



Tsunami relief shifts to recovery in South Asia

Baltimore, Md. (IOCC) — The response to the massive devastation caused by the tsunami in South Asia one year ago has given way to programs of reconstruction. IOCC, in partnership with the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia (OMHKSEA), Church World Service (CWS), and other local organizations, has focused its long-term efforts on the remote, underserved island of Nias.

On March 28, 2005, just three months after the initial tragedy, an earthquake measuring 8.7 on the Richter scale struck the predominantly Christian island of Nias in Sumatra. Yorgos Daskalakis, a member of the IOCC team that provided assistance, observed, “[The people] were living in makeshift barracks made out of corrugated metal, and these shelters have now sustained a lot of damage, or have collapsed altogether, because of the second earthquake.”

The cornerstone of IOCC’s continued response to the tsunami is the “Build a Village” program in collaboration with CWS. The project, valued at nearly \$500,000, aims to provide comprehensive assistance through the reconstruction of housing, water systems, and public sanitation as well as recreational and educational activities for children, psycho-social services, child and family nutrition, and livelihood recovery (primarily



related to agriculture and pastoral families). IOCC is providing the necessary funds to restore an entire village, including the construction of seventy-five houses and all integrated activities.

IOCC’s continued partnership with OMHKSEA’s office of Philanthropy is also leading to the creation of a new community health clinic on Nias, where there is a lack of medical facilities and services. The clinic will be self-supporting via patient’s provision of minimum fees for services and medicines.

It will formally operate under the Greek Orthodox Church’s Medan Foundation, which will have a local clinic director from Nias and doctors from the community to provide services for patients.

continued on page 5

Extraordinary need met with record response in United States

Baltimore, MD (IOCC) — With support through the generosity of Orthodox Christians, IOCC mounted its largest disaster response initiative ever in the United States, delivering more than \$4 million in emergency relief assistance (*see box page 5*). The most destructive hurricane season on record in the USA claimed more than one thousand lives, made more than one million people homeless and caused an unprecedented level of damage.

continued on page 4

From the Executive Director

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

— (Isaiah 9:2)

As we gather to celebrate the feasts of Christmas and Theophany with friends and loved ones, we contemplate how Christ’s appearance on the earth is the Light dispelling the darkness of death, despair and hopelessness. This truth is beautifully captured in the prophecy from Isaiah mentioned above that foretells of Christ’s birth and effect on mankind.

During this past year we have witnessed the darkness wrought by the tsunamis in South Asia, starvation in Niger, the destructive forces of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma in the United States, people living with HIV infection in Ethiopia and Romania and continued hostility in the Middle East.

In the midst of this seemingly overwhelming darkness, however, you have brought light. By responding to Christ’s call to minister to those who are suffering, you have allowed us to fulfill our mission of sharing God’s gifts of food, shelter, economic self-sufficiency and hope. This year, more than ever, IOCC has responded to the call both at home and abroad allowing Christ’s Light to shatter the world’s darkness. Our response, however, is only made possible because of you. Thank you for your unprecedented response during 2005.

It is appropriate that this edition of *News & Needs* be devoted to “responding to the call” and the positive impact of this response. Your light this year has not been hidden, but raised on the hillside for all to see. The pages of this publication highlight several places where IOCC’s presence has transformed sadness to joy, despair to hope and darkness to light.



IOCC executive director Constantine Triantafilou inspecting some of the relief which brought hope to people in hurricane-affected regions of the U.S. through its partnership with Church World Service.

In 2005, IOCC supporters responded to the call at every level: from our Church Hierarchy and clergy, to our own board members, to our college interns, to faithful parishioners old and young. Examples of their responses on these pages will hopefully encourage you to heed Christ’s call of service by continuing your support for our work.

While we are thankful for all that has been accomplished this year, we are nevertheless cognizant of the challenges that remain for 2006.

May our Incarnate Lord, the Light of the world, continue to shine upon you and your family this Holy season and throughout 2006.



