

BUILDING WITH PIONEERING ZEAL

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:11-12

Recently, our school hosted a small group of teachers and administrators from Timor Leste. Their school in the capital, Dili, has just crossed its 12th year. Over the last decade, it has grown from strength to strength, starting first as a primary school to one where it now has a pre-school and a senior section.

Seeing them at this stage of their history, I can't help but wonder if these very qualities were the ones that our own ACS pioneers possessed that steered our school from its establishment 129 years ago?

The group was a fascinating mix of people, each with a unique – and often moving - personal story. Two, including the Principal, were missionaries from Brazil, the interpreter and administrator was an Indonesian lady, while the rest were Timorese teachers. All had different educational and

growing up experiences prior to joining their school. But I was struck by their unity of purpose and their spirited dedication to ensure that their students are given better life opportunities through the education they receive in the school.

My colleagues and I learned much from our guests from Timor Leste – and we were humbled and inspired by their lives and experiences.

We recognised their thirst for knowledge and the urgency of their desire to improve themselves so as to better serve their students. They do much with what they have, trusting God completely to provide them with the resources for the school to meet the needs of their staff and students. They have an overcoming, can-do attitude that takes on life's challenges and keeps their motivation and hopes high for the future. Their clarity of purpose for their school – for their staff and students to learn, love and serve – gives meaning to their efforts. We witnessed firsthand their love for their students, their passion to serve, their gumption to succeed and the intensity of their pioneering zeal

to overcome obstacles in order to pave the way for current and future generations.

Seeing them at this stage of their history, I can't help but wonder if these very qualities were the ones that our own ACS pioneers possessed that steered our school from its establishment 129 years ago? Starting with Bishop Oldham – and then the principals, teachers and missionaries who served in ACS in the early days – these pioneers trusted God for His leading and provision – and worked tirelessly to serve their students and provide for a better future for them and their families. In doing so, they built ACS – the school and more critically its spirit and ethos. 129 years on, to ensure that the best is yet to be, we must continue to uphold these qualities.

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