

Hope shines after the tsunami

Sitting on a carpet in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, eleven-year-old Dedi starts to cry as he tells me what the 2004 southeast Asia tsunami took from him—two brothers gone, his home destroyed and his community decimated. It would take the young boy four terrifying days before he would find his surviving family members.

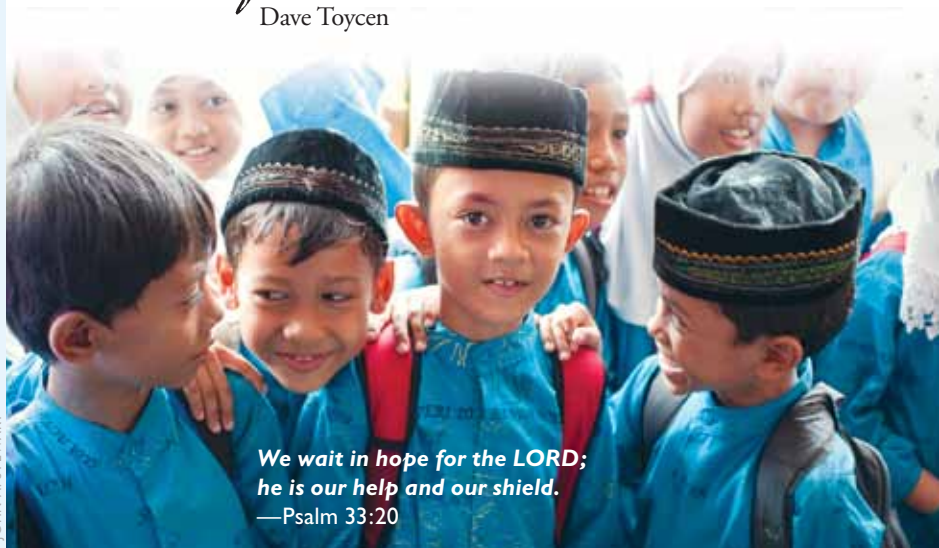
Evil has a way of stalking our hope. Five years after the tsunami, the resilience of children reminds me that our hope in God's grace and mercy to restore and renew, is not in vain. Hope is deeply rooted in Dedi's heart and he beams when he's asked about his new school, new home and dreams for the future. Dedi wants to be a pilot. His hope after such a traumatic event renews my own hope for this region. Banda Aceh, once the epicenter of the tsunami's destruction, is now a bustling city with new roads, new hospitals and restored livelihoods.

The psalms echo the stories I heard over and over again in the Aceh region. The psalmist alternates between passionate pleas for God's help during difficult times and overflowing praise for God's faithfulness to walk through those circumstances. As we begin this New Year, let's pray with hopeful hearts. We know that pain and disillusionment will continue to pursue us in this fallen world. But we also know that God hears the cry of the oppressed, the lonely and the disheartened. Our hope is renewed through His faithfulness and encouraged through His mercy.

God bless you in this New Year.



Dave Toycen



***We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.***
—Psalm 33:20

El Salvador



In less than six hours, tropical storm Ida pummeled the small Central American nation with more than 350 millimetres of rain—more than the average amount of rainfall across Canadian regions for all of May, June, July and August combined. Ida caused 190 deaths with many still missing, 176 deadly landslides and damaged or destroyed nearly 20,000 homes. In San Vicente, one of the hardest hit cities, 80 percent of the crops that families depended on were damaged.

World Vision is providing water tanks, family hygiene kits, and basic food items like beans, oil and rice to affected families in San Vicente and Usulután.

Pray for people who have lost their homes, crops and livestock and are trying to adjust to a new reality. Pray for the more than 14,000 people currently living in temporary shelters who are vulnerable to disease in cramped quarters.

Pray for farmers who are now struggling to feed their families with limited resources. Pray that all those affected will have the strength and resources to resume their way of life again.

