

October 2025

Joining Jesus – Building Bridges

Jonathan Bornman

Donate at emm.org/jbornman

Dear friends,

Responding to an invitation from our partners in Indonesia, Michael Hostetler and I traveled to Indonesia from September 10 to 27 for an *Unexpected Peace* film premiere and tour. We had seven screenings in six cities with local Muslim and Christian scholars reviewing the film and participating in discussion panels. It was an amazing two weeks! Imagine traveling with Hizbullah Commander Yanni Rusmanto and his wife Dia; Mennonite pastor Paulus Hartono, his wife Rut and daughters Rebecca and Vanessa; doing seven film screenings and discussion panels together with sightseeing, and many meals together. It was beyond all my expectations!

Wherever we showed the film, we were met with strong responses from people requesting to show the film in the following types of venues: churches, Islamic boarding schools, universities (Christian, Muslim and public), and the national inter-religious forum. A provisional plan outlining a distribution agreement for Indonesia was discussed. Pray for those committed to bring these desires into reality.

The Indonesian Premiere

There was great energy about this event. As people arrived, they were given an *Unexpected Peace* T-shirt and a box of snacks. Many of the people at this first screening had participated in making the film. Hosted in the auditorium of the Solo city government building where YPLAG (a multi-faith peace committee) has an office, this was the premiere event we were hoping for!

The room was filled with 120 people from many different backgrounds. There were invited guests from Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (large Indonesian Muslim organizations), multiple Christian denominations, Indonesian Ministry of Religion, local Islamic boarding schools and more. Hizbullah was there with 15 soldiers in addition to Yanni, his wife Dia and two of their children. The KOPASAR militia founder, Hardono, came with some of his militia. Hadja Hillal was there sitting in the front row, smiling and waving to me when I went on stage.

Visit to the Hizbullah Base

Michael and I went with Paulus and two of his daughters, Vanessa and Rebecca, to visit with Yanni Rusmanto and Dia at their home, the Hizbullah base. We ended up visiting for two and a half hours. Recently, an American friend asked me if the commander and pastor are still friends. Yes, they are, and the relationship is



Top: The MDS team plus Yanni and his wife Dia recreate the *Unexpected Peace* cover image. **Middle:** PCCI partners Agus Suyanto and Paulus Hartono with Hizbullah commander Yanni Rusmanto and me. **Bottom:** Taking in the Indonesian premiere of *Unexpected Peace* with two Hizbullah soldiers.

deepening over time. What I observed was a real friendship rooted in honesty, transparency and vulnerability. They have committed their lives to nonviolence.

I learned that during COVID and Yanni's stroke, his family suffered a major economic setback. Paulus and Muria Damai Sentosa (an Indonesian Mennonite service organization) were able to help them and Dia now runs a thriving small shop with baked goods. I learned that peacemaking is a lifestyle and a long-term commitment that includes social, economic, spiritual and environmental components. It was a truly remarkable time together. Something unimaginable 25 years ago is now ordinary and routine.

Introducing the Film Seven Times

At each screening, Michael and I gave a short introduction. We tried a variety of introductions speaking about non-violence in a polarized world. However, at the fourth presentation at the Christian University in Salatiga I felt a prompting of the Holy Spirit to give a spiritual context for the film. I turned to Ephesians chapter 6:10-17.

Verse 11 says, "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." I said that in our polarized world, one of the devil's schemes is to spread dehumanizing hate speech, fear and violence. Our film stands in resistance to these schemes. I continued reading, ending with verse 15, "with your feet, fitted from the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." Lifting one foot and pointing to my shoe, I invited people to embrace the way of Jesus and the gospel of peace.

Discipling Relationships

Slowly, I am becoming more aware and deliberate about the people I am discipling and the various phases of those relationships, sometimes up close and intense, and other times more distant. This month I am happy to report about Mukiza Mabano who wrote to me on October 9, 2025, "I really see the hand of God. I have put together Christian and Muslim families and taught them to live in peace. I shared with them the word you have given us in today's prayers from 1 Peter 5:1-11."

Praises and Prayer Requests

1. **Pray** for our Indonesian partner, MDS, as they put together a distribution strategy for Unexpected Peace in Indonesia.
2. **Pray** for all the members of my Christian-Muslim Relations Team; Peter and Christy Sensenig, Andres and Angelica Prins, Michael and Ruthy Hershey, Angie and Brendan Earl and their families as God's blessing and joy to encourage them.
3. **Pray** for PCCI partners who minister faithfully in challenging situations.
4. **Pray** for our family, our mothers, children and grandchildren. Pray that each one would receive joy and encouragement.
5. **Pray** pray for me, as I'm in a season of wrapping up older projects and asking the Holy Spirit to help me discern which new opportunities to engage.

Funding Update

Jonathan's Missionary Support Team is thankful for regular support of many individuals and churches. As the work of training, leading, connecting, and peacemaking continues, please prayerfully consider a year-end donation. Our goal is to finish 2025 with strong financial support. Please consider a new or increased donation at emm.org/jbornman. — Dani Longenecker, finance coordinator