

# FIELD

# LESEA GLOBAL FEED THE HUNGRY Report

## REACHING HUNGRY NATIONS WITH THE GOSPEL



*Feed the Hungry International Director of development and distribution, Stefan Radelich with children at Indonesian Orphanage*

Footage of the devastation in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, does not properly prepare you for the reality of the situation. There is literally destruction as far as the eye can see, in every direction.

Cars were crushed, mangled and twisted into shapes never intended by their creators.

Houses teeter on unstable foundations. Personal possessions lie strewn about the streets like a rubbish dump.

Walking among the ruins of a vibrant city, we spoke to passer-bys. It seemed that every person we spoke too had lost a family member; that the living were survivors only because some providence called them away from the danger area.

With several hundred thousand people missing or confirmed dead, it was only the very few who did not lose a child or parent. We met one lady at a UN Camp, who had lost 10 children, and 2 grandchildren.

Evangelism in Banda Aceh does not fit into a text book situation. One Christian leader made this observation, *“We need to reverse the indoctrination and cultural hatred the people feel towards Westerners and Christians in particular. First by reversing their negative feelings towards us though actions of love and*



*Living in a tent, Children in Meulaboh (Aceh Province) wait as their parents rebuild their home in the background.*

*compassion. Secondly we reverse their negative knowledge about us by explaining what we do and why we do it. With positive feelings and positive knowledge the people are finally receptive to the Gospel, and are good ground for the Word of God.”*



*The destruction is unbelievable.*

Conscious of the deadline imposed by the Authorities physically removed from ground zero, our Indonesian Christians are focused on building relationships with key leaders and sowing seed that will ripen and harvest despite external restrictions.

Not only do people have to deal with this natural disaster, but also with an oppressive religion. Seeing a flood of foreign aid to Banda Aceh, Mohammedans or hardline Muslims left Medan, Sumatra intent on disrupting the foreigners. Armed with pamphlets, 2000 Mohammedans went among the people urging them to refuse this “tainted” foreign aid. The survivors of the Boxing Day Tsunami turned their back on them, and replied *“these people wiped the tears from our faces”*. I realised several days later, there was no mention of the Mohammedans bringing aid as well as the pamphlet. Such a critical error: bringing hatred with one hand, and nothing in the other hand. Residents of Banda Aceh were overwhelmed and moved to tears by the magnitude and swiftness of foreigners generosity.

Despite having official churches closed down, and pastors driven out of the area—the desire to celebrate Christmas was still strong among the Christians in Banda Aceh. Government leaders warned the Christians that it would not be safe to celebrate Christmas within the city limits. Christians in Banda Aceh were forced to travel some distance to the mountains, and celebrate in secret. By risking identification as a devout Christian and subsequent persecution, attendees gathered in the mountain. Risking their life to worship the saviour, Christians were in fact protected when the Tsunami hit their homes. This story, confirmed by several people, indicates that 400 Christians were saved that day.



*Scavenging for recyclable metals from home for an income*

As part of phase two operations, 12 containers of food and aid are due to arrive in Indonesian in the next few weeks. These will be distributed through our contacts at the “Indonesian Relief Fund” and through the “Convoy of Hope”.



Ps. Charlie Milbrodt (*pictured above on right*) from Living Word International has been receiving funds from Feed the Hungry as part of our Phase 1 operations. Funds have been used to buy food packs to support over 2,000 families which are distributed every two weeks. Food Packs contain a variety of items: rice, noodles, garlic, chilli, and sauces. Every fortnight, Charlie's team return to the same camps and distribute the food packs to the same families, helping to build relationships.

Each food pack, also contained a copy of a Joyce Meyer mini-book—either "Peace" or "Why God Why". Translated into Thai, each copy of the book has a special forward written by Joyce Meyer about the Boxing Day Tsunami. Charlie has been distributing the books in the camps since January 10th and using them as a starting point for evangelism.



Our trip to Thailand was arranged to coincide with an actual distribution, so that not only could we assess how your

funds are being used, but to personally get involved in a practical sense and help. Myself, Stefan and a dozen helpers packed and loaded 750 food packs for distribution the next day.

Unlike Indonesia, it was the tourist regions of Phuket, Thailand that were hit hardest. The Tsunami hit just weeks before an important re-election of the self-made-billionaire Thai Prime Minister. For a variety of economic reasons, the Thai government was highly motivated to clean up worst effected regions and lure the tourist dollar back.

With a largely intact infrastructure the government was quickly able to flex it's considerable economic and military

muscle to clean up the mess. It appears the primary goal was to hide the mess rather than deal with consequences. For instance they relocated locals into temporary housing. Although grateful for a roof over their heads, tension was created when their housing is placed several kilometres away from the sea out of tourists sight and away from their livelihood of a predominately fishing economy.

The Thai government, was able to provide housing, but there was little other support either financially or mentally for the survivors. Relief efforts in Thailand are changing to a second phase. This is as daunting as the first, if not more emotionally demanding. For this is the phase in which helpers try to assist survivors who are 'stuck in time' to disconnect from the trauma and reconnect with life.

Both epicentre's of the Tsunami devastation suffer from minimal Christian presence. Unlike Banda Aceh, North Phuket suffers simply from neglect rather than resistance. In a region of some 300,000 people there are only two churches with less than 50 members in total. The challenge for Christians is to establish a true witness of the Saviour in these areas while the people search for answers and their hearts are soft. Ps. Charlie is busy re-tasking his evangelism and church planting programs to this forgotten region.

Feed The Hungry is taking a small team to help add some manpower to a food distribution with Ps. Charlie.

*If you would like to come on this short-term mission trip please see the details below and contact the office.*



*Report by*  
 Benjamin Evans  
 Operations Manager  
 Feed the Hungry  
 Australia &  
 New Zealand



*be an angel...*

JOIN US

## Feed the Hungry Missions Trip

**Phuket, Thailand**  
**18th—22nd April 2005**

*Preparing and distributing food packs  
 for survivors of Boxing Day Tsunami*

Please phone the office for more information.

Limited Space available