

Kennedy Family

SINGAPORE MISSION UPDATE

February 28, 2021

FEBRUARY FLIES BY

February is the shortest month of the year and it has flown by here in Singapore. We have had Chinese (lunar) New Year celebrations, change of courses at Four Seas, teaching opportunities with the Jurong congregation, and more.

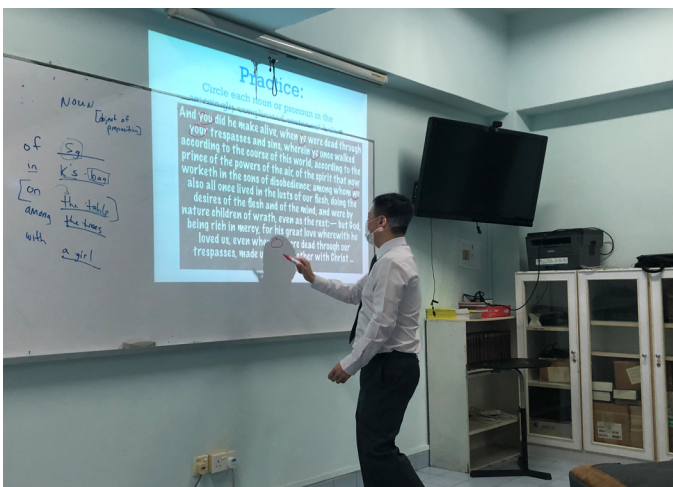
The Chinese New Year time here in Singapore is special with decorations, treats, festive foods, generous gifts, and good will towards others. While there are religious traditions and customs that go along with the history and celebration, the Christians here only celebrate it as a secular and cultural holiday season. To remind and instruct us all, Chee Meng Cheong, one of the local elders, gave a great sermon this month on the history, boundaries, and cautions which should be exercised by Christians during this time. In this regard, it is very much like Christmas in the United States. We were the beneficiaries of many treats from our brethren which we enjoyed greatly. The kids enjoy the season because they receive ang bao or “red packets” with money inside. Unfortunately, Covid restrictions kept us and the local people from fully celebrating the holiday. There were even special restrictions in Singapore about having visitors in your home who were not kin. So, all over the world we know that people are ready for travel to be easier, people to be healthier, and restrictions to be lighter.

As always, I was blessed to teach in the local Bible class program on Sundays and Wednesdays. We are still studying the book of Acts. Lisa and I are preparing for upcoming lessons both for the local congregations in Singapore and congregations in Malaysia. It is our hope to be able to teach in the coming months, but this teaching will almost certainly be via Zoom as border restrictions remain in place. I have also continued teaching “Tuesday Tips” lessons from Biblical Poetry on Jurong’s Facebook page as a local outreach. February’s theme was “Love and Marriage.”

The work at Four Seas needs your prayers as students who have been accepted wait to see if they will be able to get into the country. We need some restrictions to be loosened, and we need quarantines to be allowed in places other than hotels. We were hoping that the new students could join us in person in April, but that does not look like it will be possible. So, our studentship remains at 11 second year, 3 first year (all local guys), and 1 wrap-around student.

Lisa has been homeschooling the children. Annie (5 years old) has learned to read recently and parents can understand the joy and difficulty that learning to read brings! All of the kids were very happy to get local holidays (like Chinese New Year) off from school, but they still expect to get “USA holidays” off too. As I have said before, the children participate in a home school sports league. They are currently learning and playing floor ball. I had my first chance to go and watch them practice and compete this month on a Tuesday morning while the FSC students took final exams. They are all growing like weeds.

We appreciate each one of you very much. Thank you for supporting, encouraging, and praying for our family. Please keep us in prayer!



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ALARICO ALVES

Alarico Alves is a wrap-around student at Four Seas College who will finish his two years of study in April. However, we have made arrangements for him to remain through the year in order to prepare for the great work he has planned after graduation. Alarico, whom we all call "Rico," was a new Christian when he came to Four Seas College. Just prior to coming to school, he studied with a good brother who was traveling on business from Malaysia and met Rico and Rico's older brother in the capital city of Timor-Leste, Dili. They were baptized in December 2018.

That generous brother has encouraged and supported Rico in his time here at FSC. Rico is unique because he is the first FSC student from the small nation of Timor-Leste. In fact, Rico was the very first Christian that we know of in Timor-Leste and is one of only two (the other Christian is his brother, Alfonso). Timor-Leste (which is more commonly called East Timor) is a former Portuguese colony and Indonesian-controlled state. It is made up of many different tribes and languages. Rico is from an area called Oecusse which is the home area of the Baikeno tribal people. All of these influences have prepared Rico well for work in the field in Timor-Leste.

When Rico came to school, his Bible knowledge was very little, but he has drunk from the deep wells of God's word and grown greatly in his knowledge. Also, Rico's English was not very good when he first came. Rico focussed on his studies, took tutoring or tuition classes, and worked very hard on his studies. Because of this, Rico was awarded our "Most Improved Student" award at the graduation in November.

He speaks five languages: Tetum (language of East Timor), Baikeno (the mother-tongue of his people), Indonesian (language of occupation and a closest neighbor), Portuguese (language of colonization and education), and English (language of the business community and hospitality industry and the language of instruction at FSC). Beyond just being well-equipped through language, Rico has a servant's heart and attitude that responds well to correction and learning. He is eager to take on responsibility and has served as the warden of his classmates since January. He is an excellent singer (in 5 languages) and a great song leader as well.

When he graduates, Rico plans to establish the church in Timor-Leste. I know he would appreciate consideration from good brethren who would be willing to support him or to make arrangements to do mission work in Timor-Leste. Ideally, someone would be willing to relocate to Timor-Leste for a time in order to learn the language and culture and help to build up the church. According to Shawn Daggett, the director of the missions program at Harding University, there have been no congregations of the Lord's church in Timor-Leste nor has there been evangelistic campaigns that have been recorded. The ground there is very fresh, the country is still recovering from war and occupation, the Roman Catholic Church is very strong, and many of the villages are still very remote and primitive. Still, the gospel needs to go to the good people there, and we have a man who is zealous to do just that!



CURRENT COURSEWORK AT FOUR SEAS COLLEGE

WWW.FOURSEAS.EDU.SG

2ND HALF OF 1ST TERM (JANUARY 4, 2021-APRIL 16, 2021)

FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

ACTS
PREACHER & HIS WORK I
NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
ENGLISH GRAMMAR I

SECOND YEAR STUDENTS

TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY
HEBREW HISTORY II
GALATIANS, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS
NEW TESTAMENT GREEK I

Thank you to all our generous supporters (Matthew 5:16)