

## Long-term Aid Helps Tsunami Victims along the Road to Recovery

By Karianne Salisbury, Church Magazines

**I**t was a long process for Sukardi of Indonesia and his family to find closure and hope following the 2004 tsunami that devastated the coasts of Southeast Asia.

"We thought it was the end of the world; it was unbelievable," said Sukardi, looking back to December 26, 2004, the day a massive underwater earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia, causing a tsunami that killed more than 225,000 people in 11 countries. "But we are alive, and we are together, and we are happy."

Sukardi, like thousands of others, lost family members and friends, his home, land, and nearly his own life. After being washed away with the tsunami, he managed to grab hold of a coconut tree and cling to it as he waited for the floodwaters to recede.

Joined by family members, each with similar survival stories, Sukardi now resides in a home built with the help of Latter-day Saint Charities, an arm of Church Humanitarian Services, as part of the Church's efforts to assist tsunami survivors.

### Committing to Long-Term Recovery

The Church's emergency relief efforts during the months immediately following the tragedy provided commodities such as food, hygiene kits, medical

PHOTOGRAPH BY RON TAYLOR



***This new community center was provided next to the local mosque as part of the Church's tsunami recovery efforts.***

supplies, and clothing. Because of members' significant donations, the Church began planning longer-term relief. As part of that long-term

effort, fishermen and carpenters were given jobs constructing more than 130 replacement fishing boats. Men were hired to use large,

wide-tracked backhoes to help reconstruct the dikes around shrimp farms. Sewing machines, looms, hand tractors, and other tools were donated to encourage a return to self-sufficiency.

"All of the first year was focused on reestablishing livelihood and helping individuals get back to work," said Brett Bass, director of Church Humanitarian Services. "Then we looked at our resources, identified the most pressing needs, and refocused our efforts on permanent reconstruction."

The Church's efforts included constructing community centers, homes, schools, medical clinics, and clean water systems—all made possible by a tremendous outpouring of humanitarian generosity by Church members from around the world.

The Church's monumental efforts in Indonesia



***New teachers prepare to teach at the Min Lampuuk school, one of 15 built to replace schools destroyed by the tsunami in 2004.***

PHOTOGRAPH BY RON TAYLOR



**Jim Greeding shakes hands with Abdul Samad, who lived in community barracks with his children for two years after losing his wife and his mother.**

concluded in December 2007. Major projects included building 902 homes and 3 community centers, constructing 15 schools, building 3 fully equipped health clinics, rebuilding a hospital wing, and completing 24 village water projects.

#### **Rebuilding Homes and Lives**

Abdul Samad lived in a hastily constructed community barracks for two and a half years before he and his family moved into their new home. He lost his wife and her mother in the flood but now hopes to make life better for his remaining family, three daughters and a son.

Each of the 902 homes built and donated is 44 square meters. The hundreds of recipients frequently said they believe their homes were the best homes built and that they would pass them on to their children and grandchildren. They expressed gratitude for having something solid and

reliable in their lives again.

“When the earthquake hit and the tsunami followed, the first thing they did, if they were in their house, was run outside,” said Jeff McMurdo from the International Organization for Migration, which partnered with the Church to build homes. “From the moment it started, they were running. So when they get the keys to a house, they are able to get some measure of closure to the whole tragedy of the tsunami experience.”

#### **Establishing Schools and Hope**

The Church partnered with Islamic Relief and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency to build 15 schools, train new teachers, and develop curriculum and education support systems.

Many of the area’s teachers were killed in the tsunami. Kamaruzzaman, a teacher from Banda Aceh, is one of just two surviving

teachers from his school.

“They have been going to a temporary building for school—a community hall where there are about 40 students in the room,” said Kamaruzzaman, who is now a head schoolmaster of a newly built school.

Each school building was furnished with desks, whiteboards, and libraries. As more teachers became available, an emphasis was put on training and developing new curriculum.

“The students now have a better school that’s more helpful to learning. They now have a more hopeful future,” said Kamaruzzaman.

Herliana, an education coordinator for Islamic Relief, is proud to be a part of this project. “There were no

schools; there were few trained teachers left,” she said. “This has been a great contribution to the communities. Together we are making a big difference in the lives of the children, teachers, parents, and families.”

#### **Providing Clean Water**

Fauziah, an animated and smiling woman, is now a water operator for her small village near Bireuen in Aceh Province. In this position, she keeps records and collects water-usage fees from those who use the community’s new water system.

In partnership with International Relief and Development, the Church completed 24 village water projects that consisted of renovating wells, installing

#### **Other Aid Ongoing in Indonesia**

Though the Church has concluded a major undertaking with its long-term tsunami relief projects in Indonesia, Humanitarian Services will continue a variety of ongoing aid projects and has no intention of walking away from new relationships forged and old relationships strengthened during the tsunami relief efforts.

“We were doing humanitarian work in Indonesia before the tsunami, and we continue to do projects in that nation today,” said Brett Bass, director of Church Humanitarian Services.

