

October 5, 2009

Greetings in the Name of Jesus, our compassionate Lord.

Two earthquakes rock Indonesia . . . four tsunamis sweep across the Samoan Islands . . . a typhoon strikes the Philippians, extensively damaging homes of half of our Brethren there, and another giant storm is bearing down on the island nation . . . **and that's just this past week!**

Brethren have always been a compassionate people, and we want to be as strategic with our disaster response as possible. To allow more flexibility to address such needs, the Executive Board has created a new **Brethren Church Relief and Development Fund** (Brethren Relief, for short). The proposal was nearly a year in development by the International Ministries Council before final adoption by the Executive Board in August. More detailed information about the creation of Brethren Relief by your elected leaders is available upon request.

Before this change we forwarded all relief money contributed by Brethren churches to World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals. In addition, we made special appeals when disasters struck in areas where our own Brethren missionaries were serving.

From now on, one-fourth of all undesignated relief funds received will be forwarded directly to World Relief Corporation. Another fourth will be used for disaster relief and ongoing development work through our Brethren missions. The remaining funds will be directed where most needed—World Relief Corporation, our own Brethren Relief efforts, or through agencies where neither The Brethren Church nor World Relief is working. All Brethren Relief funds will be offered as a cup of cold water in the Name of Jesus (Matthew 10:42).

Our churches use a variety of different tools to raise support for disasters and other relief work. Some churches ask for special offerings and others raise money using a variety of coin bank collection ideas. We ask all congregations as a part of our denominational support system to set a goal of \$5 per average worship attendee based on the most current reporting year. Regardless of how you raise the money, please know that your gift makes a difference. You will be making a difference in areas of the world that the Brethren Church has not yet gone, areas that we are directly related to, and possibly areas in our own country and cities in times of disaster.

Brethren Relief funds are currently being released for our Philippine Brethren under the leadership of Pastor Gary Castro, who have been devastated by the recent typhoon. And so your response is especially needed at this time. Please consider a special offering soon, or sending whatever funds you may have on hand for this purpose. Simply mark your donation "Brethren Relief," and all funds received will be used in this manner.

Thank you in advance for your generous and compassionate assistance in these difficult times.

Sincerely,



Ronald W. Waters
General Conference Moderator