



PARTNERS
International

Tsunami Briefing

January 11, 2005

Partners International is committed to timely and accurate reporting on what we are doing together with our indigenous partner ministries to relieve the suffering, and contribute to the recovery of lives and communities, of those affected by the earthquake-spawned tsunamis. Partners International is a church-planting ministry that already has local partners on the scene who are able to help in relief and development in a culturally and economically appropriate way, and for the long term. We will provide these briefings as relevant information becomes available.

In this third *Tsunami Briefing*, we are grateful to God that the Partners International's assessment team has safely returned to Medan from their trip to Banda Aceh.

Please remember to pray for the two medical teams, led by our East Asia Area Director Dr. Ben, that are on their way today to the Nias Islands, and the Simeulue and Pulau Banyak Islands (see yesterday's *Briefing*).

INDONESIA

From Partners International's Area Director in Indonesia:

We made it back via car from Banda Aceh to Medan. The trip took us through unsanitary restaurants, separatist guerillas, reckless driving, and tsunami territory. But the results were gratifying. Places we surveyed are in need. The Cahaya Suku ministry plans to take another shipment to one of the areas on Friday. We found that in areas in the north where the tsunami touched a significant percentage of the population, people were very open, and there were many opportunities to share God's love.

Over the next two days we will prepare the Cahaya Suku team to go up and take advantage of these opportunities. There are many issues to work out and a lot to do. But we did find several villages to help. We were really excited to see how the Lord had led and opened the doors. Pray that Cahaya Suku will move boldly and quickly. We are looking at perhaps placing 2-3 teams in the affected area. There are many community development projects to do, but we will start with trying to get their water running again. All their pumps were washed away in the tsunami.



To read an excerpt from our Area Director's journal, please see page 2.

Dairi Christian Fellowship (sent by Wati, our partner ministry leader):

We are all shocked and grieved so much for what happened in Aceh. In December I traveled all over Aceh and spent four days in Meulaboh, the most devastated city of the tsunami. We held a Christmas service for many people including Acehese people. Also on the day of the earthquake I was in Aceh Singkil up on a hill.

Many miracles happened on that day. In Pulau Banyak and Simeulu, about 1,500 Christians live among the Muslims, but none of them lost their lives, though they did lose many properties.

Praise God for fulfilling the promise in Psalm 91. I believe your prayers move God to save His people as we see many believers saved from the disaster. Our focus now is to heal their souls from this traumatic time and assure them that God's provision for His children never changes. Though they lost everything, they have the most important thing—their souls are kept by God, and He is able to give back the lost just as He did to Job.

Please pray for Abdi who is still searching for his wife and two children and also his parents with his three brothers in Banda Aceh. He serves his own people, and one day before the tsunami we discussed the strategy to win his people in 2005.



Scene in Banda Aceh after the tsunami.



Destruction spans as far as the eye can see in Aceh.

From the journal of our Area Director in Indonesia:

Get in your car and drive 2.5 miles from the edge of town towards the city center. Now imagine that no one is left alive and no buildings are left standing. That is what happened when three 35 feet tall tidal waves hit in rapid succession traveling at speeds of 500 mph. Everything in the waves' path was swept away as they flowed 2.5 miles through the most crowded part of the city. Once the final count is made, probably 100,000 people (one-third of the city's population) will have perished.

The city park was filled with thousands of kids on that Sunday morning as they participated in a drawing competition. Others were there exercising. Probably all of them perished. When the earthquake shook the city, people ran to the mosque for protection where they were subsequently killed by the wave. A man was speaking to his mother on the phone when suddenly her line went dead—people going about their normal daily activities. But that day tragically turned out to be anything but normal.

It was a difficult sight to drive through the path taken by the wave. All along the road we could see people searching where their relatives' houses once stood, hoping to find some remains. Two weeks after the destruction, debris removal crews continue to find many bodies buried beneath the rubble. These corpses are left on the side of the road until a burial crew can take them to the mass grave.

Rasidah's identity papers served as a reminder to me that these corpses were once someone's mother, daughter, friend, and coworker. I found her papers when visiting the swath of land literally wiped clean by the tsunami. Rasidah would have been 33 years old on January 13.

Two weeks later people are trying to put their lives back together. We rented a car from a wonderful man named Marlin. After touring the devastation, he took us to the refugee camp where he and his relatives are staying. The camp currently houses about 2,000 people but will grow to 8,000 as the camps around town are consolidated.

Marlin lost his wife and two-month-old daughter. He was saved by jumping out of a vehicle, running up a hill and holding on to a tree as the water rose up to his neck. His mother lost her husband. His sister, who has a five-year-old child, lost her husband.

Each of the 21 people staying in this small tent had seen their family, homes, and livelihoods stolen from them that day by the ocean. Linda, Marlin's sister, shared, "For two weeks I could only cry and cry and cry. Now finally I can cry and laugh and cry." She has not yet told her five-year-old daughter that her father is not coming back. He was out fishing that morning. Nights are cold at the camp, and they do not have blankets. The children only received milk during the first week. They asked for vegetables which we subsequently bought for them. Marlin says once his mother is relocated, he will leave this place and the bitter memories that it holds for him.



Marlin and his remaining family members at the refugee camp.