

Prayer request from David Morris for SICCM:

The northeast monsoon has started right on schedule for 2006. This might seem unremarkable except that often it doesn't!

The heavy rains are as heavy as those of last year, when we had such heavy flooding in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Kerala has already had a heavy southwest monsoon.

Unlike many other years, this heavy rain (which would always be welcome, although there is much misery with the accompanying flooding) follows on an unusually heavy southwest monsoon for these three states. It looks like there will be heavy flooding again in November and December, only perhaps WORSE than 2005.

2005 was bad enough, but it followed on years of drought, so absorbing the excess water recharged the aquifers, filled up the village wells and filled the huge reservoirs that hold water for the cities like Madras, Madurai, Bangalore (all with multi-million populations) and smaller cities like Tinneveli, Tiruchi, Rajahmundry, Gudur, Ongole and Mysore, with around 1-2 million people.

The southwest monsoon was heavy in Kerala, which has a large number of dams and village level waterworks, due to its usually heavy rains. It was also surprisingly strong in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, keeping water levels high in the aquifers, wells, and reservoirs even though often the southwest monsoon neglects these areas.

Now with a heavy northwest monsoon already giving as much water as is normal for the whole monsoon season, we are receiving many reports of flooding. The cities are most obviously showing the strains of flooding, as the streets became rivers and lakes. But even in the villages, there is concern as the mud huts begin to "melt" in the mud and slush of the early stages of flooding.

Please keep the villages and cities in your prayers as the flood threat increases with each accompanying day of heavy rain. The permanent church buildings stand out as lighthouses in the muck and mire of flooded villages as they have stone foundations in addition to reinforced concrete pillars anchoring cement walls. We only have 40 of these "mother churches", however. The mud hut churches rebuilt this past spring are likely to fall under the onslaught of flooding. This means hundreds of church buildings. Over 700, in fact, and maybe as many as 825 if one includes some of the mud and cement faced buildings, which do have, stone foundations.

The Mission Children's Homes are all "pukka" buildings, meaning buildings with stone foundations and reinforced cement construction. The College is also, as is Christian Hospital. These will also stand tall and firm against the rains. If the rains continue and the flooding becomes WORSE than last year, these will need to be pressed into service as flood relief centers for the surrounding villages.

Please pray for the people who will suffer during the months of November, December, January and February. By February, the flooding will end and the rains will translate into jobs as the flood damage is repaired and the 2007 rice crop is planted.

Please also pray that the leadership of the South India Church of Christ Mission, all its evangelists and eldership and teachers and medical workers can respond to the challenges of this year's flooding in such a way that Jesus will be glorified and many will come to accept Him as their only true hope and security in this vale of tears.

David