



September 2005

# Aceh Prayer

*And you will seek me and you will find me when you search  
for me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13*

## Cease Fire

A few weeks after the tsunami struck a new round of peace talks began, sponsored by Finland. One of the main obstacles to a settlement was cleared early in the talks, when the rebel Free Aceh Movement (GAM) dropped its demand for full independence for the province. Meeting in Helsinki on Sunday July 17th, representatives of the two sides announced that they had arrived at a formula for disarming the militants and reintegrating them into society, withdrawing Indonesian troops and monitoring a ceasefire, which they signed on August 15th.

Since then things have remained peaceful and government troops have begun to withdraw, however there are still strong feelings of mistrust on both sides.

*Please pray:*

*For the many Acehnese people who have suffered as a result of the fighting.*

*For continued peace and that each side will stick to the agreement.*

*That as the control of power in the province changes hands, foreigners will be able to continue to serve the Acehnese people.*

## Land and Housing

How do you rebuild your home if your land is now in the ocean because the coastline has moved? This is a problem for a number of villages and landowners whose homes used to be near the beach but are now underwater. New land needs to be found and bought before rebuilding can even be considered but with so many landholders having died, establishing who can legally sell land is a major difficulty. On top of that the legal complexities for buying land in Indonesia is causing headaches for NGOs, particularly if they are unwilling to pay a bribe.

For those who do have land that can be built on, the greatest problem has been obtaining building materials. For a few months the rebuilding process was delayed by the

lack of legally logged wood. Small amounts of wood are now becoming available again but many people are still living in tents that are beginning to look worse for wear after almost 9 months of constant use in a harsh tropical climate. Some NGOs tried to overcome the shortage of wood by using other materials but often these homes are unsuitable in the heat and not culturally appropriate for Aceh.

*Please pray:*

*For honest officials to be working on the land ownership issues and that new land can soon be found and bought for displaced people.*

*For more wood to become available and for more appropriate homes to be built.*

## Livelihood projects

Livelihood projects are now being planned to help people to re-establish businesses or retrain in order to gain employment. Micro-finance loans will help fishermen to buy boats and sellers to buy stock. Shrimp and fish ponds are being cleaned out and restocked. Courses are being set up to teach computing, English, cooking and sewing. Because of the tsunami a lot of sand was dumped on top of soil previously used for growing crops and salinity has become a problem, so possibilities for new crops need to be explored.

*Please pray:*

*That grants will go to the people who most need them.*

*That wisdom will be given to aid workers to understand the culture of money here and to find ways to counter corruption.*

*That through all of the interactions between Acehese people and aid workers, the merciful love of Christ can be seen and that there will be opportunities to testify as to why we do what we do.*