

January 1, 2005 (South India)

Dear friends and partners in ministry,

Little did I know that the daydream I had would happen within 5 days and that over 125,000 people, many of them children, would be dead.

I am writing from Kovalam on the southwestern tip of India on New Year's Day. It is with great sadness that I greet you. About one week ago, I was sitting on the East Coast of India at Mahabalaypuram watching my children making sand castles.

I had a vision of a tsunami pulling a vast amount of water back into the sea. I pictured an enormous "quiet" while I frantically ran for the kids and, holding their hands, ran from the beach. In my imagination, the violent and surprisingly smooth surge of the water overtook us within twenty paces.

At this point I shook off the daydream and glanced out at the relatively calm waters. Before returning to the pages of my book, I realized that the heads of my children had disappeared behind the crest of the beach. I quickly got out of my hammock and soon saw their heads bobbing around making water traps and laughing carelessly. By God's grace, we left that beach for the mountains. Tens of thousands were not as fortunate.

Although many journalists strongly disagree with the practice, pictures portrayed in Indian newspapers show detailed scenes of mass graves and images which I should not describe. Quoting from a national newspaper here, the "Indian Express" (Dec 31st, 2004)

"Who would not be moved? The way dead bodies are getting washed up on our beaches and the often impossible task of burying them without delay tell us each day of the still unraveling dimensions of this massive tragedy."

One story has caused me to weep with compassion. The picture shows a father who stands upright with a look of absolute anguish on his face, as his wife, daughter of about age twelve and son of eight lie lifeless on the ground beside him. As I pray for this man, I feel just a fraction of the immense sadness that I would have felt, had the tsunami struck only 5 days earlier.

We have just made contact with Rev. John Sathiyakumar, who heads up our Bethania Home and Bethania Kids Center for beach children in Chennai, where there was dramatic devastation. According to Rev. John,

"The Tsunami and its vigorous impacts are quite new for India and as such the rescue measures being taken by the Govt. agencies and naval forces are found inadequate even though they are working in full swing. Various social welfare

organizations (both Christian and non-Christian) have joined their hands with Govt. to help the people who are in unspeakable pathetic condition.”

Thankfully, none of our own Bethania children have been lost, but sadly one of our caregivers lost her husband and two daughters at Vellankani beach. There are hundreds of orphans on our doorstep and the need is great for immediate help. With our particular vision and gifts, Bethania Kids would like to respond with a permanent, loving Christian home for some of these unfortunate children. We will take in as many children as possible and provide a long-term Christian home, where they can be nurtured through their tragic loss and equipped in faith and courage to make a real difference in the society in which they live.

Will you help us? Your gift today of \$20, \$50, \$100, or \$250 will help us reach out with the Love of Christ to a country devastated by poverty and destitution. We will channel 100% of your gifts to benefit children impacted by this tragic event.

Our Bethania Kids board members are thankful to God for his provision and protection for my family, full of grief for the tremendous loss of life in Sri Lanka, India & Indonesia, and yet hopeful in God's eternal plan.

On behalf of our entire Bethania Kids Board of directors and in Christ's eternal love, we wish you a blessed and Spirit-filled 2005!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David N. Granner". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "D" and "G".

David N. Granner, President
Bethania Kids