

First Missions – East Timor

First Missions – Pioneering Workers – East Timor

Southeast Asia: East Timor

January 13, 2023

EAST TIMOR

Paupau New Guinea and **East Timor** are included on the Australian Workers list.

When did the workers first arrive in East Timor? August 2006.

Who were the first brother workers? Trevor Loeschel and Daniel Bell (both originally from South Australia)

Who were the first sister workers?

Who was the first to profess? Domingos Lequi Siga Maria

Who was the first native to go in the work?

When & Where was the first meeting?

When & Where was the first baptism?

When & Where was the first convention?

Where have subsequent conventions been held?

Where is the convention currently held?

Who have the Overseers been?

NOTE: **Paupau New Guinea** and **East Timor** are included on the Australian Workers list.

NOTE: Trevor Loeschel is a South Australian worker laboring in Peru, currently on home visit. His Portuguese came in handy. Daniel Bell is a South Australian worker – in the work about 10 years.

August 25, 2006

There are two hymns echoing in my heart as the longed-for moment nears for our departure. It is more than 4 months since we knew of the possibility of the wonderful privilege of sharing the 'Riches of God's Kingdom' with some of the poorest people on the face of the earth, for the first time. These hymns are 230 (Lord, in our need) and 403 (Impelled by love).

East Timor, also being the newest country in the world, gained its independence as recent as May 20, 2002. It is situated just 400 kms off the northwest coast of Australia, having a population of around 850,000.

A feeling of urgency fills our hearts; like going to rescue someone who is about to perish in the desert of a dry and thirsty land.

The need for someone to visit East Timor has been inspired by the return of Domingos Lequi Siga Maria, to his country, after studying overseas for three years. He made contact with Truth in December 2003 while on a flight from Vancouver to Toronto, Canada. While studying at a University in Hawaii, he attended meetings, embraced God's way and Truth as it is seen in Jesus in November 2004 and was baptized in Hawaii, November 2005.

August 30, 2006 ~ A 1.5 hour flight from Darwin, Australia brought us into Dili, capital city of East Timor, at 8:30 yesterday. Our friend Domingos awaited us in the airport, in spite of the danger of being attacked by rebel anti-government groups who roam the streets throwing stones, creating a threat to passers-by. A Canadian friend, who rents a house in Dili, where he works, had kindly arranged lodgings for us. We have plans to be here until September 22, DV, when we return to Australia to begin preps for the coming conventions.

September 24, 2006 ~ Now I'll try and share a little of our days in East Timor. We spent as much time with Domingos as possible. A very mature 28-year-old man with a clear revelation of Truth. We did get to visit his little home on the outskirts of Dili the day we arrived, but he didn't feel it was wise for us to return there at any time after. This meant he would come to our lodgings daily, helping us to get acquainted with places and people around the city. Tetun is the most widely spoken local language. Portuguese is also used.

East Timor having been a Portuguese colony for over 400 years. That ended in 1975, when Portugal withdrew all interests in East Timor. At which time, a 24-year Indonesian occupation began. An estimate 200,000 East Timorese have died through fighting and famine since then.

It was so special to get to meet most of Domingos' extended family. Most of them live in and around the little city of Maliana, 150 kms (4 hrs by bus) west of Dili, almost on the West Timor border. One sister and her husband and their 5 children, plus 5 extended family make up that household. Some of them speak Portuguese, making it possible to communicate directly with them.

We were able to share spiritual things with them, and there was a receptiveness that inspires a feeling of hope for them in the future. From here it was an hour by truck and a one hour walk to Raihew, a small village, snuggled in the mountains, where Domingos' parents and many other family members live. We met about 30 of them, and again were able to share the "Good News" with them. Their lifestyle is VERY simple. Thatched houses have high roofs which come down to about half a metre from the ground.

There are no walls. The half metre gap serves for ventilation and the only light that comes into the house. Brown rice and corn being their staple diet. Kemak is the local language of this area but having Domingos with us provided a top class interpreter. All these people were surprised when Domingos arrived with two "malae" (foreigners), and his family were most concerned about what they could prepare for us. Domingos assured them we were "his brothers" and that they should look on us as part of the family.

They accepted his advise. It was evident they detected a very close bond between Domingos and us, and that there was no hesitation on his part when he was interpreting for us as we spoke about spiritual things. We also felt a receptiveness amongst a few in Raihew.

Once back in Dili we set about to try and find a **Tetun New Testament**. We knew one had been printed in 2000. The search for it proved to be a very useful way of making positive contacts. One of our first enquiries was at a private library. The attendant, (Anita), asked if we were priests. When told, "No, but we do teach from the Bible," she immediately asked if we would read the Bible with her as she wanted to learn from the Bible. She immediately gave us her name and email address. We later met her brother and a cousin, who also expressed their desire to read the Bible. Now separated from them, those little Bible studies continue by email. These people are from Los Palos, the opposite end of the country to where Domingos' family live.

Yes, we did acquire a Tetun New Testament but from another contact. Sebastiana (known just as Ana) found it for us. Ana is a cousin of Domingos. She has lived in Darwin and speaks good English. Her first reaction when we mentioned the Bible was, "Don't talk to me about the Bible. That's for my cousin Domingos!!" But, when we told her we were looking for a New Testament, she said, "I have a brother who is a priest, and I'll ask him for one." Two days later, she brought us the New Testament; her attitude now quite different!! She plans to visit family in Darwin later in the year and even asked if she could make contact to attend meetings there.

Our departure from Dili on Friday a.m. Sept. 22, was "painful," having to leave Domingos there alone. We are thankful for the promise of our Lord and Saviour, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and to know that wherever the will of God may lead us, the grace of God will keep us.