

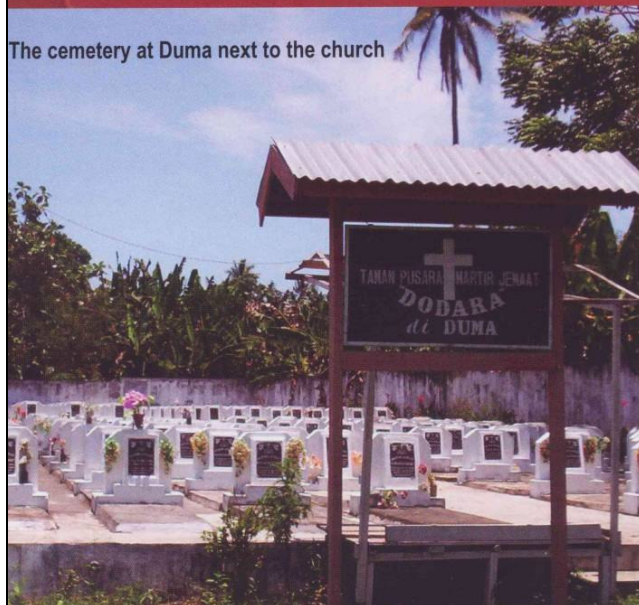
indonesia

Hear the cries of the *voiceless*



Judy McComb

Devastated Christians keep on loving



The cemetery at Duma next to the church

Singer *Judy McComb*, gives a voice to Indonesian refugees . . .

Australian singer/songwriter Judy McComb recently released her fourth album. Its title, *This is Life*, aptly describes its content. One stand-out song is *We Cry Out to You*. In it we are compelled to consider the plight of the persecuted church with a focus on Indonesia. Judy has encouraged refugees and victims during three visits to the nation in 2002, 2003 and 2005.

Islamic warriors first converged on Ambon in January 1999 where it is estimated thousands attacked the city. Since that first attack it is estimated that 10,000 people were killed and over 600,000 became homeless as a result of further conflicts.

Stories of horror and healing

Everyone has a story to tell. Husbands seeing wives kidnapped, raped and tortured; fathers seeing sons beheaded; mothers burying their children; pregnant women having their stomachs cut open;

When Rudi refused to convert to Islam he was attacked with a machete

young men being hacked to pieces, and far more horrific and graphic descriptions of these real life current events.

At the same time their stories of forgiveness and healing are even more astounding. Many of these gentle people carry gruesome scars on their bodies as evidence of the conflict and yet their spirits soar as they relay the love, grace and power of Jesus Christ in their lives.

The triumph of the village of Duma on Halmahera is just one of many incredible stories to emerge from the conflict. Attacked 21 times by thousands of Laskar Jihad warriors the people of Duma were able to hold off their enemies the first 20 times. Many times they suffered heavy losses of life and scores were seriously maimed or injured. Eventually on 19 June 2000 they were overtaken and forced to flee to the neighbouring island of Sulawesi which housed 50,000 refugees in appalling conditions. Two hundred and eleven villagers were killed in that attack alone.

Rudi*, a young man aged around 17 at the time recounts how he was with two friends during one attack. They were both murdered and when Rudi refused to convert to Islam he was attacked with a machete. The Jihad cut him on both sides of his head with one shoulder almost cut through. They pierced through to his back and they even made an attempted to behead him. As an extra measure of cruelty the jihad covered him with kerosene and banana leaves and tried to set them alight. By the grace of God they did not catch fire and the warriors left Rudi for dead. He survived eight days without food and was 34 days in the forest with no medical attention or help of any kind. Today Rudi forgives his attackers and has given his life to serve the Lord and share the love, hope and grace of Jesus Christ as an evangelist.

A burden lifted

Aman* from Duma also shared his story with Judy's team. During the final attack on Duma on 19 June 2000, hundreds gathered inside the large church able to hold about 500 worshippers. Bombs were raining down on them and Aman witnessed many deaths that day. Despite remaining uninjured himself, over 200 Christians died in that attack alone. It took the survivors and helpers from neighbouring villages three days to bury the dead. This was just one of the many mass graves that were dug during the conflict.

Needless to say Aman was left with feelings of great bitterness toward the Laskar Jihad warriors. He even tried to join the army in the hope of fighting for revenge. He was not accepted so he began unsuccessfully to try and accrue his own guns.

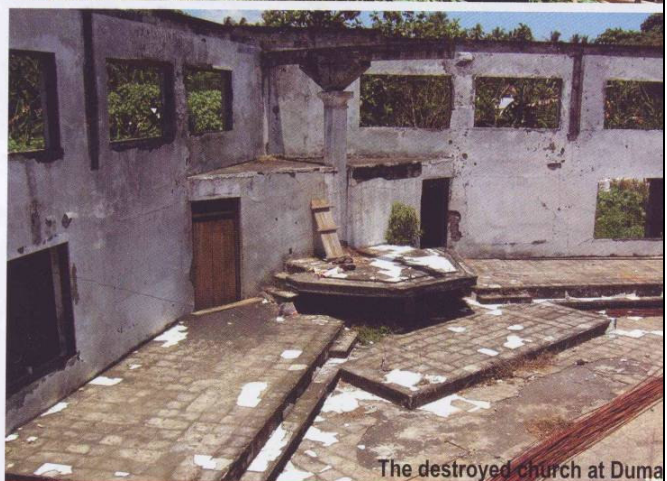
During that time Aman was invited to a retreat held by some Christians from a church in Java. It was there the process of forgiveness and ministering to others began. It was tested at a second retreat where there were 200 other young refugees present. A young man who had been a Laskar Jihad warrior stood before the youth and asked for forgiveness as he had been involved in killing their family and friends.

Aman was speechless as he remembered all of the events surrounding the attacks on Duma. Despite wanting to punch the

man, Aman and the ex-Muslim embraced and together they wept and prayed. Aman recalls, "I felt a burden had been lifted. I was freed. I was really happy." The joy that now resides on his face testifies to his words as he said, "Thank God now I can minister. Thank God I am alive. I really believe in him."

Many of the 50,000 refugees who fled to North Sulawesi have now returned to their villages to rebuild their homes, their farms and their lives. They worship God and meet together to encourage and strengthen one another. They fear the Western church has forgotten about their plight but the sad reality is that most didn't even know about it in the first place. Every group you meet specifically asks to 'not be forgotten.' Well, thanks to people like Judy McComb, they won't be. CW

**Rudi and Aman's names have been changed to protect their identity.*



The destroyed church at Duma

For more information visit:
www.cryindonesia.rnc.org.au
www.ifcus.org
www.judymccomb.com.au