

NEWS POSTED ON OCTOBER 1, 2009

International Ministries responds to Asian Tragedies



CATHERINE NOLD

American Baptist International Ministries is responding to the needs in Asia following the recent series of devastating tsunamis, typhoons, earthquakes, flooding and mudslides. A \$25,000 One Great Hour of Sharing emergency disaster grant has been distributed to partners working throughout the region to meet the immediate needs faced by the victims. The initial funds will provide clean drinking water, non-perishable food, tarps, blankets, and health and baby kits.

The death toll in the storm that lashed the Philippines has risen sharply to 240, according to government figures, with threats of worse weather later this week. Tropical Storm Ketsana tore across the Philippines September 26, demolishing or flooding thousands of homes and leaving 80 percent of Manila under water. The Philippine Government's national disaster

coordinating council says a total of 1.87 million people were affected by the storm and flooding. Up to 375,000 people are staying in 600 evacuation centers. Remnants of this storm also caused damage in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Three days after the 7.6 Richter Scale (RS) earthquake struck West Sumatra, Church World Service (CWS) was in the affected areas and continues to deliver assistance. The most badly affected areas include Padang Pariaman district (387,500 people) and Pariaman city (77,500 people) located north of Padang city. The death toll has reached over 1000 people in West Sumatra, and is expected to rise further. Thousands of people are still trapped in several buildings in Padang city.

An initial \$5,000 has been sent to Central Philippines Baptist Churches (CPBC), \$10,000 to CWS for its relief efforts in both the Philippines and Indonesia, and \$10,000 to Baptist World Aid, who is supporting a BWAid Rescue 24 international team now on the ground in the Philippines, working with local Baptists. Another BWAid Rescue 24 team is en route to Padang, Indonesia. Baptist World Aid will also work with New Zealand Baptists to provide relief in Samoa.

Baptists throughout the world are showing their concern by their prayers and donations. "It is through International Ministries' extensive network of ecumenical and national partners that we as American Baptists are able to provide this relief in areas where we don't have a missionary presence. Your financial support is critical, as these recent events have brought devastation to millions" shares Lisa Rothenberger, American Baptist World Relief Officer.

American Baptists wishing to support relief efforts can do so through their church's monthly report of mission support. Those wishing to support needs of the area in general should designate their contributions "OGHS-Asian Disaster Relief." Those wishing to support specific relief in the Philippines should designate their contributions "OGHS-Philippines Relief."

Checks for this relief should be made payable to "One Great Hour of Sharing" and sent to:

One Great Hour of Sharing
Attention: World Relief Officer
P.O. Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482