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Dear Prayer Partners, Friends and Supporters of the tsunami survivors,

The 90<sup>th</sup> day or 3 month anniversary of the tsunami killer waves hitting the beaches of Tamil Nadu comes the day before we celebrate the Risen Jesus and His Resurrection from the dead. Our celebrations will be mixed with the sorrow of memory for the tsunami survivors. Praise Jesus, there will be newly saved souls to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus here in South India on the beaches, joining their brothers and sisters in the villages, towns and urban slums where the Mission works.

We are continuing to feel the mighty power of God's hand at work, although we can only see from day to day the pieces of His plan for Christ's church here in south India.

Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> was a tremendous revelation of His power and grace as over 2,000 men, women and older children accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior and were baptized through immersion baptism for the remission of their sins.

Through the history of the Mission, there have been many times when it was God's will that mass baptisms occurred but this is the first one since Arthur and Ruth Morris went on to their reward. It is an awesome sight to see so many people patiently waiting in line, starting at earliest dawn and then for hours, as there were 8 preachers

doing the baptizing. These were all from the teams, so there would not be any sense of outsiders coming to exploit the tsunami situation for publicity or to make "aid Christians" (what some people have called "rice Christians.") Each had to make their own confession and chose their own new Christian name, so it all took as long as it took. We also have to be careful about only feeding Christians because that also will put pressure on non-Christians to claim Jesus as their Savior when their motives are simply to survive and eat

The team members have been doing a very good job is trying to know each survivor who expresses interest and who is sincere and who not. Lots of judgment calls, of course. Our policy is: "when in doubt, don't do it. Wait, and then see if the person or family is sincere."

We are not here to deny salvation to anyone, nor do we want to encourage people to take on the form of a Christian for any other reason than a heartfelt conviction. It is not easy sometimes to tell the difference and we are praying for God's help as always in making tough decisions.

As of now, it looks like we should go ahead with the boat purchase plan decided on last week by the assembled teams near Nagercoil. This calls for the purchase of 100 kuttamarins (at around \$200 each) and 3 sets of nets suitable to the small fish that fishermen can catch from kuttamarins (the total comes to \$250 for a set of nets made in India, or a total of around \$450.) Down south, the demand is more for the larger boats, while closer to Madras and north of Madras, the smaller boats still can provide an income for a family. Part of this is because being closer to a major city like Madras, there is a market for the smaller fish while further away the fish need to be on ice.

We were wondering if there might be any net manufacturers in the US who might be interested in making donations of nets. I have no idea of what the manufacture of nets is like in the US. These would be anchovy or sardine nets, best we can figure. Anyone know more about this?

The big boats only need one kind of net but it is more expensive, about \$1,000, since it is a big open sea net. We figure each of these boats with net at \$12,000 each.

We are also going to need about \$8,000 to continue the purchase of ration rice and some vegetables. This is what we spent the past 30 days and we don't want to get deeper into supplying daily food relief if we can help it. We want the survivors to be able to go back to work as independent people in independent churches.

The agreement with the leadership of the teams and survivor groups that we have been discussing this with is that at least 10% of the catch goes to those survivors who don't have boats yet. So with rice, vegetables, coconuts and some fish curry, plus what they

can grow or steal (sorry to say this, but things are getting desperate on the beaches and there is a surplus of food in the nearby farming villages), we will try to keep the remainder of the 18,000 survivors alive through another month.

We have stopped all building, which is ok as we are on target to stop building March 15. All 50-survivor communities have gotten at least the multi-purpose community building and thatch school building. 28 have gotten the clinic thatch building also, although the visits there by any medical people are sporadic and only the team members who have had first aid training are able to do basic fever treatment and wound binding. Since so few are fishing, and the weather has been good if hot, we have not had the anticipated demand for medical attention. The schools, however, have been wildly popular.

