

WEEK 13 • APRIL 1, 2023

Timor-Leste: A New Mission Field

2 Timothy 4:18—“The LORD will deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”

Timor-Leste is a small island nation located in Southeast Asia. It is home to 1.2 million people, most of whom are Catholic.

About 500 Seventh-day Adventists live in Timor-Leste. They worship in one official church in the capital city and three other groups spread across the island. Adventist members in Timor-Leste face persecution. They are often rejected, persecuted, or fired from their jobs. Adventist children are expelled for not attending school on Sabbath.

Joaquina is a tailor who lives in a humble home that is also her shop and workplace. She sews clothes and other creative items to earn a living. Joaquina suffers a lot of pain and physical challenges. One day she felt so weak that she prayed for God to help her. Soon afterward, two Adventists came to her house, prayed with her, and gave her a Bible.

Joaquina studied the Bible and became convinced that God’s truth lay in the Adventist teachings. On Sabbath she closed her shop and worshiped with the Adventists. When her neighbors learned that she had left her former church to become an Adventist, they filed a complaint against her, and she was arrested. It was a difficult time for Joaquina, but God gave her strength. She was freed and cleared of wrongdoing. Now she talks to her neighbors about God in spite of persecution.



Even the Adventist children in Timor-Leste face challenges. Public schools meet six days a week. When children refuse to attend school on Sabbath, they are expelled from public school. In 2015 part of the world church’s offerings helped build an Adventist elementary school where students can study without fear of being expelled. The school is registered as an international school where classes are taught in English. Enrollment grew steadily, and a dormitory was needed to accommodate students who live far from the school. Many non-Adventist parents are also eager to send their children to this school.

Part of our Promise offerings helped to build the dormitory and will continue to support the work in Timor-Leste. Let’s help continue evangelism in Timor-Leste and pray that God will strengthen the believers as they work to break down prejudice between those following the majority religion and the Adventists and open the hearts of those who want to know God personally. Giving to God our Promise offerings honors God and strengthens us as Christians as well.