



Indonesian Trip Update

June 2016

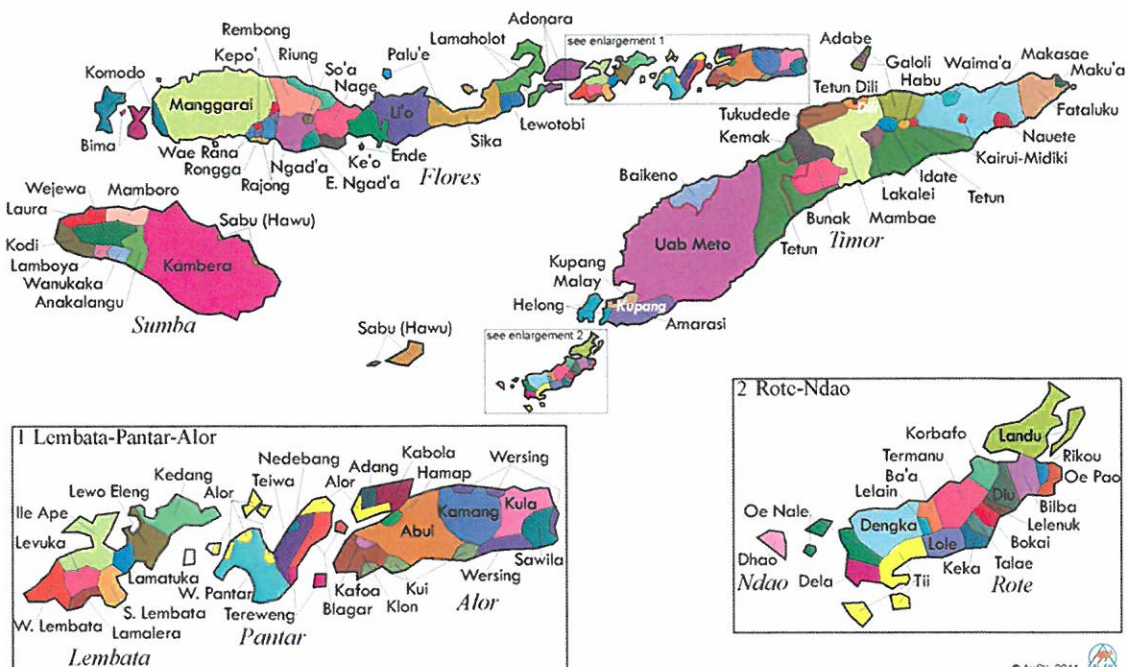
Partnering with Ben and Emma Grimes

My recent trip was the result of a long-term connection with the Grimes family. Ben and Emma Grimes serve with the Navigators in West Timor, Indonesia. They have a passion to disciple people using the recently translated Scriptures by the SIL Translation Team, led by Ben's mother and father. It was a privilege to return to Timor, work with the region's church leadership, and offer seminars at a Theological College in Kupang. This longer report provides updates on all these ventures as well as a look ahead to the summer months.

Ben and Emma work with the "Language and Culture Centre" where they focus on developing the use of local Timorese languages for effective discipleship and understanding of the Scriptures. They train people to use God's Word for individual and group study through focused mentoring of key people, group studies and seminars. They work in partnership with local churches to develop and adapt Bible study tools in local languages. In addition, Emma manages a guesthouse that supports local Bible translation projects, and Ben is involved in multi-lingual education and local language advocacy. Emma completed her Masters in Public Health and Ben has recently commenced his Masters in Applied Linguistics. They have three young children, Indiana, Joseph and Bethany.

It is natural for me to partner with Ben. We shared our teaching of 2 Timothy in the Helong, Tetun and Amarasi language areas of West Timor, where Ben is working. Below is a Language map signifying the languages of the region. Can you find these language groups on the map? Turn to page 2 and 3 for details of our ministry in each venue. Thanks for your partnership in prayer, support and for standing with us in special ways. Dave

Languages of Nusa Tenggara Timur and Timor Leste





Pastors and Church Leaders Training

In the Training sessions held across West Timor and on Semau Island, we taught Paul's second letter to Timothy emphasizing mentoring and leadership development principles. 2 Timothy is a rich resource for encouraging growth and maturity of pastors and leaders of all ages. Please pray for these pastors, leaders and the congregations as they serve Christ in the year ahead.

Words Have Meaning

"boa blingin" – "cool flesh" – a Helong language greeting urging one to be comfortable in the extreme heat.

"You are lazy?" – A question that Thaniel asked me one afternoon in Betun. He was really asking if I was tired, but imagine explaining the difference between "tired" and "lazy".

