

NMM Launches Disaster Relief Effort to Aid Victims of Kerala Flooding

August 21, 2018

Dear NMM Prayer Partners and Friends,

I am writing this letter to bring an urgent request to your attention.

Kerala, the state on the southern tip of India which is commonly called “God’s own country,” was inundated by severe rains last week. The rains were so heavy that the State Government was forced to open the shutters of more than 22 dams, including the Idukki dam, which is the biggest arch dam in Asia. Forty-four rivers were in spate, creating havoc across the state and damaging crops, roads, homes, and dreams alike.

Thousands of houses have been destroyed by the floods and gushing water from the dams. Many educational institutions and religious buildings, including churches, have also been destroyed by this vigorous southwest monsoon. Over 350 deaths have been reported, but the final figure is still awaited. In addition to the high death toll, there are many more people who are suffering from flood-related injuries.

“Life is at a standstill, and people are faced with the stark reality that it will be a Herculean task for most of them to bring their life back to normalcy. Thousands of people lost all their belongings except the clothes they were wearing. The risk of the spread of contagious diseases as a result of the floods is very high. Food, clothing, and medical aid are the immediate need of the people in distress,” said the Chief Minister of the State. Most of the people escaped with nothing, so to rebuild and restore what has been lost will take a long time.



I was in India at the time and witnessed some of the devastation myself. I have never seen a flood like this in my entire life. After conducting the NMM National Council Meeting in Navapur, I had traveled to central Kerala to stay at the NMM Pastors’ Retreat Home for three days. During the middle of the night, a siren awakened me. No matter which way I looked, I felt like I was surrounded by an ocean of water. There

was no time to wait for others to come and help. As I saw the waters rising furiously, I knew that we had to act quickly and find our own way of escape. Five other people from the Retreat Centre frantically got into a car with me. By God’s grace, I was able to drive through rising waters and reach a safe place about 15 miles away.

Though we were unharmed, the NMM Pastors’ Home was badly impacted by the floods. The water was almost nine feet deep. All the furnishings and appliances, such as the refrigerator, kitchen range, washing machine, furniture, and bedding, have been destroyed. These had been purchased just recently and were being used by pastors and missionaries for refreshing and training purposes.

When the staff at the Pastors' Home realized they could not do anything until the waters receded, they got involved in providing relief to people who had been rescued and brought to relief camps. The Indian government has established more than 1,500 relief camps where over 500,000 people are being housed.

In the northern part of Kerala, NMM church planters have also suffered much and lost a lot. Pastor James John, NMM's State Leader reported, "Even though we had to take care of the Children's Home and the 50 kids in our campus, I was more concerned about those who had suffered the brunt of massive landslides that had shaken our place. When I arrived there, I could not believe the tragedy that I saw unfolding before my eyes." Later he was able to visit about 12 NMM church planters over the course of three days. Using NMM funds, he was able to provide packets of essentials to over 150 people who could not make it to the relief camps.



With Pastor James John and his team working in the northern part of the state and the Retreat Home staff working in the middle part of the state, NMM has begun to help those in immediate need. We are asking people everywhere to stand with us through prayers and giving so that we can do more to bring comfort and care in the name of Jesus.

We plan to base our relief operations in two districts and help the people there rebuild their lives. In addition, the Pastors' Retreat Home will now have to be repaired and completely refurbished.

We seek your prayers and your generous support to help us in this urgent and important task. When you partner with us in this relief effort, you will be caring for the poor and wiping their tears. Because so many people have lost everything, it will take years before they have normal lives again; but we will help some of them take the initial steps.

I want to thank all of you in advance for your generous contributions. Though you are far away physically, you can be right beside us spiritually through your prayers and kindness. Together we are going to make a difference. Jesus said, "When you do this for the least of these brethren, you do it for Me." That is the most important thing.

Please pray and give of your resources to help those in desperate need today. It will take the helping hands of many around the world for the people of Kerala to get back on their feet.

Help us to help the people and also to nurture pastors through our Retreat Home.

For the sake of the needy people in Kerala,

Joy Punnoose
President, Native Missionary Movement