

# United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough  
Chairman

Roy Holladay  
President

## Letter from the President December 31, 2004

Dear Beloved Brethren,

We are all deeply saddened by the pictures and reporting coming out of southern Asia of the horrific and vast devastation and loss of human life from the recent 9.0 earthquake and resultant tsunami. As of Friday morning over 120,000 people have been reported killed, and some estimate that number will double as more isolated areas are investigated and as resulting diseases spread. Over 5 million people have been displaced and are homeless. Whole villages have disappeared, and a number of islands are either partially covered with water or have disappeared altogether.

The governments of many nations in southern Asia are faced with the gigantic problem of supplying the basic necessities of housing, proper sanitation, food, water and clothing. What jobs do many of these people have to return to? How many decades will it take for the societies to rebuild and for families to have a meaningful life? Already \$500 million has been raised worldwide in relief efforts to help the victims. We are reminded: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so” (Proverbs 3:27). To this end, the United Church of God has made a donation to the Red Cross International Relief Fund to aid in the effort to assist people in great need.

Many have asked: “How can we personally help?” According to the Red Cross, 100 percent of any donations made for tsunami victims will go directly to those suffering. If local churches, members or families would like to make their own discretionary donation, we encourage them to do so. Many worthy relief organizations are involved, but if the Red Cross is selected, then more information on where to donate locally can be found online or by phone at:

American Red Cross  
International Response Fund  
P.O. Box 37243  
Washington, DC 20013  
800-HELP-NOW  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Because of a number of tsunamis that have killed thousands over the last 50 years, an early warning system has been established in the Pacific region with at least 26 participating nations. A comparable system has been suggested for the Indian Ocean region, but the governments in that area could not agree on it. How many lives could have been saved if an early warning had been broadcast to the people? Perhaps tens of thousands could have been spared and would have fled to the safety of higher ground. Part of the job of the Church today is to be a watchman and to proclaim an early warning message to this world of repentance from sin and impending worldwide disasters. Notice God’s instructions to Ezekiel:

“Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their **watchman**, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and **warns the people**, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not

take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head' ... When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand'" (Ezekiel 33:2-4, 8).

Just like the prophets of old, the Church in the end time has been chosen by God to proclaim that early warning to the nations. Those who heed the warning and seek the spiritual high ground have the possibility of escaping future disasters outlined in the book of Revelation. Our job is to give a message of hope today and to pray that many will heed it and join us in broadcasting that message of salvation and hope.

Presently, it is estimated that over 25 million people are displaced from their homes, and that nations in Africa like the Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, the Congo, etc., have suffered terribly from wars, famines, spreading diseases and displacement. What we see now is only a foretaste of what humanity will face in the future. The apostle John, in describing the fourth horseman of Revelation 6, states: "So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death and by the beasts of the earth" (Revelation 6:8).

Clearly this scripture indicates that one quarter of the earth will be in turmoil and suffering from wars, famines, natural disasters and the resulting plagues. Revelation 16:20 states that before the Kingdom of God is established on earth, "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." Our minds cannot fathom the worldwide destruction, chaos, misery and suffering that humanity will face.

When the Millennium begins, these will be the conditions the resurrected family of God will face. It will be our job to bring both physical and spiritual aid to the suffering masses. Luke 4:18 describes Jesus Christ's approach: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Christ is preparing a Bride to assist Him in giving comfort and healing to the brokenhearted and hope to the masses of people who have suffered for so long. We cannot solve the world's problems today, but we don't want to harden our hearts to the plight of humanity either.

One of our representatives in Southeast Asia, Dave Baker, is presently traveling through that region. Both he and Jeff Caudle have reported that apparently our members have been spared from direct destruction and distress.

Please continue to pray for the peoples in that region and to give financial aid as you are able to assist in their recovery. Above all, pray more fervently for God's Kingdom to be established on this earth. Then we will assist Jesus Christ in alleviating the pain and suffering of mankind.

In Christian love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roy Holladay". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "In Christian love,".

Roy Holladay