Since the beginning of

2007, more than two dozen humanitarian aid projects have been completed or are ongoing. Among those projects were emergency relief to victims of flooding in Jakarta and Solo, of mud flows in Java, and of earthquakes in Sumatra and Bengkulu.

Other projects include donating wheelchairs and vocational training materials to the disabled, supplying medical equipment to a hospital, sponsoring a number of pediatric surgeries, providing furniture and sanitation equipment to various schools, and overseeing several projects to bring clean water to villages that had none. ■



***Yards have already been enclosed around these two of the more than 900 new homes built in Indonesia.***

storage tanks, improving sanitation, and upgrading delivery systems. These efforts are providing clean water to 20,000 people.

"Before, it was hard to get good water and it took a long time to go get it," said Fauziah as she expressed gratitude to have access right outside her home. "Now our children will be healthier and will have a better future."

Bath and laundry facilities were also built in the villages, and residents received training on how to take care of the facilities and keep them clean.

#### **Improving Health Care**

While each village also received personal hygiene training, the more elaborate efforts to improve health care moved forward with the completion of three fully equipped health

clinics and the rebuilding of a hospital wing.

"This is much-needed," said Syarman, a community leader in the Bireuen district, where access to medical care previously required a 15-kilometer walk. "Our people will be able to get needed medical assistance near their homes. It is better than before, and we are grateful."

The Church also arranged training for doctors and medical staff and provided needed medical equipment.

#### **Doing It the Lord's Way**

For Bill and Linda Hamm of Anchorage, Alaska, USA, the work presented a personal challenge: they were called to serve as humanitarian service missionaries to oversee tsunami relief efforts in Indonesia. "We were exhilarated by the

challenges and overwhelmed by the opportunity," Brother Hamm said.

This opportunity was also extended to Jim and Karen Greeding of Thousand Oaks, California, USA. They were called to oversee the completion of the projects after Brother and Sister Hamm's 18-month mission concluded.

"We were to oversee the quality of the work and to make sure the money allotted for projects was being used properly," Sister Greeding said.

Church representatives were present at every stage of the process; that provision, combined with its funding methods, distinguished the Church from other organizations.

"We regarded our finances as sacred funds and made every effort to see these funds used efficiently and not wasted," said Bill Reynolds, director of field operations for tsunami relief. "We provided sequential funding that relied on benchmark expectations that we personally oversaw. The organizations we worked with knew that if we said we wanted something done and in a certain way, they needed to meet those expectations."

#### **Restoring Hope**

The Church focused on helping Indonesia and its people take a simple step forward, a step away from tragedy and pain, a step

toward reestablishing life. While these efforts played just a small part among those of the many individuals and organizations that offered aid to the tsunami victims, the missionaries were able to share their love, the love of the members, and the pure love of Christ.

"We were not permitted to proselyte, but we were representing the Lord and tried to share our testimonies through our work by being kind and polite or simply by smiling," Sister Hamm said. "Sometimes we had the opportunity to explain where the funds came from, and we told about our prophet and how he called for a 24-hour fast, with the money that would otherwise be spent on food to be donated to a special fund. I think the Spirit bore witness and they understood that there were individuals around the world who loved them."

Evidences of the tsunami are still very much apparent, but the people have expressed gratitude for every effort that has been made on their behalf.

"This is simply an experience you can never forget, and anyone who travels to these areas will not be able to miss the evidences of destruction where the land became sea permanently, where so many lost their lives and loved ones," Sister Greeding said. "But many who were suspicious of Christians have changed their hearts. Some stared at us, but most in their limited English said to us, 'Thank you, mister.' We heard that often." ■



## TEMPLE NEWS

## Rexburg Temple Becomes 125th in Operation

President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the Rexburg Idaho Temple in four sessions on February 10, 2008, in one of his first acts as the 16th President of the Church. He was accompanied by Elder Russell M. Nelson and Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Located to the south of Brigham Young University—Idaho, the Rexburg Idaho Temple is the Church's 125th

worldwide and the third in Idaho. Approximately 200,000 individuals attended the open house during the month before the dedication.

The 57,504-square-foot (5,100-square-meter) temple was first announced in December 2003, and ground was broken in July 2005. The temple's exterior features a quartz rock finish and 700 art-glass windowpanes. The temple serves approximately 47,000 Church members in eastern Idaho. ■

## Curitiba Brazil Temple Dedication Set

The Curitiba Brazil Temple was to be dedicated in four sessions on June 1, 2008, following a cultural celebration on May 31 and a public open house from May 10 to 24.

The Curitiba Brazil Temple thus becomes the 126th temple operating worldwide and the fifth in Brazil. Temples are also located in Campinas,

Porto Alegre, Recife, and São Paulo. The Manaus Brazil Temple, which was announced in 2007, will be Brazil's sixth temple.

The Curitiba temple was first announced in August 2002, and ground was broken in March 2005. It will serve more than 42,000 members, including those from 21 stakes in the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina. ■

## Dedication Announced for Panama City Temple

The First Presidency has announced open house and dedication dates for the Panama City Panama Temple, the 127th operating temple worldwide.

