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## Top Stories

### Judsonia pastor tapped to coordinate relief aid: Kachelman running national effort for Asia victims

*By Pat Hambrick  
Contributing writer  
The Daily Citizen  
Tuesday, January 4, 2005 9:01 PM CST*

The most experienced small congregation in White County at emergency relief coordination has been asked by the U.S. State Department to help the tsunami disaster victims of southeast Asia.



*John Kachelman Jr. checks for an e-mail from his contact person, Willie, in Sri Lanka on Monday afternoon at his office at the Judsonia Church of Christ. The U.S. State Department asked Kachelman to coordinate national disaster relief shipments to Sri Lanka. (Pat Hambrick/The Daily Citizen)*

Judsonia's John Kachelman Jr., pastor of the Judsonia Church of Christ, got the call Dec. 29 asking him to coordinate national disaster relief aid to victims of the Dec. 26 tsunamis that killed more than 160,000.

Survivors were left homeless and without food, water or medicine.

"We want to send a crate of medical supplies to Sri Lanka. Can you do that for us?" the State Department official asked.

Kachelman and his congregation have been transporting humanitarian aid overseas for about five years. It was through these relief efforts that the State Department was aware of them as a resource.

"This year we sent nine 40-foot containers to the Ukraine. We proved to the State Department that we could do it," Kachelman said.

That effort coordinated by Kachelman and his congregation included donations from Harding University and other White County groups and businesses.

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**Did you make any New Year's resolutions this year?**

Yes, I make them every year, and I'm usually pretty good at keeping them.

Yes, I make them every year, but I'm not very good at keeping them.

Yes, this is my first year to make resolutions.

Yes (other)

No, I don't make resolutions because I can't keep them.

No, I don't make resolutions because I don't believe in that sort of thing.

No, I didn't make any resolutions because I couldn't think of anything to resolve to do.

No (other)

The group in the State Department that Kachelman works with on relief shipments to the Ukraine and other areas is known as "Operation Provide Hope." The group he is working with on aid for tsunami survivors is USAID (U.S. Aid for International Development).

Kachelman deals directly with native Church of Christ congregations. They meet the shipment and they disperse it.

"The people of a community know who needs help," he said. This assures that aid will get into the right hands at the community level. "We have to have people there who will get the medical supplies to doctors and hospitals as quickly as possible."

He is currently working with a congregation in Sri Lanka and is in e-mail contact with a man named Willie, who is from Piliyandala.

Willie contacted the secretary of the Ministry of Health and discovered the secretary required a letter faxed to him at Colombo, Sri Lanka, indicating that the drugs/aid are for tsunami victims, along with details of the items to be sent. Once that is done, the secretary will issue a letter of certification allowing the shipment into the country.

Initially the State Department had thought the greatest need might be clothing and blankets for the survivors, but after an assessment the State Department decided that medicine and medical supplies were first priority.

"They need food as badly as medicine, and there will be one container of rice in this first shipment," said Kachelman.

He said he has sometimes shipped relief items by sea, but the need is so immediate in the case of the tsunami survivors that Washington has found a way to airlift the supplies out of JFK Airport to Sri Lanka.

"The State Department said they hoped to have this first shipment out the early part of this week," Kachelman said.

There is an additional problem when shipping medicine and medical supplies from the United States to foreign countries: The directions are in English.

For that reason, Kachelman insists that all medicine and medical supplies go directly to hospitals, clinics or dispensing physicians who have knowledge of how to dispense the medication.

"I'm hesitant about giving out pharmaceuticals except to practicing physicians."

He said that even if they don't understand the English instructions, they have PDR's (Physicians' Desk Reference) and can look up the medication and dosage.

Willie and others will be notified when the shipment is on its way and will be prepared to meet the shipment.

In an e-mail to Kachelman, Willie said, "Some of the brethren of different congregations of the Churches of Christ in Sri Lanka are meeting today to discuss how we can get more involved in the relief work. We will get things working once we hear from you."

Kachelman explained that this relief effort is not currently geared toward individuals who want to help the victims of the tsunami. He is coordinating shipments being put together by several groups around the nation, including such organizations as Healing Hands, International.

Kachelman has a large e-mail address book and uses that to get into contact with relief organizations and churches.

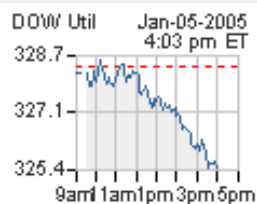
"E-mail is the greatest thing to get word out about what is going on in the 12 affected areas," he said.

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### Market Watch



Index	Last Trade	Change
NASDAQ	2091.24	-16.62
DOW	10597.83	-32.95
AMEX	1385.85	-13.20
Russ 2000	617.48	-11.06
SP 500	1183.74	-4.31
NYSE	7055.21	-35.31
DOW Util	325.44	-3.02

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Healing Hands, International called Kachelman and said, "If you are going to do like we did in the Ukraine, I'm on board."

"On this first shipment, I'm working with the State Department and I'm not sure where it's all coming from," Kachelman said. He believes private organizations, pharmaceutical companies, and private citizens donated the pharmaceuticals.

Churches of Christ around the nation will be included in the groups sending items in later shipments.

"All Churches of Christ are individual congregations. We are all autonomous. There is no central organization, so we don't do disaster relief through a national organization."

That is why someone needs to coordinate shipments for disaster relief.

Kachelman said that he had been receiving calls from churches all over the nation.

"Everything these people had washed away. Their families are gone."

He said the response of the American people has been amazing.

"Our government wants to help, and between the government and the private sector, there's no telling how much financial aid Americans are sending. Americans are generous when they see a disaster like this."

A Church of Christ in Texas that has several members in construction has sent a construction crew.

He said he had a call from a church in Kentucky that had already raised \$10,000 for tsunami victims, and he gave them the names of several organizations that need financial contributions.

Kachelman, who has made 19 mission trips to the Ukraine, among other places, has been minister at Judsonia for about three years and said he and his wife Jennifer chose the Judsonia church because they are very supportive of mission work and concerns.

He attended a meeting in St. Louis in September of groups and organizations interested in aid, Kachelman said. The various organizations and the State Department were amazed at the amount of relief effort the small congregation of 200-250 has given and coordinated.

"How do you do that?" he was asked.

"It's just a good group of folks doing what they think the Lord wants them to do. They just love to help folks," he told them.

In an e-mail from Sri Lanka early on Jan. 3, Willie told Kachelman, "It really feels great to have concerned brethren around the world. This just goes to show the love of Christ that binds us together. Please thank all those who are going out of their way to help the people of the country in this time of grief and for all the prayers."

For individuals wanting to contribute in some way to aid the tsunami victims, Google.com's home page has information and a list of organizations that are currently accepting donations.

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