



Bondia Timor Leste

Edition 4, February 2011

"Please convey our greetings and love to the people in Australia." Pastor Arlindo Marçal.

Relationships Grow.

The quote above from Pastor Arlindo is an expression of the growing relationship that we enjoy with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste.

This church came into existence less than three years ago, and we had our first visit with them nearly two years ago.

Pastor Arlindo's trip to Australia in August / September played a big part in this developing relationship. His comment at the end of the trip was, "On previous visits to Australia I have visited

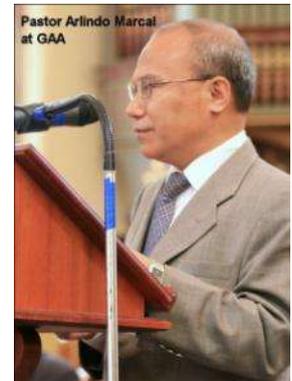
church offices and missions administrators, but this time it was great to meet with local churches and the people in them." He was amazed at the receptiveness to his message and the love that was demonstrated towards him.

THANK YOU to all those who made Pastor Arlindo so welcome, and showed the love of Jesus to him.

Other ways that the relationship is growing, are that we are getting a few more assistance projects off the ground, and also

the growing receptiveness in the teaching times for the church leaders.

Read on, and you will learn more of these events!



Pastor Arlindo visits Australia.

In August / September 2010 Pastor Arlindo Marçal, Moderator of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste, visited the NT, WA, SA and NSW. He met mainly with PCA churches, but also with the Westminster Presbyterians in WA.

Pastor Arlindo spoke of his upbringing in occupied Timor Leste.

His father was a prominent community leader in Same so, very early on in the occupation, when Arlindo was a lad of 15, his father was arrested and taken

away never to be seen again. Others in his family died of starvation, and quite a few of his relatives (including Arlindo himself) had to flee the country.



This is place where Arlindo's father was taken when captured.

He spoke of the destruction which was unleashed upon the country after they voted for independence from Indonesia. About 75% of the country's infrastructure was destroyed as the Indonesian armies departed, including 100% of the electric power systems and almost all the schools. 75% of the population were displaced.

Timor Leste is classified by the UN as a "low human development country". 70% of the population survive on \$2 or less per day – many on less than \$1. Half of the

men in Dili aged between 20 and 24 are unemployed.

The Presbyterian Church in Timor Leste has 19 congregations and a membership of approximately 5000. There are 10 Pastors and 14 Evangelists (our equivalent of Home Missionaries).

The people in the churches carry out subsistence farming so the offerings in most rural churches total about \$5 per week, and in the Dili congregation about \$60 per week. Pastors receive a stipend of \$20-\$50 per month.

In 2008, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church held its first Synod which was attended by 35 people.

They face many challenges as a new denomination including the fact that the Bible is not completely translated into the local languages and the challenge of having pastors who are doing their best, but some have little training for their job.

Pastor Arlindo expressed the gratitude of his people for the help that they have received from

"Bondia Timor Leste" – the name means, "Good Morning East Timor". It is produced by a sub-committee of Mission Partners. The publishers of this newsletter pray that it might be used to awaken interest in the Presbyterian Church which is nearest to Australian shores.

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Australia, especially after the 1999 referendum and again when there was civil disruption in 2006. He thanked the church for its support encouragement and prayer, and for the partnership that we enjoy as fellow Presbyterian Churches.

The churches in Timor Leste pray for the Presbyterian Church in Australia and Pastor Arlindo thanked the Church here for our prayers for them and asked us to continue to pray for them in their struggles.

Teaching visit 2010

With the disruption of society for a whole generation there has been little opportunity for consistent Bible teaching so these teaching weeks are a high priority for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste. (IEPTL)

A few Pastors have been well trained, but others have simply had a heart for proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus and have taken up the work with no training at all.

Some Australians have asked about training Timorese in our Australian Colleges. Of course we would love to do that, but it would be nearly impossible to bring a non-English speaking person to Australia to learn the English language at the same time as they try to learn Greek and Hebrew!

A few people in Timor Leste speak Portuguese, so there is an option for them to go to Brazil and study with the Presbyterian

Church of Brazil. They have excellent training facilities, and are theologically like-minded to us here in Australia. There is one man, Krisensio de Oliveira, who returned to Timor in December after having spent five years training in Brazil. We pray that he will be of great assistance to the church. Others will continue to train in Indonesia.

The first teaching visit majored on some aspects of the Westminster Confession of Faith and at the end of the workshops they adopted it as their subordinate doctrinal standard.

This time the teaching was using the Westminster Catechisms.

The Westminster Catechisms are ideally suited to a society which has a history of oral learning. Before we arrived in Timor Leste the Shorter Catechism had been translated into Tetun. This was done with the financial support of one of our Australian churches.

Rev Chris Balzer was the main teacher, and he was assisted by Rev Wilson Fernandes, Pastor of the Brazilian Presbyterian Church which meets in Manly, Sydney, and Rev Rob Duncanson, Pastor of the Darwin Presbyterian Church.

The teaching was very well received by the 50-60 people in attendance and after the first day the questions from the group flowed continuously.

At the end of the conference the three Aussies were asked to come up the front while we sang together :-

“Hale’u hau ho o nia liras;
Hamahon hau; Ho o nia kbiit”
Encircle me with your wings;
protect me; with your power ...