Yours In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC) was established in 1992 by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) as the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians to work in cooperation with the Orthodox Churches worldwide.

The mission of IOCC is to respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ, to minister to those who are suffering and are in need throughout the world, sharing with them God’s gifts of food, shelter, economic self-sufficiency and hope.

Published three times a year by IOCC, News & Needs is edited by Dan Christopoulos, Mark Hodde and Emily Stchur.



recycled paper

To learn more about how IOCC responds to the call, please visit www.iocc.org

Projects Have Life-Changing Effects in Ethiopia

Baltimore, Md. (IOCC) — “In all my travels, both in the United States and abroad in various countries, I am not sure that I have ever witnessed more pious, simple, loving people, than those I encountered in Ethiopia. They have a living Orthodox faith that allows them to cope with the many hardships that confront them on a daily basis,” observed His Grace Bishop Andonios, Director of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese office of Philanthropy, after his visit to Ethiopia earlier this year.

Bishop Andonios accompanied IOCC Executive Director, Constantine Triantafilou and IOCC Board Chair Bert Moyer and his wife Marjorie on a week-long trip at the end of March 2005, to better understand the work of IOCC in Ethiopia. His Grace was able to meet with many officials of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, including His Holiness Patriarch Paulos of Ethiopia, gain a better understanding of the critical work

that IOCC accomplishes in Ethiopia, and learn of new opportunities for continued work in the country.

“I came to appreciate not only how effective IOCC is in working with the Ethiopian Church but how far even a modest amount of money can go in an area where the average yearly income is just a little over \$100.

In addition to the massive HIV/AIDS education and prevention project that IOCC and the Church runs, I saw how small irrigation, urban farming, and other projects can have equally life-changing effects,” the Bishop noted.

In his capacity as advisor to the Greek Orthodox Ladies



On a visit to Ethiopia, Bishop Andonios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese witnessed the life-changing effects of IOCC projects administered in partnership with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Philoptochos Society, His Grace was able to share his first-hand experiences of the trip with the Philoptochos members and urge their continued support of IOCC in general and its Ethiopian projects in particular.

His Grace concluded, “Responding to need like I saw in Ethiopia is not only our Orthodox Christian responsibility, but also a privilege. In these dire situations, where our Orthodox people see other faith groups responding with multi-million dollar programs of aid, it is imperative that they see that their own Church has not forgotten them, but is present giving them hope and help. If we, as Orthodox, are unwilling to fill these voids of need, then certainly others will step in and do so. IOCC is our Orthodox vehicle to express our love toward God and our neighbor and I wholeheartedly encourage us all to use this vehicle to live out our Orthodox faith.”



Expressions of Love for Our Neighbor

In 2005, the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society gave unprecedented support to IOCC for projects in four countries, including:

- \$51,903 in funding to provide assistance for Tsunami victims in South Asia;
- Participation in a \$60,000 project in the Republic of Georgia to provide 280 wheelchairs and vocational training for disabled children;
- \$50,000 gift to provide emergency relief for Hurricane survivors along the Gulf Coast of the U.S.;
- \$35,000 for the construction of a medical clinic in Ambo, Ethiopia from proceeds from 10th Annual Medical Fund Luncheon in Dec. 2005;
- A pledge of \$25,000 to build a new school next to the medical clinic in Ambo, Ethiopia.

IOCC is grateful to Philoptochos, and other organizations, that have made extraordinary efforts to fund IOCC projects throughout the world. This type of funding is critical in meeting the needs of special projects that IOCC undertakes every year.

Extraordinary need met with record response in U.S.

Continued from page 1

Photo: Vlade Divac Foundation



Basketball star and humanitarian Vlade Divac loads a truck in Sacramento, Calif., destined for hurricane survivors from New Orleans now living in Houston, Texas. Divac personally drove the relief supplies from California to Texas to an IOCC hurricane response center.

The IOCC response took the form of direct assistance to Orthodox parishes and communities impacted by the storms, direct assistance through ecumenical networks to the affected population at large, and the provision of services and supplies in some of the most critically affected areas.

