

Why Love East Timor?

Today, **TIMOR LESTE**, or Timor as she is more affectionately known, is that one child in God's family of nations that needs more attention than many others. Born on 20 May 2002, she is a land of heartbreaking trauma, poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, social unrest and so much more. But God has neither forgotten nor forsaken her. Through the vision of Love East Timor, she's on to new beginnings in Christ. We must urgently and wholeheartedly involve ourselves in Timor right now. Why? We offer here eight compelling reasons, adapted from a message by Pastor Rick Seaward at a Timor Consultation in Singapore.

1 **A prophetic word has been given.**

In May 2004, Pastor Rick Seaward received a word from the Lord that Singapore as a nation is to give focal attention to Timor and be responsible to bring transformation to her. We are also to raise the trumpet call of the Lord to summon the nations of the world to come help rebuild her. In July that same year, Pastor Seaward shared it with some senior pastors of the city. There was immediate resonance. Thus was born the Love East Timor vision.

2 **Singapore is Timor's neighbour.**

In our foreign relations, Singapore is always seeking to be a good neighbour. But beyond political diplomacy, who is truly a good neighbour? What does God's Word say? From the Good Samaritan story in Luke 10, we know that it is one who has seen the needs of another and responded in love, with no strings attached. Indeed, we have seen Timor's plight. We have heard her cry. We have been burdened by the constant news reports of her troubles. Some of us have been on the ground. We have been moved by the reality of her sufferings. Like the Good Samaritan, we must compassionately respond. Beyond immediate first aid, we are called to restore her back to total health and wholeness — whatever it takes!

3 **Timor is Asia's poorest country.**

Ministering to the poor is a biblical mandate, not an option. As individuals, we are to minister to individuals in need. As local churches, we are to minister to the poor and needy in our respective communities. As a nation of churches, we are to work together to minister to impoverished neighbours. If we believe that God has called us to be Antioch of Asia, then all the more we should be attentive to the pressing, critical needs of Asia's poorest country.

4 **Timor though weak, will one day confound the wise.**

Today, Timor may be the weakest nation of our region. In the natural, it seems almost impossible for her to turn around. In fact, her Asean neighbours may have written her off. But with God all things are possible! God delights in using the weak to confound the wise. Our nation Singapore started out small, weak and poor, too. Many people thought we would never make it. But God had a different picture. Today we are a success story for His glory. The same can happen to Timor if we dare believe. Collaborating with God, we can reverse her misfortunes. The rest of Asean will sit up and take notice. Timor is a miracle in the making and God wants us to be part of that!

5 **This is God's kairos hour for Timor.**

Think about it. How often do we get the chance to impact an entire nation from its very beginning? As an infant nation, Timor is impressionable. She's hungry. But she must be fed the right stuff. This is the kairos hour to nourish her and to nurture her. Truth is, we've been a

little slow. But God has used the civil strife and unrests of 2006 to reset the clock, so to speak, for us to catch up! There is now a new entity set up called Transformation Alliance [TA]. Its primary task is to operationalize the Love East Timor vision through a strategy of churches 'loving Timor village by village'. We are making headways. There's been good progress. TA is bringing together churches in Singapore and from many nations to transform Timor from the ground up.

6 Timor is to be God's beacon of light to her former enemies.

God will heal Timor from the many wounds she had suffered under 25 years of Indonesian occupation. The Prince of Peace will reconcile former enemies. God will use Timor to showcase the power of Christ's forgiving love. Timorese peoples speak Bahasa Indonesia. In His time, God will send out Timorese missionaries to serve many of Indonesia's major Unreached People Groups. The Indonesians will be confounded and many will turn to Christ!

7 To whom much is given, much is required.

We are an affluent nation, blessed beyond measure. There is tremendous wealth in the Singapore Church today. God blesses us so that we may be blessing to others. It costs only about USD200 a month to bring practical help, sustainable change at the village level. Even a small church of 70 members can adopt a village in Timor and do 'wonders' on the ground. Every little action helps. Every bit goes a long way to bless villager families in need.

8 Timor will provoke the Church to pray!

Transforming Timor is a Kingdom call, a spiritual work. As we start with fervent, focused prayers for breakthrough village by village, something will happen in the spiritual life of our own church. Ordinary members will catch the vision and run with it. As we sow abundantly in prayer for Timor, we will reap powerfully in more ways than can be imagined! God will use Timor to unite the Singapore Church in prayer and in missions.

Church, go for it! Timor has waited long enough. The time to favour her is now. As someone once said: Good news is good only if it arrives in time ■