



# East Timor: Ministry Updates

October 31, 2022

*2 Thessalonians 3:1 – Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:*

## 1. Worship Service

We thank the Lord that we have conducted Part 1 of the training for the church leaders. Now, we have two elders who can preach and ably share the Word of God during our Sunday ministry and programmed weekday Theology and prayer fellowships. Timorese really need persistent serious prayers to break the bondage from animist practices and dominant cultural and traditional idolatrous beliefs. Religion and religious faith in God for them have never been their life priorities. There are times that some skip church services if their tribal chiefs/ leaders call for cultural or special gatherings. Their fear of *karma* or curse is very strong. Every time we share our stories with them, they also impart their daily task of hard work as they are obligated to give mandatory budget for all family and tribal events and other religious/sacrificial gatherings such as Uma Lisan (family reunion), Uma Lulik (tribal intercessory house of prayer by older/leader), Uma Adat (general reunion in an old tribal ancestral house). All these three major celebrations have animal sacrifice offerings for days and are conducted with animist rituals and prayers to their ancestors, dead family members and even prayer for their sacred animals.



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In most cases, they neglect to take good care of their health and sacrificially fast to cut down their food expenses during these important events. Another crucial example of their unique and distinct practices is giving dowry. The sad truth for ordinary couples is that they could only be wed legitimately in a church ceremony after 5 or 10-25 years of living together after completion of giving 15-77 cows plus other monetary dowry donations. In some areas, the poorest wedding dowry is a cow/carabao with considerable affordable cash needed and giving of a similar animal every time a sibling or parent of the couple dies. Hence, many get illegally divorced and the rest succumb to live-in practices with an increasing number of unwanted pregnancies and abortion issues. This current situation in the society has much affected their economic condition with little care for their morality and/or spiritual needs. Additionally, these hard core beliefs give excuses for workers to be absent from their work (normally without pay) with their kids excused from regular classes for 3 days or more if their families are attending the aforementioned events and rituals.

## 2. Children's English Tutorial Classes



We are looking for the future of the Timorese kids as we teach them every week. At least we make right and straight some of their behavioral

curve. We see them as the future leaders of the church as we nurture them in the life Christ.

### 3. Sunday School



We continue the kids' Sunday school, and it has increased in attendance. By November, we plan to divide them into 2 classes by age group to be housed in the newly renovated classrooms. These

are our Friday and Saturday English students. "Jesus loves the little children" so we are taking care to grow them in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### 4. Children's Fellowship

The success of the first children's fellowship is an encouragement to all of us, as we saw some kids receive the



Lord Jesus Christ. Everybody was so happy on this momentous day that these kids kept on asking when the next fellowship would be as they wish to join again. Praise the Lord that some of the church members helped us in the preparation and parents accompanying their children were also assisting with the needs of this program. Indeed, it was a remarkable insight for the Team who readily felt the children's need of attention and of spiritual guidance.



### 5. Prayer Meeting and Theology class



Prayer meetings and theology class face many trials each week as we keenly observe each working member. Yet, we praise God for all His goodness in answering our prayers even if there is a decrease in members attending due to security and safety reasons going home at night. For our current Bible class, we have tackled the

Book of Acts, while for devotional Christian living, we make use of the reference book *The Purpose Driven Life*. We are in the 17<sup>th</sup> month of having a series of dispensational Bible lessons.

### 6. English Tutorial Class in ETDA (East Timor Development Agency)



Monday to Friday, Pastor Aaron is teaching Basic English at East Timor Development Agency (ETDA Technical School), as we always try to connect with the locals. It's a good opportunity because some of the students are professionals and others are already working in government offices as doctors and supervisors. Praise God that every

time we have classes, we set aside a time for a short meditation and prayer.

### 7. Sunday Afternoon Bible Study

We take advantage of Sunday afternoons to have a Bible study with members who stay on with us. This special Bible class is in pure Tetun language so they can clearly understand the doctrine of salvation. We are praying that attendees of this Bible study



will grow according to God's grace so that many could help us impact the lives of others with the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 4:13 says, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching". East Timor ministry is gradually growing in spite of hardships in dealing with the people. Fellowshiping members in the church are also encouraged in serving the Lord, inviting friends to every Sunday Worship. It is in us to keep patience as we wait for the Lord Jesus to mold them according to His grace, as some who professed accepting the Lord Jesus are having struggles with their families. These new Christians need strong faith in God not to grow weak and weary when cultural and traditional beliefs totally contradict our Christian living.

### 8. Worship Center



Thank God that the worship center is now more comfortable for everyone when we

have church activities. The planned improvement will be continued after we get our renewed contract. Please help us intercede in prayer for the proposed 5-year contract from March 2023 until 2028. Habitually, land owners increase the rent of the place once it is developed by tenants and some sad experiences happen once owners see the house/lot improvement.

### 9. Children's New Class Room



Praise the Lord for the answered prayer for the repair of our two classrooms. Walls are already painted, have good flooring, chalk board, and electrical installation of lights and outlets. At last we can divide the class according to their age level. Ciony and Noemi are working hard

for the children's lessons every week. We have more children coming during Sunday school and we praise the Lord for their parents who trust us to teach their children.

### 10. TCM East Timor Office



Thank God for answered prayer for TCM East Timor office

equipment and accessories. Government officials are always looking for our NGO and Learning Center offices. Thank God that we now have new pieces of furniture, cabinets, office tables, air conditioning unit and a steel cabinet. We are expressing our thanks for all brethren who are persistently partnering with us in field missions and Things to Come Mission-U.S.A. for the procurement of the above specific office needs.

### Prayer Requests

1. November 2022, we will conduct our first Youth Fellowship: ages 13 and above. Our original plan was to do this in October but we moved to November because of conflict with the exam schedule of the students.
2. Pray for the extension ministry in the 2 districts.
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Church Leadership training this coming November 12.
4. Pray for our safe gatherings as riots always happen anywhere in the city.
5. Stones fall on our roof anytime and mostly at late night.
6. Pray for the continuing NGO livelihood trainings and activities.

7. For funds for our proposed NGO project for livelihood training through start-up agricultural farms as soon as the agreement/contract with the farm owner/target area is signed before year-end.
8. English Learning center activities every Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
9. For funds to buy a piece of land in Dili City to build a church and NGO Office.
10. Church projector, electric guitar, 1 portable speaker. Our old projector is borrowed and is now functioning erratically.
11. Preparation of documents needed for processing the Work Permit for Arsinos and Visas for the whole East Timor Team.

**Psalm 79:13** – So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

For some questions and suggestions, please feel free to contact us at:

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