“This has been a truly inspiring effort made possible by the cooperation of so many partners in our work,” said Constantine M. Triantafilou, IOCC executive director. “The support of the SCOBA hierarchs, the clergy and their parishes, Orthodox and ecumenical partners and the dedication and determination of the IOCC board, staff and volunteers has been remarkable.”

Each of the nine SCOBA jurisdictions has provided support to IOCC for the hurricane response efforts.

As part of its response in the immediate aftermath of the disasters, IOCC also provided assistance to Orthodox Christians directly affected by the hurricanes. An Orthodox

parish/parishioner emergency assistance program provided funds for families who were seriously or moderately affected by the disasters.

The relief effort was made possible through the support and participation of Orthodox Christians from across the country who contributed health kits and volunteered directly in the Gulf Coast. IOCC board member Leonidas Kapetanakis took leave from his business for nearly two months to deliver supplies and assist in coordinating the effort, while St. George Orthodox Church in Houston gave IOCC use of their facilities to set up a coordination center.

IOCC’s initial emergency focus has now shifted to a recovery and rehabilitation period,

according to Frank Carlin, IOCC field director for operations in the hurricane-affected areas. This recovery phase of the response will carry-on for a further six to nine months depending on the resources to implement such programs, he said.

“Were it not for the high quality of our emergency response, this \$4 million figure alone would not be impressive,” said Carlin.

“We have proven ourselves to be an effective and efficient link between resources and needs. Our church and parish leaders and the faithful supporters who gave so freely and contributed their resources of both time and money have enabled us to do what often looked impossible in the face of such massive and immediate needs.”



IOCC’s Hurricane Response

Since the onset of the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina on August 29, more than \$4 million in emergency assistance will have been provided to vulnerable families and individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita throughout the U.S. Gulf Coast.

IOCC emergency assistance in response to the hurricanes includes:

- Provision of more than \$150,000 in essential, unmet emergency needs, such as essential food items, sanitary and cleaning supplies, relocation assistance, and emergency grants to evacuees;
- Distribution of \$2.5 million in emergency relief items, such as “Gift of the Heart” health and children’s school kits, new hand-made quilts, household emergency cleaning kits, multi-vitamins, food, water, blankets and bed linens, diapers, personal health kits, and mattresses;
- A \$430,000 Orthodox parish / parishioner assistance program to assist seriously affected Orthodox families with immediate emergency support for family needs arising as a result of the losses they experienced due to the disasters;
- Medical assistance, valued at more than \$855,000, including a mobile medical clinic provided by Mission of Mercy;
- More than \$75,000 for the equipping of churches and aid distribution networks, including the provision of chainsaws, power washers, clean-up and storage equipment to parishes and local organizations for use in the clean-up and recovery efforts by the local community.

To learn more about how IOCC responds to the call, please visit www.iocc.org

Tsunami relief shifts to recovery in South Asia

Continued from page 1



Other collaborative projects with OMHKSEA and a local organization called “Tomorrow’s Hope” are focused on vocational training for youth affected by the tsunami. The program will provide internet technology training for 180 young people in the area of Media and equip them for jobs in the computer industry that pay twice as much

as labor jobs. “Tomorrow’s Hope” has run orphanages in the area for the past ten years and is currently rebuilding an orphanage that will house 100 tsunami orphans. IOCC will provide the funding necessary to purchase and equip several vocational training programs, including carpentry, computers, bakeries and other skills aimed

at giving these children more opportunities for the future.

Within days of the tsunami on Dec. 26, 2004, IOCC and its partners began providing life-sustaining assistance to survivors in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand. The assistance included nearly 300 medicine kits, each with enough medical supplies for 1,000 adults and children for up to three months; fresh food parcels for people living in temporary camps and private homes on the east coast of Sumatra; thousands of health, hygiene and school kits; and \$1.1 million in multi-vitamins, enough to provide 53,000 adults with a daily dose for one month.

