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Pray with East Timor on Sunday, March 18, 2018

BY [MONICA LIDDLE](#) ON MARCH 12, 2018

Lectionary Selection: John 12:20-33

Prayers for East Timor:

For the women and girls in East Timor, who are subject to the desires of husbands, fathers, uncles, and brothers, dear God, we pray. When unwanted pregnancies occur, leaving a mother to bear the physical and emotional work of caring for babies and children, or sometimes leaving her in danger for her own life or safety, dear God, we pray. When violence against women and girls happens, particularly in the home, whether it be physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, dear God, bring righteousness to the women and open the eyes of men.

Jesus came to teach a way of justice for all people. In East Timor, we pray today for this indigenous, young, Asian nation as it faces challenges of modernization and as it comes to terms with deeply entrenched cultural norms that too often disempower women. May women and men recognize that to glorify God is to walk humbly as servants of Jesus, following a path which honors the dignity of **all** people, women and men alike. Amen.

Mission Stewardship Moment from East Timor:

Just as in the USA sexual harassment, abuse, and violence against women have a long and often hidden history, so it is in East Timor. The patriarchy here, however, keeps women silent to the core. No #MeToo movement is in place here, yet.

In our church partnership, an egregious story of sexual abuse has recently made national news. We thank God that Timorese law condemns such acts of violence against women and girls, and that the perpetrator is now in prison. Still, three young women suffered years of abuse in the home. Cultural norms permitted the abuse to continue unchecked, despite the local community's suspicions of misbehavior. In the end, the girls' aunt rescued them. And now she herself is in danger: for breaking cultural norms, for exposing the



family, for not just leaving the problem to the family to work out.

Tom's work with IPTL's pastors and Monica's work in health care have dovetailed into a new mission direction for us here now. Pray for us as we strive to bring justice and freedom from violence and abuse to more girls and women in East Timor through our work with our partners, the Protestant Church of East Timor.

(Prayer and Mission Moment by Monica Liddle)

Global Ministries Mission Coworker in East Timor:

Monica Liddle serves with the Protestant Churches of East Timor (IPTL). Her appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church's Wider Mission, and your special gifts.

More information on East Timor:

http://www.globalministries.org/east_timor



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East Timor

East Timor is the eastern half of the Island of Timor in Eastern Indonesia. It lies north of Australia across the Timor Sea. East Timor gained its independence in 2002 after nearly 30 years of occupation by Indonesia (1972-1999) and four centuries of occupation by the Portuguese.

East Timor won its independence from Indonesia in an election in May of 1999. After interim oversight by the U.N. East Timor became a new nation in May of 2002. The years of agitation for independence and preparing for independence were fraught with conflict between local groups and between the locals and the Indonesian military. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives. Homes and churches have been destroyed.

The population of East Timor is predominately Christian, of which 90% are Roman Catholic. Indigenous people have lived on the island for thousands of years. The population of East Timor is estimated at 911,000. Unemployment in some areas is as high as 80%. The economic disparities between those who are well off and the majority who live in abject poverty feed a restlessness that makes nation-building all the more difficult. The nation is vulnerable to the alternating disasters of monsoons and droughts.

During the sixteenth century Indonesia was colonized by the Portuguese and it remained a Portuguese colony until Portugal agreed to relinquish the colony in 1974. In 1975, Indonesia invaded East Timor to incorporate it into Indonesia. During the invasion, over 200,000 Timorese (approximately 1/3 of the population) were killed. The Indonesian occupation was not accepted by the majority of the population and another 200,000 Timorese died from violence or famine between 1975 and 1999. In 1999, 96% of the residents of East Timor voted for independence and the United Nations became the interim administration until independence in 2002. The Indonesian military went on a scorched earth rampage in response to the 1999 vote for independence. Most of the Indonesian Christian clergy were killed or driven out of Timor. Many of their churches were burned. Most of their Indonesian congregation-members were also driven out and many of their homes were destroyed. The formation of the Truth-seeking and Reconciliation Commission in 2002-03 has brought some hope for restoration of human rights, refugee Timor Lorosa'e or East Timor is the eastern half of the Island of Timor in Eastern Indonesia.

East Timor is disputing Australia's claim to oil and natural gas deposits beneath the Timor Sea. According to commonly accepted Law of the Sea guidelines the Greater Sunrise Fields, the Laminaria-Corallina reserves and the Bayu-Undan deposits would lie entirely within East Timor's sea boundaries. Australia's claim goes back to an agreement negotiated with Indonesia in 1972. Since East Timor is a new nation and was in no way represented in that agreement they are demanding that Australia withdraw

its claim. Negotiations are making slow progress. East Timor is in desperate need of this economic boost and the benefits it would bring to the local population in the form of schools and other public services. Activists are calling for a swift resolution to the issue.

Population (2014 est) – 1,201,542

Area – 9,240 mi

Capital – Dili

Ethnic Background

Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian)

Papuan

Small Chinese minority

Exports – oil, coffee, sandalwood, marble, (a potential for vanilla exports)

Imports – food, gasoline, kerosene, machinery

Life Expectancy (2014 est) – M 66 years, F 69 years

Infant Mortality (2014 est) – 38.79 deaths/1,000 live births

Adult Illiteracy Rate – 41.7%