

UMMA UpDate #30, New Year 2005

EXTRA e-bulletin of the

United Methodist Missionary Association

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"Linking mission workers worldwide"

NEW YEAR 2005 TSUNAMI ISSUE

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGES REGARDING TSUNAMI DISASTER

Extracted from news gathered and sent out to NAFAUM mailing list by Aquilino Javier, *Short takes, news* - December 31, 2004.*

Dec. 30, 2004 News media contact: Tim Tanton, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org Original source: <http://umns.umc.org>

By United Methodist News Service (UMNS)

The tidal waves that struck countries along the Indian Ocean prompted the Rev. R. Randy Day to set aside an earlier text he had developed for a New Year's message. Instead, the top staff executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries wrote his 2005 New Year's message in the form of a prayer. The full text follows:

"New Year's Message 2005: A Prayer from a Heart in Pain"

How, O God, can we joyously greet a new year
When thousands of Asians lie dead on the shores?
How can we sing songs?
The earth shakes, and the tides roar, and children
Vanish from their mothers' arms to perish in the deep.
How can we rejoice?
Homes and hearths are gone from Thailand to Africa.
Sumatra and Sri Lanka are islands of death.
How can we be happy?
Parents in India wail for their little ones;
Little ones in Malaysia search for their parents.
How can we eat and drink?
A generation of Indonesians vanishes in a flash;
We are numb with disbelief and agony,
How can we dance?

We cannot go on, O God, except for our trust in You.
The pain is too great, the tears too heavy,
We cannot go on,

Unless we hold fast to your love and find hope
In Your promises of eternal care and consolation;
Unless we anchor ourselves in the strength of faith.
The pain is too great, the tears too heavy,
Unless in faith we respond with love and care,
To the fathers who have lost their daughters,
And the sons who have lost their mothers.

How, O God, can we not greet a new year with
Thanksgiving and wonder at your steadfast love?
Even in times of bewilderment and terror
You go with us up the mountains and into the sea.
Without You, O God, we are nothing but tumbling
Stones upon the sand.
With You, O God, we find purpose in life and in death,
And greet tomorrow, greet another new year,
Confident in You through our tears and pain.
You alone, O God, are a sure foundation.

- R. Randy Day,

General Secretary, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church

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Missionaries in Indonesia Urge Strong Christian Response to Quake

Dec. 30, 2004 News media contact: Tim Tanton ** (615) 7425470

Nashville {04617} NOTE: Related resources are available online at <http://umns.umc.org>

A UMNS Report by Jan Snider*

United Methodist missionaries Don and Ramona Turman watched the words crawl across their TV screen in Jakarta: "Indonesia Menangis." Translation: "Indonesia is crying."

The Indonesian island of Sumatra was near the epicenter of the Dec. 26 undersea earthquake that sent tidal waves crashing into 12 countries around the Indian Ocean. The waves killed at least 117,000 people and washed away entire villages.

The Turmans offered words of assurance in an open letter to family and friends. "We want you to know that we are safe, and that none of the effects of the devastating earthquake and tidal waves reached the island of Java and the city of Jakarta," they wrote.

The Turmans are closer to the tragedy than most of the church's missionaries. "The United Methodist Church has no missionaries in the coastal areas or islands devastated by the tidal waves," said Elliott Wright, information officer for the denomination's Board of Global Ministries.

"Some of our church family have relatives who have perished or are missing," the Turmans wrote. "Others can tell of miraculous escapes. It is a time of desperation for all of the people in the affected areas, and the Christians represent a tiny minority in the midst of a very conservative majority religion. We pray that a strong Christian witness will be evident through the outpouring of beneficial aid from around the world."

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population. The country is also ethnically diverse, with more than 300 local languages.

The Turmans say that Indonesians are uniting in their response to the catastrophe with donations of money and materials. Indonesia has suffered economically and politically in the past few years, in part because of inter-ethnic and religious conflicts but also from natural disasters, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Bishop Joel N. Martinez, president of the Board of Global Ministries, echoed the Turmans' hope for a strong response from the Christian community. "I am sure that our gifts will be offered generously to provide ministries of healing, relief and reconstruction," Martinez said Dec. 30. "United Methodists have always responded in times of crises, and the General Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief will lead our United Methodist people in responding to this terrible tragedy." [UMMA member Paul Jeffrey is now accessing needs in Sri Lanka after coming from India the week before.]

Donations to UMCOR's "South Asia Emergency" relief efforts can be placed in local church offering plates or sent directly to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330, New York, NY 10115. Designate checks for UMCOR. For details on partners and plan for short and long-term help click: www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=2&mid=6388

Advance #274305 and "South Asia Emergency." Online donations can be made by going to www.methodistrelief.org Those making credit-card donations can call (800) 554-8583.

**Original source: www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=2&mid=6395

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New Years Greetings: Ideas for Transformation and Peace by Elizabeth S. Tapia

Dear friends,

I wish I could begin this with a happy new year greeting, but I believe you share with the worldwide concern and grief regarding the tsunami victims and survivors in South East Asia and East Africa.

You may already have begun your own contribution through donations and prayers for these people. This is just to add one small voice and I am inviting you to help mobilize your organizations to actively join the relief efforts.

I am glad that there are ideas/plan for debt relief, consolidated coalition by rich nations, led by USA, not for war on terrorism this time but for life and short & long term help to the nations mostly affected, that ordinary citizens are not spending money for NY fireworks but choose to donate to agencies, to give food to the hungry in their own contexts, realizing that life is precious, that natural forces in nature are unpredictable, and that not all things that happen in this world are God's will. We pray, as in the WCC's next assembly theme, "God, in your grace, transform the world."...May God's grace and comfort and the generosity/compassion of humanity prosper in all the earth.

Peace, Elizabeth S. Tapia, Lecturer, Missiology, Bossey Ecumenical Institute, CH-1298 Celigny, Switzerland. She was formerly Dean of Union Theological Seminary, Philippines.

*Aquilino Javier is the President of NAFAUM (National Association of Filipino American United Methodists) www.nafaum.com/