

Dear Friends and Partners of Seek God Ministries

We want you to know that we are ok. You may have been concerned about us if you heard about the devastating floods that hit Manila and the surrounding region in the Philippines. Manila received about 17 inches of rain in less than 12 hours on Saturday. For the last few weeks we have been receiving a lot of rain (it is monsoon season here) so the ground was already saturated. Manila was brought to a stand still by high water and it was impossible for vehicles to get in and around the city. In many places people were wading through neck deep water to get to safety. All over the city people abandoned their drowning vehicles and scrambled to get to higher ground as the waters rose quickly.

I am writing this Tuesday morning our time. We now know that over 200 people have died in the floods and over 300,000 people are currently in makeshift shelters. Some areas were hit worse than others. We are planning to go into Manila today and visit a poor area where we minister to see how the people are there and see what we can do to help some of those in need. Yesterday, we visited another city near us where we checked on some street kids that we minister to. The kids there are ok. They waited out the storm in an abandoned building. They had 28 kids and homeless young adults in the abandoned building during the heavy rainfall. Fortunately that area was not affected by any flooding.

The area where we live is high up and safe from flooding and mudslides. However, some areas close to us can experience those things, and we have seen them in recent weeks. They are always working on the new expressway that is near us to prevent water erosion which threatens the roadway. The city of Olongapo which is the closest city to us experienced a flood September 8 which affected 70,000 residents.

In the province of Zambales, north of where we live, there is an area that has been hit several times in the last few weeks by devastating floods. The article below describes the situation of many people there. We have been wanting to visit that area to see how we might help some people there but we have been waiting until we have a few days of dry weather in a row because even the highway can be impassable in that area when we get heavy rain. The article below describes the plight of the people there who have been hit by flood after flood.

**From: BusinessMirror.com.ph**

Written by Henry Empeño / Correspondent  
Monday, 28 September 2009 18:20

**Flood after flood, Botolan victims kept from returning home,  
are now restless**

BOTOLAN, Zambales—After losing their homes and most of their belongings to a series of floods that inundated 10 villages in this town since early August, residents who fled to the safety of higher grounds face new problems, mainly lack of food and medicine, as well as a stressful life in overcrowded evacuation centers that have served as their temporary homes.

“They badly need basic items like food, potable water, medicine, clothing, and most of all, housing,” said Vibelen Dimalupig, a social-welfare officer in Zambales, during a briefing at the capitol building in Iba on Thursday.

The relief goods issued by the government and those that come from donors “simply cannot cope” with the needs of the displaced families, she added.

The massive displacement of residents here began last month after heavy rains spawned by Typhoon Kiko combined with excess runoff from the mountains and packed a deadly headwater of debris-filled watery lahar.

The rampaging waters then breached a portion of the San Juan dike along the Bucao River, one of the major catch basins of lahar from Mount Pinatubo, and shifted the river course to nearby villages, sending residents scampering to safety.

In the aftermath of the typhoon, 4,783 families comprising 20,581 persons were displaced, a summary report prepared by the Zambales Provincial Disaster Operation Center showed. These included 4,913 persons from the riverside barangay of San Juan; 3,655 from the village of Carael, where the river passes through; 2,292 from Paco; 2,064 from Bangan; and about 1,500 each from the villages of Tampo, Batonlapoc, Paudpod, Capayawan, Beneg and San Miguel.

In the succeeding weeks when more typhoons brought torrential rains to Zambales, the number of evacuees in Botolan rose and fell along with the dreaded floodwaters, social workers noted.

When Typhoon Maring lashed the province on September 7, for example, 4,673 families were again affected by flash floods.

Of these, 718 families said their houses were totally damaged, while 333 reported that theirs were partially destroyed, a report by Botolan social-welfare officer Isagani Ecle said.

The new floods again led 1,931 families to seek refuge at evacuation centers, and 1,277 others to stay with relatives elsewhere. Because of the recurring floods, 2,141 families composed of 7,942 men, women and children are still housed in 12 evacuation centers scattered in this municipality as of September 24.

But the relative safety of evacuation centers has apparently started to wear thin and exact some toll on the evacuees over time. The emerging culprit, evacuees complained, is overcrowding that has inevitably strained the facilities and resources in the evacuation centers.

At the New Taugtog resettlement area, for example, a total of 901 evacuees from 235 families share a warehouse-like structure previously occupied by the Technology Learning and Resources Center. Camping inside the building, the evacuees erected makeshift rooms that they share with family members and occasionally, household pets like dogs. Over time, however, the noise and smell became hardly bearable that it was hard to sleep, said 74-year-old Gloria Dimacusa, who evacuated with her six grandchildren.

To make matters worse, the building has only three toilets to serve the whole evacuee population. Social workers in this town admitted that the situation could be worse in other evacuation centers like the Babon San Juan, which has 1,771 evacuees, or the so-called Tent City, which has a total of 1,288 evacuees.

Gina Acuña, a rural health officer in this town, said the unsanitary condition in the evacuation centers, coupled by lack of adequate food and medicine, has made some residents sick. Most of those afflicted have acute respiratory tract infection, fever, colds and cough, headache, abdominal pain and diarrhea, Acuña added.

Severino Magsanop, a 93-year-old retired soldier, has been living with his wife Felisa, 80, at the Taugtog resettlement site ever since their house in barangay San Juan became flooded last month. Magsanop said the government should do what it can to help evacuees rebuild their houses and their lives.

"It's very difficult to live in this kind of place," Magsanop told the media in Pilipino during a visit last week. "We're overcrowded in here. The place is dirty and it smells bad." The same plea came from Ester Josafat, 69, and Andres Bulanhigan, 65, who also left their family homes in San Juan when the floods ran roughshod over the village.

Bulanhigan, a vegetable farmer who has three children ages 5 to 16, said it is important for them to have a new home. "We can make do with not much food, even with a few belongings, but we need to have our own house," he said.

### **End of Article**

For those of you wondering about the newsletters we plan to start them again. I will try to give the highlights over the last few months and catch up on what is happening here. The news above is what is currently happening. I spoke in the church Sunday about "Spirit Led Faith", <http://www.seekgod.org/message/spiritledfaith.html> Last week we were able

to take the pastors we oversee to an ocean beach for a family rest day. They greatly appreciated it and all the kids had a great time.

Thank You for being our friend and partner in the ministry. We love you and pray for you.

Gary, Suzzhette, Joshua, Alianna and Shekinah  
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