

Paying the Price

BY LARRY HALL

I admire Terry's ability to reach across language and culture, connect with people and help them with their grief.

Students in a canvas-sided temporary school building



Larry Hall traveled to Indonesia to a region that received aid from AG Relief after the December 2004 tsunami. Hall visited with missionaries Terry and LuLu Paschall.

Terry Paschall is talking on a cell phone as he and his wife, LuLu, meet me in the hotel lobby. The news from home is sad. Terry's brother-in-law has died of a fast-growing cancer. A flurry of short international phone calls follows and then, despite their heavy hearts, the Paschalls, Assemblies of God missionaries in Asia since 1987, turn their full attention back to Indonesia. Once again they are dedicated to the

task at hand, to people here who need them and to their call to Indonesia.

Together we board a single-engine plane to cross a range of mountains to a coastal town on the island of Sumatra. More than a year has passed since the December 2004 tsunami ravaged the town.

While evidence of the devastation is still abundant, the streets are crowded. Small motorbikes

LuLu and Terry Paschall prepare to fly to a region devastated by 2004's tsunami.

— sometimes carrying up to four passengers as well as huge boxes and loads of lumber — play suicide tag with cars swerving around huge potholes.

We arrive at a pair of buildings painted bright yellow. Situated across the road from the ocean, the structures serve as sleeping quarters, storage and a manufacturing site where cement blocks are produced to fund ongoing relief efforts. Built with tsunami relief funds from AG Relief, these buildings provide a base of operations for long-term Indonesian staff and short-term relief teams from the States.

The tropical scene surrounding the buildings is beautiful, with palm trees, white sand and the soothing sounds of the ocean surf. But the beauty is deceptive. Terry explains that geological forces are still at work. The coast has sunk

several feet, prompting fears of another tsunami.

My business mind weighs the risks, unable to understand why someone would invest so much time and effort where danger still lurks. Terry answers my unspoken question with an invitation to meet the man who lives next door.

Ratu's home is an unpainted, tin-roofed building, built in part from salvaged lumber. Its appearance, however, doesn't deter a steady stream of clientele who come for strong, sweet coffee and greasy fried bananas.

Ratu, who has lived in this area since 1983, lost his wife and children in the tsunami. He survived only after being swept inland almost two miles. He came back to find complete devastation where his home once stood.

Jeff Hartensveld, an Assemblies

of God missionary in Indonesia, met him by the side of the road, dejectedly pounding nails out of old boards with a rock. At that moment, Hartensveld sensed that this location was where God wanted to plant a bright beacon of hope.

Terry listens intently as once again Ratu describes the rushing water and his desperate loneliness following the tsunami. Though Terry has heard the story before, his face reflects sympathy as though it were the first time. Gradually Ratu talks through his grief again. He then makes a comment and laughs, his smile nearly toothless.

Terry turns to me and tries to explain the humor in English. "He says all he needs are new teeth and then he can get married again." As I join in the laughter, I admire Terry's ability to reach across



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Student in a school built by relief funds

language and culture, connect with people and help them with their grief.

Similar scenes take place throughout the day. We visit schools supplied — and sometimes entirely built — with relief funds. In other locations we sit in homes and businesses equipped with donated sewing machines and diesel-powered welders to assist those who lost their means of livelihood.

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Terry sensed God's call to Asia as a sophomore in Bible college. LuLu also felt a distinct call, but after spending several years in a pastorate it took another act of surrender to give up a comfortable life and take three young children to a land where missionaries face significant risks.

On the final evening of my trip, Terry and I walk along a street in search of Chinese food. As we

approach a line of food carts lined up on the sidewalk, I spot a huge rat ducking into a nearby drain. After viewing so much devastation and need, I turn to Terry. "Why do you do it?" I ask.

Without hesitation, Terry answers, "Because the Lord has called us." He pauses, then adds, "But each term requires a new commitment. The first time we left the States, we left our extended family and friends. Later, we had to leave our children behind, and now our grandchildren. We leave knowing that we may not see some of them again."

The memorial service for Terry's brother-in-law will be held in a few hours, but Terry and LuLu will not attend. They are on the other side of the world, separated from their relatives in a time of sorrow.

Watching them work, I realize anew the sacrifice involved in obeying Jesus' words: "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:37-39, NIV).

The Paschalls are willing to pay the price, and the people of Indonesia are experiencing God's love. **tpe**

* Some names have been changed or omitted.

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E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.



Terry visits a school under construction using relief funds.



LuLu enjoys a light-hearted moment with an Indonesian friend.



A tailor shop owner thanks Terry for a donated sewing machine.