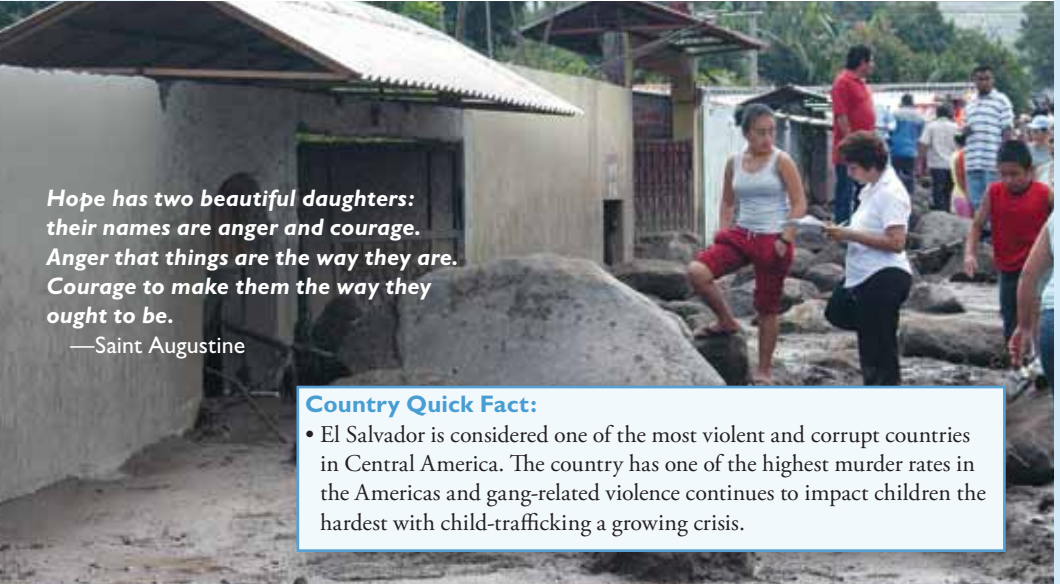
Pray for those responding as relief efforts continue and reconstruction projects get under way. Pray also for the churches that are reaching out and that this would be a time to show the love of God through service to those affected.

*Hope has two beautiful daughters:
their names are anger and courage.
Anger that things are the way they are.
Courage to make them the way they
ought to be.*

—Saint Augustine

Country Quick Fact:

- El Salvador is considered one of the most violent and corrupt countries in Central America. The country has one of the highest murder rates in the Americas and gang-related violence continues to impact children the hardest with child-trafficking a growing crisis.



H1N1

As cases of the H1N1 flu start to decrease in North America, many developing countries are seeing their numbers increase. Limited numbers of health care staff, vaccine and medication mean that many of the most vulnerable countries are bearing the brunt of the virus. Mongolia is just one of the countries struggling to keep its communities safe and healthy. The government of the Asian country has declared a state of emergency and closed all schools, banned public meetings and enforced strict curfews to try and isolate the virus.

Pray for families with sick children who cannot access immediate medical support because of their geographic location or their lack of money to pay for services.

Pray for communities who are now being faced with price increases on food and medical items as demand increases.

Pray for the health of the staff responding to the epidemic. Pray that they would be given the strength to respond under difficult circumstances and with limited medical supplies.

H1N1 Quick Facts:

- More than 150 million doses of the H1N1 vaccine have now been distributed to more than 40 countries.
- Just over 7,800 people have died from the virus in the last year. Medical agencies such as the World Health Organization are crediting vaccination campaigns for the decrease in infection rates in the Northern Hemisphere although no countries are willing to say that the virus has peaked.



The Philippines

In just one month, four typhoons made landfall in the Philippines. More than 10 million people were affected, nearly 200,000 homes were destroyed and 500 people were killed. Thankfully, international agencies like World Vision were able to respond immediately in partnership with the government of the Philippines to serve those worst-affected.

Praise God that the international community, including the Canadian government, responded immediately with funding for emergency relief and the reconstruction phase.

Praise God that disease did not spread and that water borne illnesses such as cholera did not take hold.

Praise God that public health care centres and hospitals received adequate medical supplies to treat the wounded and sick.