With your support in 2005, IOCC has been there to help many of the tsunami victims whose lives have been wrenched apart by unfathomable disaster. With your continued support, we are able to remain in South Asia and elsewhere to help people rebuild their lives with long-term recovery projects.



Tsunami Devastation: the Human Toll

Two months after the onset of the disasters that struck the region, IOCC’s Colin McGinnis was in the area as part of a team monitoring our response. A worker in the guest house where the team was staying shared her story with them. When the Tsunami hit, her husband was at work and she was alone with her two sons, eight and four years old. She tied the eight year old to her back with ropes and clutched onto the four year old. In his journal Colin related her story:

“When the wave hit my house, it smashed everything and my son was stripped from my back. I heard his cries, but I could not reach him. I was thrown and bounced by the water for almost two miles, slammed against floating cars and debris, and when I came to rest, I was in the yard of a small house. I looked down and realized that my other son, whom I had been holding tight all this time, was limp and lifeless — he had drowned.

A week later, my husband saw my picture flicker by on a TV report from the refugee camp where I was living. Now we are together again and trying to figure out how he can get back to work as a fisherman, since he lost his boat. It is very painful, but at least we are left with each other; with help, we will rebuild our lives.”

To learn more about how IOCC responds to the call, please visit www.iocc.org

Internship offers glimpse of programs, leaves lasting impression

By Arianna Rondos

Jerusalem/West Bank (IOCC) —

Upon arrival at the IOCC/Jerusalem office, I was immediately involved in a number of aspects of a non-governmental organization's activities. Collection and storage of donations, project visits within the field, reports verifying such activities, and the day to day workings of an office with the full responsibility of so many communities' livelihoods, were part of my daily routine.

Reflecting on my internship experience, I am struck by my impressions about the implementation of projects and successes, particularly within such a strict cultural framework. As experienced in the West Bank town of Jenin, as well as in Nablus, the classes for women's health have allowed for a level of honesty and discussion on subjects that have, until now, been taboo in a society where women are expected to remain within the house.

Along with the visits to project sites, the experience of attending inaugurations and graduations of the completed project activities left a lasting impression. These events best articulated the great many levels of involvement necessary in accomplishing a project. After witnessing the inauguration of the information technology center at At-Tayba in the Ramallah Governate, I noted that "the ceremony was an expression of cultural heritage, traditions of both dance and dress, as well as a celebration and example of the activities that have been brought



Photo: Nicole Minor - The Pangosa Network

to the community through the creation of the center." These 'expressions' I refer to led me to conclude that the pride communicated through these children served as a clear indicator that the activities provided through the IOCC-supported center have helped to develop and enhance a growing community.

The influence on those in the communities, particularly women, who have taken part in the activities such as health education classes and computer skills programs, will prove to be the strongest and most significant in subsequent years. As stated on an IOCC poster, "Sometimes knowledge is the best way to prevent exploitation." Knowledge, and access to it, is the most empowering and beneficial tool that can be offered a society. Thus, IOCC's projects which target such matters allow for development, in its truest form, to be both applied and realized.

Coupled with my experiences at IOCC was my day to day life while living in the Old City. Encompassing the religions, tradi-

tions, and politics of a divided city, the Old City is a complete enigma. Once beyond the walls though, I was immediately struck by the juxtaposed worlds that make up the vastly different East and West Jerusalem. The cultural taboos change, the dress code differs, and, most obviously, the language is completely different. Therefore, it does not surprise me anymore when I hear people describe Jerusalem as "the strangest place I have ever been."

I cannot be sure that I will follow a career path in relief and development, but I take from this a greater understanding of the intricacies it involves, the difficulties that can be faced, and the reward of its successful implementation.



Editor's Note: IOCC intern Arianna Rondos served at the IOCC office in Jerusalem/West Bank this past summer. In 2006, IOCC will offer two 3-month internships designed for current college and graduate school students. For more information on the program, please visit the IOCC website.