The temple, which is the first in Panama, will open to the public on July 11, 2008, and will remain open until July 26, excluding Sundays. A cultural celebration will

take place on August 9 before the four dedicatory sessions scheduled for Sunday, August 10, 2008. The temple will open for ordinances on Monday, August 11.

Construction began in October 2005 after Elder

Spencer V. Jones of the Seventy, then President of the Central America Area, broke ground. The temple was announced in August 2002. There are approximately 22,000 members in seven stakes and three districts in Panama. ■

## Twin Falls Idaho Temple Set to Open

The First Presidency has announced open house and dedication dates for the Twin Falls Idaho Temple, the Church's 128th operating temple.

A public open house will be held July 11 through August 16, 2008, except for Sundays.

The temple will be dedicated in four sessions on August 24, 2008, and will open for ordinances the next day. On the evening prior to

the dedication the community will host a cultural celebration.

The Twin Falls Idaho Temple will serve thousands of members in 14 stakes in southern Idaho. Plans for the temple were announced in October 2004, and ground was broken in April 2006. The temple will be the fourth in Idaho, the state with the third largest membership in the United States. ■



Twin Falls Temple

### Competition Seeks Art Submissions

The Museum of Church History and Art invites members from around the world to submit their original artwork for the Eighth International Art Competition. The theme is "Remembering the Great Things of God." About 225 pieces will be selected for an exhibit to open in March 2009. All submissions must be entered online or postmarked by October 10, 2008. More information about the theme, rules, judging, and submissions is available at [lds.org/artcompetition](http://lds.org/artcompetition).

### New Resources Available on Church Music Site

The Church music Web site now offers in French, Portuguese, and Spanish lessons on conducting or accompanying music and PDF versions of the hymns and *Hymns Made Easy*, a book of simplified hymns. Recordings from the *Children's Songbook* and *Hymns* in Spanish have also been added.

To access the site visit [www.lds.org/churchmusic](http://www.lds.org/churchmusic).

### Site Offers Online Focus on the Savior

[JesusChrist.lds.org](http://JesusChrist.lds.org), a Web site featuring the Savior, launched to English audiences on February 25, 2008, with plans to be available in additional languages in the future. Visitors will find information, articles, and multimedia presentations about the Savior focusing on three main themes: faith in Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, and testimonies of Him. Visitors will

have access to materials such as music or video clips and can find direction to other related sources.

### Resource Available Online for Military Families

*Supporting Military Families*, a resource designed to meet the needs of military families in the Church, is now available on LDS.org. The resource covers topics such as preparing for deployment, helping children cope, managing financial challenges, and reintegrating into family life. To access the resource, go to [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) and click on **Serving in the Church**, then on **Military Relations**, then on **Resources for Military Members**.

### Art Used on Cover of March Issue Available

The art used as the cover of the March *Ensign* and *Liabona* special issue on the Savior is available through distribution centers worldwide and on [LDScatalog.com](http://LDScatalog.com). Jesus Christ (detail from *Christ with Boy*), by Carl Heinrich Bloch, will be available in three different sizes. ■



## Comments

### Raising the Bar

We related strongly to the February 2008 *Ensign* article, "Our Son's Choices." We had a similar experience with our son, and are happy that he repented and is now living a gospel-oriented life. However, it sounds likely that the events in your article took place before the Church "raised the bar" for missionaries. Although our son repented and spent a year turning his life around, he was not able to serve a mission because of the serious nature of what he had done. It is important for members to know that while repentance is always possible, serving a mission after leading a wayward life may not be.

Name Withheld

### Teaching Support

I've been pondering for some time how to increase the amount of thoughtful discussion in my Relief Society class by asking the right kinds of questions. My prayers were answered by Brian Gudmunson's stimulating article, "Questions, the Heart of Learning and Teaching" (*Ensign*, January 2008, 26). It was perfect.

Thanks!

Jeanine Tew, Utah

### March Issue on the Savior:

The March 2008 *Ensign* was great! Not only was it touching, with personal testimonies and experiences, but

educational. I also liked the section that took our beliefs about Christ and shared supporting scriptures from the Bible and Book of Mormon. With a lot of national media coverage on the Church lately, the issue couldn't have come at a better time. It gives members a resource to answer questions, or we can pass along the magazine to our inquiring family and friends.

Jerelyn Dunaway, Utah

The March 2008 *Ensign* is, in my opinion, the finest yet. As I read each page, the Spirit verified every word. I have not seen a more conclusive, concise treatise of what the Latter-day Saints believe about our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

George Harris, Idaho

The March 2008 issue is truly outstanding in spiritual messages, scope of articles, and artwork. All the illustrations are great, for they enlarge the meaning of the articles, which teach of the deep meaning of the Atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My heart is moved. I shall go over the March issue repeatedly.

Florence Hedgpeth, Oregon

### Clarification

The identification of Easy Company in the article, "Band of Brothers" in the February 2008 *Ensign* is incomplete. It should be Easy Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. ■