

December 31, 2004

Dear Partners in Christ,

You are probably as shocked as I am at the magnitude of destruction wrought by the earthquake-spawned tsunamis the day after Christmas. Every time I go online or open a newspaper, the death and damage toll goes higher and higher.

Little did I imagine that at the close of this year, I would have to write to you about a tragedy of such horrendous proportions. Some of you have been wonderfully proactive—calling or emailing—asking what we have heard from our partner ministries and what we here at Partners International are planning to do. And as I write this letter, we are already receiving gifts to help the suffering survivors—thank you for your trust!

If you do not have time to read the rest of this letter, then know this: our indigenous ministry partners are already there and already ministering in word and deed to those who have been affected by this disaster. Our ministry partners don't need permission to enter disaster areas because they already live there. What they need are the funds to provide medicine, clothing, and shelter to the survivors.

Yesterday I heard from Rev. Moses Swamidas, one of our partners in India whose ministry is very close to the disaster area in South India:

There are no human words to explain the deplorable condition of the people—they have lost everything. This morning I went to one of the hospitals. If we have some resources immediately we can provide clothing, food, medicine, utensils, and even build a few houses.

We thank God that our partners in the area have survived well. But they now face the huge task of helping their neighbors in need. Immediate aid is essential. But rebuilding traumatized lives and communities will take months, even years. So I was encouraged to hear Vasantharaj Albert, a partner ministry leader (who had only left the seaside 10 hours before!), report that they are looking long-term:

In addition, we have decided to help fishermen repair their broken boats and even funding them to make new ones so that they can regain their livelihood.

One of our most strategic ministries is among the four million unreached Acehnese who live on the northern part of the Indonesian island of Sumatra—only miles

from the earthquake's epicenter. This area has been doubly devastated: first by the earthquake and then by the tsunami. Our Area Director in Indonesia wrote:

Today [Dec 29] our church planters leave for Aceh with a team of 8 Christian doctors. They are planning to bring a truck of supplies—5,000 blankets, 300 boxes of instant noodles, 5 tons of rice, medicine, 700 boxes of bottled water, used clothes, fish, and vegetables. Besides helping meet the humanitarian needs, our church planters are trained in the local language and evangelism. The province is under military rule due to a civil war and travel is restricted. No foreigners are allowed in the province. All this has changed! Church planters will go in starting today. They will give clothes to the naked, water to the thirsty, and the words of life to those who have never heard. Speed is of the essence. I am trusting God will provide the funds.

Tragedies often give God's people opportunities for compassionate ministry to those who, like the Acehnese, are very resistant to the Gospel. Because of our existing relationships with local ministries—in India, Indonesia, and throughout the region—Partners International is set up to immediately provide funds once we have them. Bank accounts are active and accountability systems are in place.

I imagine that there is little I can add to what you have already seen and heard on the news to convince you of the urgency and importance of responding to human suffering on this scale. I am aware that we have just gone through a time of year when asking for gifts is at a high. But I believe it is our God-given responsibility to inform you of the need and to tell you that Partners International is already there ministering through its partners. Your gift will multiply many-fold what our partners—indeed, your partners in the Gospel—can do to demonstrate God's love to those who are suffering.

Some of you are recent donors to Partners International through our *Harvest of Hope* Gift Catalog. I imagine you were motivated by the practical gifts that you could “wrap” and send to those in need. I cannot imagine a more important time than now for you to send another gift—as God enables—that will bring tangible help and hope to people in desperate need for both material help and Christian comfort. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Under His Wings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jon Lewis, President/CEO

P.S. News reports are calling this potentially the deadliest tsunami in 200 years. To be part of helping the survivors experience God's love, please return the reply slip with your gift in the envelope provided. Or go to www.partnersintl.org, click on “Ways to Give” and enter your gift in the “Global Relief and Development” box. Thank you!