Beslan victims receive help through rehabilitation center



Moscow (IOCC) — Long-term assistance for those suffering from the psychological effects of the Beslan school hostage crisis that claimed 344 civilian lives in September 2004 were given a boost following the dedication of a center developed by IOCC in cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Beslan crisis ended tragically after three days, but the effects for family members and the community are expected to extend well into the future.

International attention on the tragedy sparked an outpouring of assistance in the immediate aftermath. In consultation with the Department on Church Charity and Social Services of the Russian Orthodox Church, IOCC's efforts focused on the long-term psychological effects of the terrorist incident as well as the broader, ongoing conflict in the region. In cooperation with IOCC's partner, the Department of Church Charity of the Rostov

Diocese, a rehabilitation center was planned in the weeks following the Beslan crisis.

On July 25, 2005 Rostov-on-Don witnessed the opening and consecration of the Rehabilitation Center organized with the help

of IOCC. Archbishop of Rostov and Novocherkassk, Pantelemon consecrated the Center. Rostov-on-Don is a regional center and one of the locations where seriously wounded children and adults were transferred to hospitals for treatment following the attack. Accessible from Beslan, the city is home to many relatives of those killed during the siege and also receives victims of violence from the region.

The center will be sustained by the Diocese, which has agreed to support its ongoing work. The center's staff include licensed psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, priests, nuns, and student volunteers from neighboring schools. Most of the staff will work on a voluntary basis.



Helicopters delivering aid in earthquake ravaged Pakistan by IOCC partner Church World Service are reaching remote areas, but the job is far from over. The first snow fell in Kashmir in early December and thousands remain without adequate shelter. According to aid workers in Pakistan, without immediate and major funds for food, shelter and medical aid, winter and disease will conspire to produce further suffering and death. Photo: Paul Jeffrey/Action by Churches Together

To learn more about how IOCC responds to the call, please visit www.iocc.org



Legacies make a lasting difference through IOCC foundation

The suddenness of natural disaster, the calamity of war, and the hopelessness of poverty are constant reminders of our Lord's call to care for our brothers and sisters. Whether through a gift made in your lifetime or as a part of your will or estate plan, the IOCC Foundation provides a vehicle for heeding Christ's call and making a life-changing difference in the lives of people served by International Orthodox Christian Charities.

The IOCC Foundation, a professionally-managed, not-for-profit support organization, is dedicated to supporting IOCC's relief and development programs. The IOCC Foundation was formed in 2004 to provide a vehicle whereby assets contributed toward IOCC's philanthropic work worldwide would receive focused stewardship. Unless otherwise stipulated by the donor, the corpus of gifts to the IOCC Foundation remain invested with a percentage of the income from the assets disbursed annually to support the mission of IOCC.

If you are interested in leaving a legacy through the IOCC Foundation, please contact the Foundation by calling (410) 243-9820.

Parish Representatives play vital role

Baltimore (IOCC) — Parish representatives play a vital role in IOCC's humanitarian mission by keeping parishes informed of Orthodox humanitarian outreach efforts and by encouraging support for IOCC. Many parish representatives work through volunteer Metropolitan Committees in communities across the United States, while others work independently in their parishes.

The responsibilities of a parish representative can be accomplished in about one hour a month and include such things as displaying IOCC materials in your parish, printing IOCC announcements in your parish bulletin or newsletter, staying up-to-date with IOCC news, organizing a parish video presentation, and keeping your priest informed of IOCC-related news.

To receive monthly e-mails, parish representatives can subscribe to the IOCC Volunteer list serve at www.iocc.org/volunteer. For additional information, please contact IOCC outreach coordinator Sylvia Araj, toll-free (877) 803-4622.



Survivors of the October 8 earthquake in Pakistan outside the devastated town of Balakot are receiving aid through IOCC — yet there is need for much greater assistance. Parish representatives are a vital link for informing Orthodox Christians how they can respond to urgent needs like these.

Photo: Paul Jeffrey/Action by Churches Together



110 West Road, Suite 360
Baltimore, MD 21204 USA
Internet: www.iocc.org
E-mail: relief@iocc.org

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Rockville, MD
Permit No. 800