"ma kasih" – a shortened version of "Thank you" in Indonesian is a phrase I used often.

GMIT – is an acrostic representing the Evangelical Protestant Church of Timor. This is a denominational church influenced by Dutch Reformed missionaries many years ago. We were hosted by GMIT churches as we presented the training sessions.

Semau Island, located off the Timor coast, is a 45 minute boat ride from Kupang. While several GMIT congregations are established on the Island, we partnered with one particular church in the village of Batu Ivan; which means "Mother's Rock". Pastor Yullius, in his fifth month as the church's pastor, also invited a local church to join the training sessions. Together, we studied 2 Timothy in one day and stayed overnight for an early morning prayer meeting with church leaders and others in the community.



Morning Prayer Group



We spent the night in the house of Ten Balle, an elder in the church and highly respected former village leader. Greatly encouraged by the training, he mentioned that "growing relationships in Christ is the priority of the church not solely "running programs". In this beautiful setting, we spent time with the Pastor and other leaders talking about challenges they face in ministry. *Pray for this Island, that the gospel will make more inroads and for the leaders as they serve amidst the everyday spiritual challenges to God's people.*

Betun was the location of our second training session, which ran two days and required a six-hour drive from Kupang to this town in the Tetun area of Timor. As we traveled to the site, we hugged the southern coast of Timor before turning into the mountains. Returning to Kupang was exciting, as the number of hair-pin turns exceed my ability to count them. While in Betun, we enjoyed an exceptional time with the pastors and leaders.



After Semau Island, Ben, Thaniel (Ben's colleague at the Language and Culture Centre) and I repackaged the 2 Timothy materials to be more directive and less reflective. It worked, as the overall engagement of the Betun participants was much higher. This area is one where tensions between pastors and elders run very high because the GMIT church assigns pastors into churches where elders have had authority for a long time. It seems that power plays are very common in many churches. As you can imagine, the message of 2 Timothy spoke directly to these issues.

Rev. Gabriel (Gab) Bria was the organizing force behind this session. Gab spent years as a pastor in this region and has deep relationships with many of the leaders and churches. His diminutive stature belies the experience of the power of his commitment to Christ. Together, Ben, Gab and I shared in the teaching, so that 2 Timothy came alive in practical terms. Understanding that relationships are the basis for pastoral ministry and grasping the difference between secular and spiritual leadership seemed to be a result shared by many. Also, there was a commitment to begin the mentoring process by several pastors. *Pray for these brothers and sisters as they faithfully serve the Lord.*

Our vision is to encourage and equip less-resourced Majority World pastors through biblical teaching and resources. Beginning in Uganda, we will assist national church leaders and mission partners as they nurture pastors and develop emerging leaders to the glory of God.

Pastors and Church Leaders Training

Burain - Our final seminar location was in the East Amarasi region. This group included several first time pastors as well as more experienced leaders. Our 2 Timothy materials prompted good discussion on mentoring and introduced a new paradigm for ministry. Ben posed the question to the leaders, "How are you helping people grow spiritually outside of church events and programs?" The emphasis on a relationship based ministry challenged the status quo.



One new pastor stated that this emphasis ran counter to the training he received, because success is often attributed by the pastor's busyness in orchestrating church programs. However, the group's prevailing attitude was an acceptance of 2 Timothy's emphasis on building a healthy church. It does not mean that programs become obsolete; instead discipleship should be the most important task of pastors and church leaders. *Pray that God will strengthen and equip these leaders for the task ahead.*



A Surprise Assignment – Preaching at a Church Anniversary Event

On our first day in Burain, the Presbytery leader asked Ben if I would speak at one of the area churches. Ben said "sure" and I was informed that the evening event began at 5 pm. Traveling light, I had no tie or sport coat to wear. Not to worry, an Amarasi cloth jacket appeared with a choice of ties. Because I am considerably taller than most Indonesian men, the sleeves of the jacket reached just below my elbows. "Perfect", Ben said, "Amarasi men usually roll up their sleeves."

With the wardrobe set, I sensed God wanted me to emphasize Ephesians 4 on the growth and maturity of God's people. Using the idea of putting off sinful attitudes and putting on the beautiful and colorful nature of Christ's character (Ephesians 4:25-5:2), I encouraged the congregation to celebrate God's faithfulness in their attitudes and actions. I asked them to display the character of Christ for the good of everyone in the community.

It was a grand occasion. Gifts were given, cake enjoyed, songs sung, liturgy shared and my first preaching assignment in a GMIT church was well received. As the picture suggests, an elevated pulpit, separated from the congregation, signifies the view of a minister's elevated role in preaching. In fact, over the entire visit, I often heard that Indonesian pastors preached in a lofty sermonic use of the Indonesian Bible that yielded a lack of biblical understanding. What a great reason for good heart-language translations of Scripture!



