

# Heartbeat

## Stopping and Starting Things

By Pastor Scott Roberts

Life is full of opportunities to begin new things and to stop doing things that have been done for a long time. We know this intuitively and experientially. When we were young, we started crawling, but the time came when we stopped crawling, and we began walking. When we were young, we sucked on a pacifier or a thumb, but the time came when we stopped these activities. Why? Because the situation and circumstances had changed.

Church life is no different. The things that served a congregation well at one period, may no longer be needed in another era of the church's life. The great challenge of participating in any institution is knowing when to stop things that have been done for a long period and knowing when to start something else. As society and technology have changed around us, things that once served the church well are potentially not useful any longer.

For instance, does a church newsletter, like the Heartbeat, still serve any significant purpose in an age when the same information can be disseminated via an email or posted on a website as the information becomes available? Probably not, the content of most church newsletters has been replaced with blogs, weekly announcement emails, prayer chains, and the like. So, going forward, this will be our last Heartbeat, as it has been traditionally produced. Marjie will continue to put together a monthly calendar, and when specific items need to be communicated in a written form, they will be made available, but the monthly production of a single newsletter will cease. Please keep an eye on the church website and the weekly emails for the information that used to be delivered in print. Digital messages are replacing traditional print.

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## Stopping and Starting Things

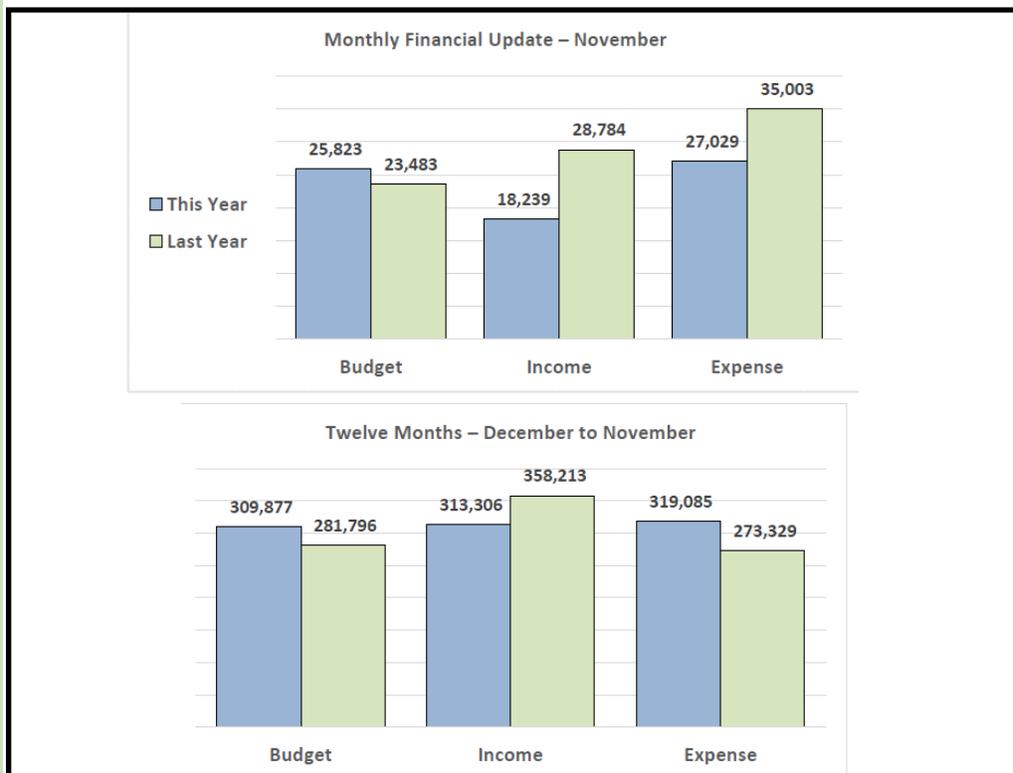
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As benign an issue as the Heartbeat is, the issue of stopping and starting things is much bigger. What other things might the church need to stop doing to start doing something else? Are there programs or ministries that served a particular purpose, time, or need but are no longer viable or appropriate to our church and cultural context?

Such questions are easy to ask, but hard to answer. They are hard because people have poured their life into some of these church programs and often stopping the ministry seems like one's service isn't being valued. Such is not the case. The end of a program or ministry doesn't mean the years of service were wasted. That service formed and shaped people and volunteers. It was beneficial and fruitful. We must celebrate that. But just because something was good in the 1920s doesn't make it a good ministry in the 1950s, 1980s, 2000s, or 2020s. Just because a ministry was effective for your spiritual formation doesn't mean it is still effective for the next generation. Times change, expectations change, and every institution is called to adapt the means while tightly gripping onto the purpose and goal. The church is called to make disciples and evangelize the lost. How we do that may and often should change with the passing of time.