The continuing impasse between the Central Government and the State Government has everybody upset and confused, because no one can move. A friend of mine in State Government called me today as I went to the Mission office. The Supreme Court of India has commissioned an inquiry into the standstill, although the commission members include a controversial social activist and so nothing may come of it either. No one knows what will happen next. The only sure thing is that whichever political party loses control of the aid will probably be the only that loses the election next spring (or earlier, if the present Chief Minister thinks it in her advantage.) So you can figure that if the Supreme Court of India can't figure it out, what can poor citizens do? The World Bank is holding hearings also. Knowing its bureaucracy, my guess is that the fishing people waiting for aid will be long dead by the time the results of that study are available. Same for the UN investigating the scene.

To give you an idea of how confused it is, the estimates of the damage in India range from \$100 million to \$900 million. As Dr. Alex Mih saw during his visit as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> Doctors Tour, a best guess including houses, boats, nets and personal possessions will be between \$50 million and \$100 million. Of course, this is in \$1 a day country so the amount doesn't accurately reflect the hardship. Hard to believe that the tsunami attack of December 26 is now considered to be the LARGEST disaster in recorded history.

While all the Government bodies and international agencies are trying to move paper around, the situation on the beaches remains bad. Again, those who got boats and nets are back to work and (except for their personal human loss and damage or loss of property) have survived. There is still a problem about being forced off the beaches but there has been a temporary court order banning any more forced relocation like the ones that upset the survivors so badly three weeks ago. We wait to see what will happen here. The relocations were tied to the construction of permanent housing off the beaches, BUT there's no money for that either, so there is right now NO permanent housing being built. Again, as Dr. Alex Mih and the team members saw, pretty much all that is being built is thatch housing, which is low cost, comfortable, and easy to locate near the beaches, if not on the beach itself. The types of shelter brought in by the international aid agencies is beginning to wilt or disappear or be incorporated into thatch buildings. For all the more remote survivor communities, it's thatch all the way.

Please keep these newly won souls in your prayers, as we work to bring the knowledge of Jesus, God's Word and Christ's church to them. And please keep all the survivors in your prayers. We are continually being approached by other survivor groups beyond our 50 groups, but have to put them on a waiting list since we have no more resources with which we can reach out to them. We can only give the example of the groups we are shepherding, pray for them, meet with them and pray yet more that God will have mercy on them in this new phase of crisis. We praise God for all He has done and what the faithful have done in these past 81 days since the tsunami waves hit. Who would have thought such a disaster would come on our calm beaches? Who would have thought so many would have died and so much would be destroyed? Who could foresee so many coming to Jesus and the birth of this Fishing Ministry? Only our God knows all, and we praise Him for His grace and mercy in sending us His Son, Jesus, to save us and to bring us before God Himself at the appointed time.

All very amazing and awesome!

We look forward to the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, the lynch pin of our faith that our Lord and Savior lived for us, sacrificed His life for us, and then was brought back to life through the Resurrection. It is hard for non-Christians to understand how it is possible for Christians to mourn the death of Jesus and then three days later celebrate his re-entry into the living, now alive and

being at the right hand of God. We delight in explaining to them how it is that the light of the world came to earth to save us from sins, and how the sacrifice on the Cross has given us the opportunity of salvation and the hope of eternal life.

Last night we graduated the 45<sup>th</sup> Graduating Class of Southern Asia Christian College. These young men have already shown their leadership ability in their weekend ministries. This year, in the middle of the Christmas Program, they were able to use their leadership skills from the very first day of the tsunami wave attacks and in the weeks to follow. They graduate with more experience than perhaps any class. Their leadership abilities have grown by leaps and bounds through the practice on the beaches.

This was a special graduation because we believe that it will be the last one in the old campus. The new College building is underway again after more than two months of delay while we grappled with the leadership and financial needs of the tsunami survivors. At the same time, we are nearing completion of the renovation of the house built in 1951-1952 by Arthur and Ruth Morris in Madrapakkam. And have built 50 multi-purpose buildings where the survivors have chosen to live, buildings that are full of song and praise each Sunday and which will join their brothers and sisters in the celebration of this Easter week.

Please keep all of us here in your continued prayers. We know it is only because of your prayers and outreach that we are able to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus with so much strength and so much humility, with those who might otherwise be dead but who now live because of you.