With Ben interpreting and using the Amarasi New Testament, one woman said that the Ephesian 4 themes (telling the truth, dealing with anger, doing away with power struggles, etc.) spoke to the issues of every congregation "in words people could understand." My favorite comment was Pastor Gab's remark to Ben immediately after the sermon, "Thirty minutes long and I didn't even feel it." Thanks Lord for this privilege of opening God's Word to your people!

Quotes Reflecting the Impact of Training

"These sessions on 2nd Timothy are an answer to prayer" – *Pastor Gab*

"Before the training, I pictured mentoring as a more Senior person telling me what to do. Now it is about sharing life and I have a more complete picture. It was like sharpening a knife. I am now sharper for ministry." *Thaniel*

"I am bothered and taken by surprise by the training sessions, as it is a different ministry focus than I was taught." - *Participant*

"The foundational importance is to care for people and not only do ministry as a job" – *Participant*

"This study of 2nd Timothy came at the start of our pastoral ministry in the local church. It gave us a clear focus for our first congregations." *Three newly assigned Pastors in the Amarasi region*

In July's Partnership Update, I will introduce you to Pastor Gab and other Indonesian and African partners with whom we have the privilege of serving.

New Testaments Distributed

Through a generous gift from Bethel Grove Bible Church, we were able to provide four (4) different translated New Testaments for the distinct venues of this trip. The “New Testaments”, some of which include Old Testament books of Genesis, Ruth, Esther, and selected Psalms, were given to individuals in the classroom and in churches. Passages were read in heart-language translations and as we studied 2 Timothy the meaning of the Scripture became clearer in contrast to the archaic and difficult language of the Indonesian Bible. Please pray that the sermons and studies will take on a fresher approach in the days ahead. Here are the details:

Copies of Kupang-Malay 2nd Edition

192 to pastors and church leaders

72 given to theological students

Helong New Testaments- Semau Island

48 given to pastors and church leaders

Tetun New Testaments in Betun

32 given to GMIT pastors and leaders

Amarasi New Testaments in Burain

64 given to GMIT pastors and leaders

Final Thoughts from Dave

As I boarded the plane in Kupang to return home, I was overwhelmed with what the Lord had accomplished during these 18 days. Working with Ben and Emma, along with Thaniel and Pastor Gab, was an incredible honor. We laughed, prayed, endured heat and shared immense joy in sharing the Scriptures in Timor.

Honestly, it is good to be home. Over April and May, I have been away 40 out of 61 days. This work is not possible without Joyce’s deep commitment to what God has called us to do at this time in our lives. Thanks for your prayers and commitment to stand with us. We are humbled by and grateful for your love. Dave and Joyce

Teaching at the Theological Faculty in Kupang

The Artha Wacana Christian University in Kupang has a college for theological students known as the “Theological Faculty”. At the invitation of the University and Dr. Adriana Tunliv, I was invited to lecture in several of her Old Testament classes. The Poetical books were the topics on the class schedule, so she asked me to give an overview of Proverbs and Job. It was a great privilege to study these books and interact with these bright young students as they prepare for ministry.



Ben Grimes also teaches a class that highlights what he calls English Theological Study. The College believes that Indonesian students need to grasp theological concepts using English terms so they can try to access English language theological materials. One day, Ben asked me to join his class so the students could ask me ministry questions. Then, he unpacked my phrases and theological colloquialisms. I learned that “Jesus grabbed my heart” is not easy to translate into Indonesian. The class was great fun as the picture suggests.

Finally, I taught a homiletics class on the subject “Preaching and the Preacher”. I spoke about the personal nature of sermon preparation and the clear need to understand the audience to whom one is speaking. The Professor thanked me suggested that I could return and teach more often. Perhaps, this time of teaching is the beginning of a relationship for future visits.

Our June Activities

- June 1-7** – Development of May Trip Update, confirm plans for remainder of 2016 and office work.
- June 8-15** – Visit of Andrew and Edith Mwenge, of Kampala Baptist Church, to Ithaca.
- June 14** – “Partnerships” Advisory Group meets to discuss plans for 2016-17.
- June 15-16** – Transport Mwenge to VA and connect with friends.
- June 17** – Joyce and I celebrate our 38th Wedding Anniversary.
- June 19 – 30** – A variety of activities that includes preparation for August Emerging Leaders training in Masaka and September’s study of Prophetical books in Zambia. Also, over June 24-26, we will visit Matt, Ashley and Reagan in Philadelphia. Can’t wait!!!

Thanks for your prayers and support! We are grateful!