As we sang, those at the front joined hands with us, and then, spontaneously the chain of hands spread around the whole room.

Then they prayed with great passion for the three of us and the

whole Presbyterian Church of Australia. It was a very moving moment.

Pastor Arlindo then asked us to convey their greetings and love for the people of Australia as we returned home.

Sabers Singing!

On the weekend before the teaching seminars we went to the small village of Betano and met with them for worship. There were about 60 people present. It is a very poor area and maybe 70% of the congregation would be illiterate.

They only had three song-books and no instrument to accompany them in singing.

Could we help them with their music?

We were able to give them a wind-up Saber MP3 Player with about 10 songs in Tetun on it. We pray that it will be an encouragement to them.



Pastor Wilson Fernandes explaining the use of the Saber player to Evangelist Dominos from Viqueque.

Another new congregation in the Eastern part of Timor Leste only knew songs in Bahasa Indonesia! Imagine not being able to sing songs in your own language! Of course as others in the community could hear the singing on a Sunday, they would gain the impression that the church is for Indonesians and not for Timorese!

Again we were able to give them a Saber player with Tetun songs.

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If you would like to **GIVE** towards gospel ministry in Timor Leste, please send donations to Mission Partners, and clearly designate them for this work. Address: 8 Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point NSW 2213.

These recorders also had the Gospel of Mark in Tetun. It is the only part of the Bible with a voice recording so far, but you can imagine what a great benefit it can be when around half the population cannot read or write and there are some congregations which are inaccessible to their Pastor when the weather is bad.

Tetun Bible Translation

Have you ever bought a gift for someone, but wondered if they really wanted it? Imagine how great you would feel if, before you gave it to them, without prompting from you and without any idea of what you had bought, they told you that what they REALLY need is that item?

We felt a bit that way during the teaching workshops, when Evangelist Manuel responded to a suggestion that he could give a neighbour the Gospel of Mark to read (Mark has already been translated into Tetun). With great animation and passion he declared, "but I want to give him the WHOLE Tetun Bible, but I can't because it is not available."



Pastor Manuel : "I want to give the WHOLE Tetun Bible..."

At that point we were able to share with the Timorese Church leaders that the General Assembly of Australia had resolved to do what it can to expedite the translation, printing and delivery of the Tetun Bible.

This project may take five years to complete, and will be quite

expensive, but what a gift to give succeeding generations of Timorese people!

Ministry so far?

Major highlights include:

- ✓ 1 Exploratory /introductory visit to TL.
- ✓ 2 teaching trips.
- ✓ Many students helped with scholarship money.
- ✓ Many congregations visited.
- ✓ 1 Motorbike provided for church leader and two more on their way.
- ✓ 1 Church repaired.
- ✓ Money for re-building a manse for a pastor's young family.
- ✓ 3 Horses provided.
- ✓ Trip to Kupang for local leaders sponsored.
- ✓ Travel for all church leaders to two church leader's meetings sponsored.
- ✓ 2 Children's books produced.
- ✓ TL Moderator's trip to



Loo with view. Provided for the Samaria Church with funding from Aust.

- Australia.
- ✓ Bibles and Scripture portions supplied.
- ✓ Money raised for translation work.
- ✓ Books provided for Pastors.
- ✓ Planning under way for our first building maintenance trip.
- ✓ Support for expenses for Pastors sent.
- ✓ Money for re-roofing 2 churches.
- ✓ Chairs for churches bought.

- ✓ 12 guitars and 2 Keyboards.
- ✓ Translation for Shorter Catechism.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

1. **Pray**
2. **Pray**
3. **Pray** (see below for points).
4. **Give**

All monies should be sent to Mission Partners in Sydney and clearly marked for Timor Leste. Address below.

Mission Partners will provide a receipt for every payment and the EPC will account to Mission Partners for all gifts they receive.

PLEASE PRAY

1. That the EPC-TL will have a firm foundation upon which to build a solid Biblical Church.
2. That together we may be able to develop a plan to expedite the translation, publication and distribution of the Bible in Tetun.
3. For the church leaders who serve self-sacrificially for the sake of the gospel work in TL, that the Lord would provide for all their needs. (most receive very little, if any, salary).
4. For many folk who are living in poverty.
5. For many Timorese who are showing an interest in the gospel, that they would be encouraged to repent, follow Jesus and that they would then be well disciplined.
6. That the Dili congregation would find a new place to meet which will be accessible for all who may wish to come along.
7. For people who continue to struggle to come to terms with past traumatic experiences.
8. That the EPC-TL will be able to minister effectively to many isolated groups of Christians in TL and beyond.

STOP PRESS!

Pastor Arlindo writes:

First of all I would like to thank the Presbyterian Church for this support which is very important for our church in Timor. It is important because it helps our people to understand how God loves us thru our brothers Presbyterian in Australia. It also helps them to feel more confident on the future of our church/EPC.

Particularly I would like to thank those congregations who have collected money to support us. We pray for them and we believe that God will help and bless them as well in a different way.

We will spend that amount of money properly and accordingly. We will send you a report while we spend the money. If you have a specific request regarding reporting that money please let me know. We honestly want improve our report to those who support us.

*Maka ne deit maun Rob.
Maromak tulun imi hotu nebe ajuda ami, (that is all, brother Rob, and God will help those who help us).*

Arlindo Marcal