

Classical Education in Indonesia

By Wanti S. Wowor



Early Beginnings

I started being involved in education when I had to personally care for the educational needs of my four children. I could not find a school in Indonesia that suited the needs and values of my family. It was then that my husband and I decided to venture out into homeschooling our children, which was unheard of at the time for Indonesians. Due to the quality of the Indonesian schools, we felt that we had no other choice as it was the only feasible way we could give the best education to our children. It was hard for my family and my friends to accept the notion of home education since no other Indonesians homeschooled their children. They thought that we were not serious regarding our children's education and we were taking a risk with our children's future.

After we made the decision to take the responsibility for our children's education, more and more Indonesian families followed our footsteps in homeschooling their children. Within two years there were about thirty families who had asked for my assistance to get them started in educating their own children. In 1994, I founded the first Indonesian Homeschool Club in Jakarta, to help and support the home school families in Indonesia.

My family then moved to Nashville, Tennessee, in 2000 and we came to know Franklin

Classical School and Dr. George Grant during our stay. Two of my daughters graduated from Franklin Classical School and I know now that it was a divine connection for what was to come. At the time, the concept of classical education seemed overwhelming to me. However, through our three year stay, we were convinced that it was what

believe that the education of a child is primarily the privilege and responsibility of the parents. Therefore, as the school, we are called to assist parents and students to fulfill this godly mandate for a proper education. Parents are not to abdicate their responsibility as no institution, governmental or private, can influence the potential of the



Morning Star Academy graduation

we should bring back to our nation.

In 2002, we moved back to Jakarta, Indonesia, and I launched a classical school based on homeschooling called Morning Star Academy. Parents who wanted to be involved with their children's education enrolled their children in our school especially since Indonesian schools do not encourage parental involvement in their children's education. We started this classical school with thirty students from grades one to six. Slowly, I introduced the new concept of classical education to the Indonesian families living in Jakarta.

A Tangible Difference

In Christian education, we

children as parents can. This notion is very new and different to the Indonesian culture. In Indonesia, most parents expect the schools to solve their children's problems. Once the parents have paid the tuition (the higher the tuition, the greater the expectation), it is then the school's responsibility to overcome any obstacles or weaknesses of the child. Thus, through regular meetings with parents, we continue to instill the biblical worldview about how God sees education and how God sees families. This process of transforming mindsets has changed the values of families in our school.

When parents are being interviewed for admission to our school, one of the basic requirements is whether they are able to commit to the time necessary to help their children. As we applied these biblical

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principles to education, we saw many families grow stronger in their relationships with one another. Also, children have more respect for their parents because parents are more interested and involved in their children's education and lives.

From 2002 until today, we have grown to become a homeschooling community of 600 students from preschool, kindergarten, elementary, all the way up to secondary school students. Many parents took the time to sit in their children's classes, especially during their children's preschool, kindergarten and elementary years. We were blessed to have our own school building

and we have certainly witnessed God's provision and favor. Through classical education, we have seen many families being restored and children's hearts returning to their parents. We have seen lives being transformed, one family at a time.

Even though our school is young, by word of mouth it has become well known in government sectors as well as the educational field of the nation. I have been invited to speak on several television talk shows and our school has received free publicity through media write ups in the newspaper year after year. I have also been invited to be a permanent guest lecturer at a postgraduate education course at Indonesia's premiere university, University of Indonesia, to train student-teachers. The concept of classical education that we brought to this

nation has made a difference.

Network of Schools

Two years after establishing Morning Star Academy in Jakarta, God led us to plant more schools in the villages and remote areas of Indonesia. It is our dream to see this nation being transformed and we know that education would be the perfect tool to build the

needs in establishing His work. Through an intensive training program for teachers based out of Morning Star Academy in Jakarta, we have become the regional headquarters to train all the teachers before releasing them to start new schools in the villages and remote areas.

It is astonishing for me to see our students in the underdeveloped

villages excel in training their minds beyond our greatest expectations. I just recently visited our schools on the island of Borneo, gathering more than forty teachers for further training and equipping. The area where we held the training was so remote that it took a four-hour drive on a bare ditch-filled gravel path to get



Schools in remote locations started and supported by MSA

ancient ruins of our nation. In 2004, we started a school in one of the poorest areas in Jakarta where trash scavengers lived and worked. Another school was initiated further away in a disaster-stricken area that left the people in a completely destitute condition.

Within four years and through God's providence and faithfulness, we have now established a network of over twenty schools in the undeveloped remote areas throughout Indonesia, with a vision of raising up a new generation of local leaders in each geographical area. One of the things that I have learned throughout this journey of educating the nation is to continue to move in faith and obedience. Sometimes we do not have sufficient teachers or resources to continue, but God always proves Himself faithful to provide for our

there. After a fifteen minute boat ride into the interior forest what did I find? I saw boldness, confidence, and healthy self-esteem in the children. They are excited about their future. Parents, teachers, and students alike are readily catching a vision for the future. What I saw has made me come to believe that education is the best way to rebuild this nation. It is a long-term commitment and it's a slow process; however, it will save the next generations to come.

After only six years of applying the principles of classical education in the East, I have personally witnessed tremendous changes in every level of society. This is just the beginning of God's immense work and it is a tremendous privilege for us to be part of God's great movement through education.