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### **Scientology Volunteer Ministers Provide Help in Desperate Times**

*New Scientology brochure tells how 600 Scientology Volunteer Ministers who responded to the 2004 tsunami changed the course of the movement.*

The holiday season conjures up images of home, family and good cheer. But for more than 600 Scientology Volunteer Ministers who responded to the 2004 tsunami, it evokes a time of heartbreak, disaster and bringing hope where there once was only despair.

The day after Christmas in 2004, towering walls of water 98 feet (30 meters) high crashed down on the villages and cities that line the coasts of Indonesia, eastern India, Thailand and Sri Lanka, killing more than 230,000.

Within days, some 600 Scientologists from 28 nations arrived in the region where they ultimately brought help to 300,000 people. Their work served

as a model for the organization and administration of Scientology Disaster Response operations in subsequent major catastrophes.

The initial corps of volunteers worked with police, military and emergency response personnel to restore order and bring calm to the chaotic scene. They took on whatever job was needed—distributing food and supplies, organizing shelters, helping in hospitals, even assisting with the gruesome work of identifying the dead.

Once the immediate crisis was over, the Volunteer Ministers began the task of providing trauma relief to the countless victims who came to them for help.

With hundreds of thousands dead or missing, nearly everyone the volunteers met had lost loved ones. They began providing Scientology assists—simple techniques that help speed recovery from stress and trauma.

Sri Lankan fishermen had abandoned their work, terrified that another wave might hit. Using simple Scientology techniques, the Volunteer Ministers helped the fishermen come to grips with what had just happened, get back to work and begin to rebuild their lives.

One woman had not slept since the wave hit several days earlier. She was terrified. Every time she closed her eyes, it was as though the wave was there again. After working with a Volunteer Minister for only a few minutes, she was able to close her eyes, sleep, and return to her home to care for her family.

As 600 Volunteer Ministers would be able to reach only a fraction of the hundreds of thousands devastated by the cataclysm, they began to train others: Doctors, nurses, Buddhist monks, Muslim clerics, teachers, police, officials and family members. In all, some 50,000 learned these procedures and in turn brought help to tens of thousands more.

Some of the volunteers who fell in love with the region and its people stayed on to help with the process of rebuilding communities. Others established permanent centers where the local Volunteer Ministers they trained could train others and coordinate actions after the initial corps of foreign Volunteers Ministers returned home.

Some, such as the Australian Volunteer Ministers contingent, have returned time and again, helping the region contend with the ravages of typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

As these countries are prone to natural disaster, Volunteer Ministers have also provided disaster response workshops to thousands of individuals and local groups to help them prepare for and minimize the effect of future cataclysms.

Their help was not overlooked. The acknowledgement they received from the Sri Lanka Prime Minister's Office is an index of the value of their work:

“The Volunteer Ministers are a remarkable group of individuals whose purpose is truly to help improve conditions. Their focus is one of organization and coordination. Their self-sufficiency and ability to direct all relief efforts is an indispensable asset to our country at this time. They work with government and community leaders, and aid in the coordination of all relief efforts. Their first concern is the effectiveness of the professionals. This is a highly qualified and dedicated team that is an immense asset to our country.”

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Transcending all ethnic, cultural and religious boundaries, the [Volunteer Minister program](#) is there for anyone in need of help. Volunteer Minister training is available free of charge through the [Scientology Volunteer Ministers](#) website to anyone who wishes to help others.

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*In creating the Volunteer Ministers program, L. Ron Hubbard wrote, "If one does not like the crime, cruelty, injustice and violence of this society, he can do something about it. He can become a Volunteer Minister and help civilize it, bring it conscience and kindness and love and freedom from travail by instilling into it trust, decency, honesty and tolerance."*



Scientology Volunteer Ministers who provided disaster relief in the Aceh province of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, the region hardest hit by the 2004 tsunami



Some 600 Scientologists from 28 nations traveled to Indonesia, eastern India, Thailand and Sri Lanka to provide relief in the wake of the 2004 tsunami.



Scientology Volunteer Ministers use techniques developed by L. Ron Hubbard to help victims of disaster overcome trauma and grief.