

"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

GAL 6:2

Praying With the People of East Timor

How does the church respond to the spiritual needs of the community of believers? In Timor Leste (East Timor) the Protestant Church of Timor Leste (IPTL), a partner of Global Ministries responds almost daily with the tradition of the "kultu uma kain" which, in Tetum means "family worship service." Through this ministry, church members feel a sense of community and solidarity in a context where many are on the margins of society.



TOM AND MONICA LIDDLE

As missionaries working with the IPTL Monica, our two children and I often participate in these home worship services. Rev. Sammuell De Jesus of Immanuel Protestant Church in Lospalos says that the 'kultu uma kain' began during the Indonesian occupation of Timor. This ministry gives each family in the church a service conducted in their own home which is tailored to their own concerns and longings. Since many parts of Timor are very remote, worship is brought to people who often cannot get to Sunday services. It is also an important way for lay people to participate in the leadership of the church. Here, lay preachers make up most of the leadership of the church. Usually four or five lay people will travel to the host's home with one leading the service. Preparation provides an opportunity for these lay leaders to develop biblical literacy and practice theological reflection. There are songs, scripture reading, preaching and a "general prayer" which is focused on the specific needs of the family. During the year every family in Immanuel Church receives their own family service. In addition to the 'kultu uma kain' there are also frequent pastoral visits made by church members to each other's homes. Very rarely does a pastor go alone; it is almost always a community activity. If someone is sick or bereaved or otherwise in need of consolation, several members will go. Through this witness of bearing one another's burdens, the church is fulfilling the law of Christ.

Tom and Monica Liddle serve with the Protestant Church of East Timor. Tom serves as facilitator for church programs; teaching English and helping with worship leadership in village churches. Monica works as a Naturopathic Doctor (ND) in Immanuel Clinic Lospalos. Monica's appointment is supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS).

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