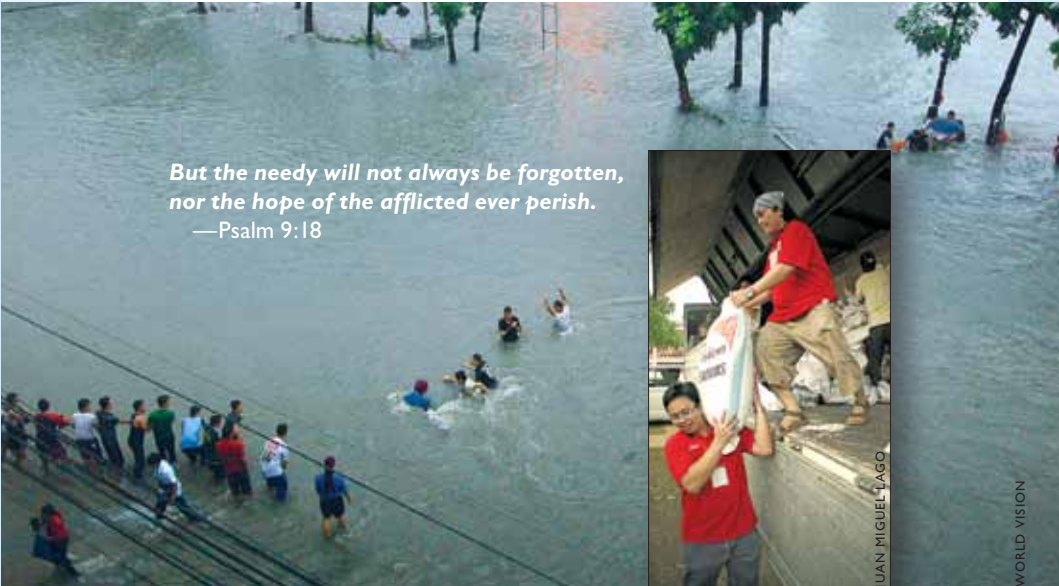
Praise God for the Child-friendly Spaces that were set-up to bring a sense of normalcy to children through play and informal education. Child-friendly Spaces allowed parents the time they needed to collect their belongings knowing that their children were cared for and safe.

Continue to pray for families who have lost everything, including in some cases their family members. Pray for strength to begin again and for comfort during a very difficult time.

Continue to pray for staff members who were themselves affected and continue to put the needs of others before their own. Pray that God will encourage them in their work and bless them for their perseverance.

*But the needy will not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.*

—Psalm 9:18



Change is in the air!

The weather isn't the only thing changing this winter. Starting with this edition of the President's Prayer Team Letter, you'll notice some changes we're making.

Thank you to all of our readers who responded to the readership survey this past fall. It was encouraging and refreshing to hear your thoughts, and to know that the Prayer Letter helps support you to pray for a changing world.

We were overwhelmed by the response and have tried to incorporate many of the great suggestions we received. Here's what's new:

- The Prayer Letter will remain in print instead of moving online. Many of you spoke about how important it is to have a copy for your Bible, church bulletin board or coffee table and we think that's important too.
- More photos! More stories! More space! The Prayer Letter is moving to a quarterly publication instead of a bi-monthly. Although you'll receive it four times during the year instead of six, we think you'll be happy with the increased room for more prayers and more photos to help you see the places and people you're praying for.
- Answers to Prayer. It can be discouraging to always be praying about the hurt in our world, so we want to share with you where God has shown his grace and answered our prayers. This section will give us a chance to celebrate together what God is doing around the world.



Drawings from children affected by the Southwest Asia tsunami depict sad memories but hopeful futures.

World Vision Canada
1 World Drive, Mississauga, ON L5T 2Y4
www.worldvision.ca

Web sites to visit: www.worldvision.ca/resources (print and video resources)
www.worldvision.ca/prayerletter (access prayer letter online)

To subscribe to the prayer letter or to send it to a friend, call **1 800 268-1650**

The President's Prayer Team is a quarterly prayer update from Dave Toycon, President of World Vision Canada.

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice.