

It is hard for the people of Bali to change their ways and become Christians, because so many of their traditions and festivals, and even the beautiful dances performed for the tourists, tell the stories of gods and demons, witches and superstitions of the island.



But now there are some Christians there who are telling Bible stories the Balinese way, through dance and mime. Some people feel they can understand that better and realize that God loves them as they are and they don't have to become like foreigners to be Christian. However sometimes their Hindu neighbors are afraid the ancient gods will be angry if people follow Jesus, so they treat the Christians very badly.

True story! Eight-year-old Nyoman was scared because some people in his village in Bali were being mean to his family because they are Christians. The neighbors wouldn't let them have water to grow crops in their fields, and didn't want to have anything to do with them. "Why do the other kids at school make fun of me, and why won't they play with me?" he asked his parents tearfully. "They even said that some night while I'm asleep, the gods will come and punish me because I don't follow them any more!"

Nyoman's father explained to him that the people were afraid of their gods, which they thought live in rocks and trees and carved idols. They wanted the Christian family to turn back to their old gods, but Nyoman's father reminded his son that Jesus has more power than any other god and takes care of us even when we are asleep. As they prayed together, the young boy felt peace come on him and he knew that Jesus would keep them safe.

If you are afraid at night, or worried, you can pray and ask Jesus to give you peace too. He loves YOU and will answer YOUR prayers! "Til next time, love Shirley.

(Answer to puzzle found in Romans 14:17)

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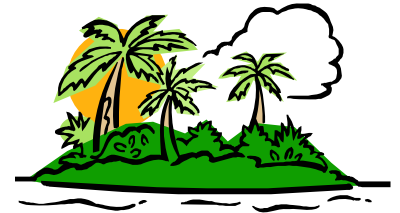
World Kids

Fun facts for kids!  True stories!

PAL Page

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Where do you think would be a PERFECT place to live?



Maybe you'd think of a land with gorgeous white beaches, sparkling blue water and palm trees; huge mountains covered in jungles with bright tropical flowers and fascinating birds; traditional dancers dressed in gold, as they entertain and tell stories; and friendly people welcoming visitors. Such a perfect land might even be called Paradise!

But did you know that there is actually a country like this? It's called **Bali** - and many people call it "the last paradise!"

Bali is a tiny island, less than 100 miles long, in Indonesia in South East Asia.



Indonesian flag (red and white)



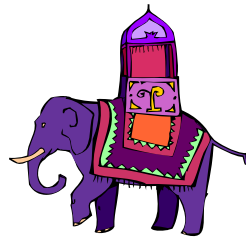
It's really a beautiful land and every year more than ONE AND A HALF MILLION tourists visit Bali! It is located only three-fourths mile from the main island of Java, but life is very different there. Probably many of us would like to live in Bali; but if we did, we might find out that it isn't REALLY so perfect!



Although the island of Bali is so small, and only about 2 million people live there, there are THOUSANDS of temples because the Balinese are Hindus and worship many gods. Every day they take offerings to the temples for the gods, as they believe it is very important to keep the gods happy!

The Balinese have a legend that tells that their island was originally flat and nothing would grow there. Then, many years ago, when the island of Java became Muslim, the Hindu gods moved across the short stretch of water to live in Bali. Because the gods needed mountains to live, they created tall mountains and volcanoes; then the rain and water from these mountains made the island fertile.

The traditional calendar year in Bali has only 210 days, and at the beginning of each New Year, there is a special feast for the gods. The gods are taken out of their shrines and invited to live in coins and wooden objects for ten days while the people feast and dance!



Most of the Balinese are poor farmers growing rice, maize and coffee; or they carve wood or make beautiful woven materials. They believe that the spirits of their ancestors live with the gods in the mountains, so when they build a house, they always put a special little room with the altar for the spirits



facing the mountain. They believe that when someone dies, their spirit cannot go to be in the mountains unless there has been an elaborate funeral ceremony. Many people save their money for years to be able to build a special funeral tower for their body to be cremated (burned).

Therefore many Balinese worry during their life about trying to please the many gods each day, and also worry about what will happen to them after they die. They live in a beautiful land - but they don't have peace and joy!




Philippians 4:7 tells us that we can have peace in our hearts and minds as we believe in Jesus Christ.

As Christians we learn that God made this beautiful world for us to enjoy, but even if we are in a wonderful place and have everything perfect that we could want, it doesn't mean that we will have peace and joy. We might feel guilty because of the way we treated someone badly; we might feel worried about things happening in our family; we might just feel empty, feeling that there is something missing in our life. Jesus is the only one who can give us true peace and joy - even in the middle of terrible situations!

Scripture Puzzle

See if you can read this scripture verse correctly:

For the  _____dom of God is not

 _____ and  _____ but

 _____eousness,  _____ and

 _____ in the Holy  _____.

We should pray that the people of the beautiful island of Bali learn to find peace and joy through our Lord Jesus too!