



After floods, help in Jesus' name

Seminary teams provide disaster relief in Kerala

In August 2018, the worst floods in nearly a century devastated the south Indian state of Kerala. Teams from New India Bible Seminary, Paippad, Central Kerala (NIBS) and New India Bible Institute, Calicut, Northern Kerala (NIBI) rushed in to help, serving ravaged communities for the next month and more.

Monsoon rains swamped much of the state, but damage was especially severe in the lush northern district of Wayanad and the central, impoverished region of Paippad. Homes, villages and entire communities were wiped out. Hilly terrain and washed-out roads prevented people from accessing food and other necessities.

At least 500 people died, more than a million were displaced and property damage totaled over \$3 billion USD. Thousands of believers lost their livelihoods. Some of the badly damaged houses remain under water and sludge.

Paippad

By the grace of the Lord Jesus, faculty and students from New India Bible Seminary (NIBS) served these poor and vulnerable communities. Under the leadership of Dr. Jaison Thomas, student teams worked in constant rain, cleaning up where they could, protecting people from flood-borne diseases and helping them recover household items and move to safer places.



Most churches lost their expensive musical instruments, PA systems, projectors and publications, along with carpets, curtains and seats. NIBS students cleaned church buildings, preparing them to host worship services again. One beautiful church holds 1,000 people. Relief teams have enjoyed the special privilege of attending Sunday services during their time in these communities.

Later, NIBS faculty formed eight student teams for the next phase of relief work: restoring families back to their homes and safely distributing food and supplies. Four other teams walked miles through muddy roads to find desperate families where water was just starting to recede.

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Relief Services Received

NIBS Paipad

8 villages
740 families
6,500 individuals

NIBI Calicut North Kerala

19 villages
725 families
4,223 individuals

Grand Total

1,465 families
10,723 individuals

Continued from front

Raising flattened houses became even more challenging with the presence of marshy pits and poisonous snakes.

NIBS teams went door-to-door determining families' needs, giving priority to poor communities, widows and people with disabilities. Food was first priority. After purchasing and packing relief materials, faculty and students distributed them despite the continuing rains.

Wayanad

The green paradise of Wayanad, Northern Kerala brims with tea plantations and dense forests. Elephants and tigers are among the abundant wildlife roaming the region. About 8 million people live here.

Floods left most of Wayanad villages covered by water, sludge and downed trees. The monsoons also washed boulders down hillsides onto houses and roads. Crops were ruined. Weeks later, people remained stranded.

Things were even worse in Thrissilery, a poor community of 21,000 people in northern Kerala. Houses here are structurally weak and the flood was completely unexpected. Damage was extensive, with most homes sunken underwater, roads washed away and livelihoods destroyed.

New India Bible Institute (NIBI) faculty and students served this poor and vulnerable community. NIBI, pas-



tors, leaders, students and church elders rushed in to help. Pastor NC Joseph and Pastor Sony Joseph led the efforts. Two NIBS teams visited five relief locations and helped other agencies to provide food and clothes to the flood victims. Despite the lack of passable roads, NIBI teams went door-to-door soon after the floodwaters receded, meeting every affected person and assessing needs.

Food was the most urgent need. After purchasing and carefully packing relief kits, the teams distributed them to this poor and vulnerable community. NIBI students continue to clean the area and restore households where they can.

The Grim Toll

After three weeks of intense flooding and an aftermath of heart-wrenching mudslides, hunger and sickness, Kerala's casualties and damage were totaled. More than 500 people had died. About 8 million lost their homes. Twenty-one thousand miles of roads were damaged or destroyed, 218 bridges washed out. 4.6 million people remain in relief camps

In their Phase 1 response, NIBS housed 242 families — 1,005 people — in its six premises. Students cleaned 12 villages, and 95 families were moved to safer places, benefiting 402 people. Also, the students assisted eight community centers serving 3,050 people.

Before distributing food and supplies that NIB, NIBI and others had purchased, pastors and the relief team asked the communities to gather at the distribution sites to pray, asking God's blessing and strength for the work they were about to do. Not only that, but many from the communities asked for prayer. Pastors and leaders prayed with them for recovery from sickness and for God's strength during this critical situation.

Despite his busy schedule with CMCH hospital and directing NIEA in both India and Nepal, Dr. Alexander Philip visited Kerala to monitor the relief work and provide moral support and encouragement to the teams.

Relief began Aug. 29 and the urgent work was completed Sept. 24. Total expenses incurred by the relief teams for both flood zones was over 5 million rupees, or about \$73,500 US.