



Yesterday, 21st October, Rob Floyd Associate Director Relief and Development met with leaders from the Methodist Church in Samoa to discuss relief efforts. The leaders took Rob to a village, Satitua, in South-East Upolu that suffered the loss of 15 lives as a result of the earthquake and tsunami.

Rob has told the stories of two local victims of the disaster he met on his trip, a local shopkeeper Leone and a Methodist minister Rev Mika Timoteo.

On the day of the earthquake and tsunami Leone went down across the main road to open her shop on the beach front in Satitua. She was there when the earthquake struck. Whilst strong, Samoans experience earthquakes quite often and so Leone thought nothing of it and kept working. Only minutes later her son called from Apia to tell her of the tsunami alert. Leone looked out the window and noticed the sea had gone out much further than the usual low tide and in the distance she could see an unbroken wave, much larger than usual on the fringing reef. She quickly took her young child and sped to higher ground in her car. A truck, also seeking higher ground followed close behind her. As Leone reached the headland and began to climb the hill she watched as the truck was swept away.

Leone returned to find her shop damaged but as it was at the far end of the village, slightly protected from the tsunami the damage was minimal.

Rev Mika Timoteo, the Methodist minister in Satitua sent his children to school in the morning and went to the church head office in Apia for a meeting. On his trip there he heard reports of the tsunami on the radio. As he returned to his village he found his house had been washed away and his church and community hall in ruins.

Rev Mika and his family are now living with Leone and he is continuing to minister and counsel many shattered people.

In Satitua, UnitingWorld will assist in the following ways:

1. Crisis counselling for children and families too scared to return to their homes.
Counselling for children afraid when the church bell rings on Sunday, for this had been the warning sound that rang out across communities such as Satitua.
2. Provision of cooking utensils and basic household items
3. Establishing a temporary community hall facility – this will be the centre for pre-school activities, community meetings, women's groups
4. Sewing machines for the community hall for the community to use to get themselves re-established
5. Furniture and equipment for the pre-school
6. Assistance with school uniforms

Please be in prayer for Rob Floyd as he works on the shape of relief work with other communities in partnership with the Samoan Methodists and as he meets with Congregational Church leaders in the coming days.

To make a donation to the UnitingWorld Samoa Tsunami Appeal visit www.unitingworld.org.au/donate or phone 1800 998 122.