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ERUPTION OF VOLCANO DE FUEGO: GUATEMALA



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SUPPORT PLEDGED



IBEROAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me to give good news to the poor;
He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted;
To proclaim freedom to the captives,
And sight to the blind;
To release the oppressed;
To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4: 18-20*

On June 3, 2018 the Volcano of Fuego erupted. At 6:55 AM, it began to expel burning fine ashes continuously. At 2:00 pm, it furiously thundered and expelled volcanic gases and burning rocks and ashes of over 600 degrees of temperature; and filled Guatemala with mourning, leaving her sad, with many dead, many seriously injured, many people and villages buried, many disappeared, many evacuated and sheltered in shelters, collapsed electrical and road infrastructure, and many crops that sustain those communities, annihilated.



THE GOSPEL SCREAMED TO US:
Go out to cure

And we went several times to shelters in Escuintla. In the coming and going of the solidarity help, we entered with the offering that gave the International and Global Ministries of my churches, and in your name we shared food (chicken, vegetables, vegetables, eggs), laundry soap, deodorant and other aids; and on October 29, 2018, construction material for a community space in the shelter.

In the shelter we talked with many people. One of them was Julio Roberto, a young man of about 26 years old from San Miguel Los Lotes. His village was completely buried and uninhabitable. Julio was the percussionist and vocalist of the musical group of the Misionera church. He saved his wife, his 2 girls, his mother and father, but almost everyone in his village was buried. His pastor and his wife died, the director of the musical group and the keyboard player, and with them 18 relatives, perished, and lost everything. It hurt us to hear his story in tears.

That same day, we tried to go to San Miguel Los Lotes, but the passage to the village was closed. At 2pm we were in front of the checkpoint, and at that time residents who had gone early to dig with international help to find their dead were returning. There we listened to them, we felt their pain and we pray, and we cried with them.

Lety and Hugo, brothers, and their sister-in-law smelled of broken bodies. They told us, *we found our brother. There it is*, they pointed to a black pickup in front of us. *We found our mother days before, but our father does not appear yet.*

Irma & Mirna Pamal, in sobs told us, *we have not yet found our little son and nephew of 17 years. The day the volcano exploded, he came safely out of the village to the highway, but when he realized that I, his mother, was not there, he returned to look for me, and he did not return.*

Overwhelmed us their pain.



Open your eyes and liberate

As the Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala, we arranged the Christian voices (Episcopal, Catholic, Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Baptist, Pentecostal), and called upon the Guatemalan state for accountability. We held 3 press conferences followed by public prayers. On the last one, on October 3, 2018, at 4 months, 240 days after the tragedy caused by the eruption of the Volcán de Fuego, we said:

1) We are saddened by the regrettable situation of hundreds of families affected by this tragedy, whose realities become harder over time, many of them still housed in educational centers, without the minimum conditions that guarantee a dignified life (overcrowded, without privacy, vulnerable to abuses of any kind, and faced with the reduction of humanitarian aid); feelings of hopelessness, abandonment, disappointment, and anger.

2) We are concerned about the families who, not obtaining housing in safe areas, have returned to live in the areas surrounding the volcano of Fuego, and thus exposing themselves to new tragedies, which may be caused by the fall of lahars, according to the public entities of INSIVUMEH and CONRED.

3) We are alarmed by the uncertainty and the distress of the families, given the government's lack of will to prioritize this issue, as well as, its disinterest in establishing effective channels of direct and accurate communication to inform the affected families about the progress in the management and response to the crises they face. We are angry that the government has overvalued the cost of housing, and that by their corrupt management has stopped the construction of houses. Families are far from seeing a permanent solution to their displacement, so they will have to stay much longer in subhuman conditions in the shelters. Faced with this situation, the counterparts of the Ecumenical Council in Escuintla are seeing the construction of 100 decent homes at a cost of \$11,000 per housing unit.

Negligence outraged us.



Restart life

And we heard a challenge that is for everyone: Guatemala suffered the eruption of the Volcano of Fuego, hurricane María devastated Puerto Rico, and still does not rise, Indonesia, a tsunami, Mexico, earthquakes ..., natural disasters and victims everywhere. In that chaos and restlessness, God moves his spirit and begins life. That we told our brothers and sisters of San Miguel Los Lotes.

Humanitarian aid, necessary

Justice, the demand.

The order that was a mess
broke,

Negligence was evidenced,
and of chaos,

New Creation,

right steps,

rights for those who,

in shock

are expelled and expropriated:

New Creation.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Genesis 1: 1-