

Woodington's East Timor Photo Update, June 2011

This is the Church in *Suai* (pronounced "Su I"), Timor Leste where in Sept 1990 200 people were locked in and the church set alight. No one survived – independence was two days old with the outgoing Indonesian forces running amuck.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suai_Church_Massacre

My two month tour in Timor Leste was exciting and sad at the same time. It was exciting to meet the challenges of the new country which depend heavily on MAF for medical evacuations and for access to Remote Mountain strips, and sad at the same time for the people who are very poor, many subsistence farmers, and under constant attack from the deceiver.



Same (pronounced "Sa Mai") is a small remote village with airstrip in the south of Timor Leste. Access from Dili is a four to five hour road trip or a short 20 minute flight. Save the Children and Water Aid are two of the NGOs we fly there often. In June I flew Water Aid to *Same* and I expected to stay a few hours on the ground. I set off walking from the town wandering along a mountain road taking in the spectacular scenery and local street traders. Time had passed me by when the Ministry of Health rang my mobile

requesting an urgent MEDEVAC (Medical Evacuation) from *Suai* to *Dili*. *Suai* is a fifteen minute flight away. "No problem", I said forgetting I had been walking for over an hour downhill away from the plane. Being a big Mr. Bean fan, I remembered an incident when he 'thumbed' a lift in France. Doing likewise I was not hopeful to get a lift in the mountains of Timor Leste until an aged old man came along on a very small motor cycle. Not being able to communicate other than by hand signals I jumped on the back of this tiny machine and we roared up the hill at a pace similar to a walk. He took me direct to the police station where I explained my plight to a UN policeman who instructed the old man to take me to the Water Aid office



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where they had a car. On arrival at the office another policeman, this time Timorese, pulled us over and gave me a telling about not wearing a helmet. This is a country where the whole family travels on a motor cycle at the same time, but apparently only the adults need to wear a helmet. This was becoming interesting, "MAF Pilot Arrested in Timor Leste" the headlines might read tomorrow. After lots of apologies he released us but I had missed the Water Aid driver. The week before I had flown



in the director of *Save the Children* to *Same* and through this relationship their driver took me to the plane at great speed. Twenty six Timorese from *Same* nearly lost their lives that day due to that local driver's fanatical driving! In a more relaxed attitude I was able to fly to *Suai* and transport two mothers with tiny babies and another woman with something stuck in her eye to Dili, all as a result of a local accident. Later I returned to *Same* to pick up those I left there from Water Aid and ended the day well in Dili.

GOVE: I travelled back to Arnhem Land for a pilots meeting at which we rehearsed overwater aircraft evacuation and received training about avoidance of tropical and local diseases. I appreciated the training on TB as one of our local employees in Timor Leste, Lito (pictured here), was hospitalized whilst I was there after contracting TB. Together we worked out a plan so he could return to work wearing a mask reducing my chances of infection. Here is Lito when I treated him to his first ever Hamburger. To overcome TB a diet of protein is necessary, something he would not normally get, so I started to feed him. This was a parting gift from me to him.



On return from East Timor we had a three day MAF Staff conference with Mike Raiter as speaker from Melbourne School of Theology. I was invited to lead the conference for the fourth year running.



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Monthly



We are actively seeking more support for our work here in the Asia Pacific so that we can continue to serve for another four years. If you would like to support us in our ministry with MAF, to make a donation or simply to pray for us, please contact us.



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