

Samoa Tsunami Relief Update

It's been 2 months since a powerful tsunami devastated the Samoan Islands and killed over 180 people and leaving thousands homeless. As the world has moved on to other news, the people of Samoa are slowly rebuilding their homes and their lives. One thing remains constant - and that is the outpouring of love and support from the Churches of Christ for the brethren in both American Samoa and Samoa. Donations such as clothing, canned food and money continue to flow in.

A few weeks ago, our dad Lu and brother Abe traveled to (Western) Samoa with the elders (Marshall Ashley and Malaetia Misa) from Tafuna Church of Christ to distribute donations that both congregations collected. Two trips were taken - both during the first two weeks of November. Donations were distributed to the brethren there as well as others in the village. Donations delivered included clothing, food, water, kerosene stoves, tools (hammers, nails, etc). Those who are not part of the Lord's Church commented on how wonderful it is that various Churches of Christ came together to help their fellow sisters and brothers in Samoa. Most of them belong to a Samoan denominational congregation and they said their church never came to check on them or send any assistance. So it was truly a wonderful opportunity to share the Word of God with them. That Sunday, our dad was invited to preach there and these villagers attended worship services with the brethren in Vaimoso (a 2 hour bus ride to town). It's truly wonderful that such opportunities exist to show people the love that thrives in the Lord's Church.

In American Samoa, one of the canneries (Star Kist - tuna cannery) is back in operation. About 500 temporary jobs have opened thanks to the FEMA grants for rebuilding homes, businesses, schools, roads, etc. A new unemployment assistance program, also through FEMA, is now available.

In (Western) Samoa, the people there still need help. They are receiving help from New Zealand, Australia and from the U.S. but not as much as American Samoa (American Samoa is a U.S. territory while Samoa is an independent nation). They are slowly getting help so please continue to pray for them. Majority of the donations collected are being delivered to the families there who are living in the mountains. Our dad says it's really hard to get up there. The attached photos are of the families and church members who are living there now.

Reports are showing a new kind of suffering the Samoan people are going through - depression, violence and alcohol use. Please continue to pray for the Samoan people and for the government officials to act fairly and honestly. I am happy to say that my sister, my son, and I will be traveling to Samoa later this month to be with family and to help in the rebuilding efforts. This trip was made possible through the generous donations of some faithful servants of HIS who offered for us to return home to help and be with family as we longed to do. We are very excited and looking forward to help in whatever way we can.

There are about 20 more boxes that will be shipped down later this week. We have also received donations such as coloring books, crayons, stuffed animals, yoyos, and candy to pass out to the children to brighten up their holidays! We will continue to collect these items for the children till next week.

Again, THANK YOU all so much for your love and prayers for the Samoan people. We continue to praise God in all circumstances and we praise God for you for answering the call to help.

With gratitude,
The Soli Family in Hawaii (Pisa, Malachi, Ruth and Jr.)

--

The good man does not escape all troubles - he has them too. But the LORD helps him in each and every one. ~ Psalm 34:19