Please pray for the church leadership as they wrestle with what the church needs to stop doing so that we can become more effective evangelists and disciple-makers in a post-pandemic world.

## HOPE IN CHRIST CHURCH NOVEMBER GIVING



# Indonesia: Great Leap Forward for Islamisation

By Elizabeth Kendal



Submitted By Rebekah Roberts

On Tuesday 6 December, the Indonesian Parliament passed its revised Criminal Code (Undang Undang Kitab Hukum Pidana, or KUHP). A previous attempt in 2019 triggered enormous protests so, this time, politicians limited public consultation, ignored widespread criticism, and rushed it through at short notice. Insiders say Vice-President Ma'ruf Amin (79), a conservative cleric and former chairman of the Indonesia Ulema Council (MUI), was behind the push to get the revised Code through. Critically, the revised Criminal Code empowers the government at the expense of the people by giving the state a legal weapon it can wield against its critics. For example: the new code criminalizes attacking the 'honor or dignity' of public officials, including the president and members of the government; and truth is not a defense (Articles 218-220).

While Western politicians, institutions and mainstream media have blasted the Code's attack on sexual freedom and privacy, they have remained largely silent on the Code's attacks on freedom of speech, association, and religion. Most critically for the archipelago's religious minorities, the revised Criminal Code recognizes 'any living law' – such as customary law or Sharia law – operating at the local level (Article 2). It also expands the 1965 blasphemy law from one article to six (Articles 300-305), while Article 304 bans apostasy, along with any effort to persuade a person to apostatize/convert. The Indonesian government has defended its stance, insisting it is merely upholding 'Indonesian values', as if 'Indonesian' is now synonymous with 'Islamic'.

The law still requires the president's signature. Even then, it will not come into effect immediately, as it could take up to three years to get the necessary implementing regulations in place. The revised Criminal Code will most certainly be challenged in the Constitutional Court, which unfortunately is not as independent as it used to be. In recent months the parliament – with the president's approval – recalled and replaced Justice Aswanto after he ruled against laws (deeming them flawed) that the parliament had passed. Would any judge dare defy parliament now?

**PLEASE PRAY** for God to raise up articulate, principled, and courageous religious liberty advocates at every level of Indonesian society. May the Lord redeem this threatening situation for his good purpose. 'For nothing will be impossible with God' (from Luke 1:35-38 ESV).

**PRAY especially** for Muhammad Kece – a former Islamic teacher turned Christian apologist – as he spends his first Christmas in an Indonesian prison. In February, Kece was sentenced to ten years in prison because of his apologetics ministry. On 6 June, Kece's sentence was reduced on appeal to six years in prison. His health has been fragile; his faith will be tested. May the Lord sustain and deliver him!



Christian convert and blasphemy prisoner, Muhammad Kece, at his appeal, June 2022 (Photo: Andhika Prasetia/detikom)

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

# January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> <b>Communion</b>	2	3 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Boer/Hop Group</b>	4 11:45 a.m. <b>Elders Meeting</b>	5 6:30 a.m. <b>Men's Group</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Men's Hop Heads United</b> 7 p.m. <b>Deacons Meeting</b>	6 6:00 - 9:30 p.m. <b>Jude Bible Study</b>	7
8 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> 11 a.m. <b>Sunday School</b>  7-9 p.m. <b>Laniga Group</b>	9 7:00 p.m. <b>Friendship</b>	10 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Manuscript Bible Study</b>	11 9:45 a.m. <b>Women's Bible Study</b>	12 6:30 a.m. <b>Men's Group</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Men's Hop Heads United</b> 7 p.m. <b>Council Meeting</b>	13	14
15 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> 11 a.m. <b>Sunday School</b>  Noon <b>Vitality Team</b>	16 9:30 a.m. <b>Retired Women's Coffee</b>  6:30 p.m. <b>G.E.M.S.</b>	17 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Boer/Hop Group</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Manuscript Bible Study</b>	18 6:00 p.m. <b>Ladies' Dinner Out</b>	19 6:30 a.m. <b>Men's Group</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Men's Hop Heads United</b>	20	21
22 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> 11 a.m. <b>Sunday School</b>  7-9 p.m. <b>Laniga Group</b>	23 7:00 p.m. <b>Friendship</b>	24 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Manuscript Bible Study</b>	25 9:45 a.m. <b>Women's Bible Study</b>	26 6:30 a.m. <b>Men's Group</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Men's Hop Heads United</b>	27	28
29 8:20 a.m. <b>Prayer</b> 9:30 a.m. <b>Worship</b> 11 a.m. <b>Sunday School</b>	30	31 12:15 p.m. <b>Zoom Prayer</b> 6:30-8:30 p.m. <b>Manuscript Bible Study</b>				