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Reflection # 3: The Ágape Christian Church, partner in the pain of the Honduran people



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SUPPORT PLEDGED





IBEROAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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This is the last of 3 reflections from my trip to Honduras: An inspiration of the incarnation of the Gospel from the testimony of the *Ágape* Christian Church and from the table of Church and Grassroots Christian Movements that *Ágape* coordinated in the Mesoamerican Forum. *Agape* was our hostess in Honduras, and we are already with her in the mission.

Blessed are the poor, the afflicted, the dispossessed, the hungry and thirsty for justice, the merciful, the pure, those who seek peace, the persecuted, because they will be consoled, will inherit the earth, will be satisfied, will receive mercy, will see to God, they will be called sons and daughters of God; to them belong the project of God.

Matthew 5: 1-12

The table Church and Grassroots Christian Movements rescued the martyr history of the Honduran church and connected it to the Mariological testimony in the scriptures and the history of Christianity.

The Honduran martyr history of extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances and murders of people working for the benefit of the most disadvantaged sectors is the history of peasants against unequal land tenure; of women for equal rights and full citizenship without asymmetries of power between genders and without violence against their bodies; of indigenous and black communities that defend their identity and territory against hydroelectric, mining, forest and other extractive activities; of workers for the rebounding of the legal and social structure that defines the distribution of income and poverty. The *Ágape* Christian Church heard God call in the burning bush of the Honduran pain of these and other groups and responded by going and being as their companion.

Ágape, One with the People

In the Mesoamerican Forum, some participants harshly censured the church for allying themselves with the powerful sectors of the country, for floating away in spirituality from the pain of the world or for assaulting the victims of the inhuman social order with blunt fundamentalisms. However, whenever that critical voice was heard, someone would get up

and say, nobody can deny that, however, not all churches are like that, Agape is with the people.



Iglesia & Movimientos Cristianos de Base

At the Church and Movements table, we discussed proposals that would bring the churches closer to the people, and we were happy to hear the testimony of Ágape's commitment. We said, the church should demolish its walls and goes where the pain is. People said, Ágape goes with the victims to collect the bodies of their loved ones; visit the dying in hospitals; rescues the captured and tortured from clandestine prisons and raises a voice of protest in the streets and on radio and television programs. We indicated that the church should find the injured groups, rescue their memory with them and help them to discover themselves as social actors. We heard from the people, Ágape went out to find the orphans of the murdered during the political-business-religious-imperial coup d'état and made them understand that their hands should touch; their feet, walk; their heart, love and their word, release, denounce and compromise. Ágape has earned the respect of those who dream of a new society. They said, some speak and dream, but their feet and minds walk in separate directions; to others it does not occur to them to find God in those who are run over; still, others, like false prophets, bought with dollars, bless those who hurt the people; not so the Ágape Christian Church.

I wanted to understand where and how Ágape came to be like that, and I asked Pastor David Del Cid. He told me: the transformation of Agape was in the wake of the coup d'état in 2009. We saw the army massacring, people disappearing and violating the most basic human rights of those who protested, and we understood where and with whom we were called to be.



Pastor David Del Cid

And you are with whom?

I pray for you to hear and understand
that the migrants face us.
In them
God speaks to us.
I pray that our ears, hear
our eyes, see
and that we respond to their call.
Before us,
the truth or the lie
justice or indecency
love or hate,
let's choose
or let's stick to the eternal judgment.

Pastor David del Cid gave me the book *Sólo Díganme Lupe* (Just Call Me Lupe) from Father Guadalupe Carney, an American martyr who became Honduran, and told me to read it. Reading it, I felt the same frustration that Lupe indicated. He said, the people of my country cannot see what causes human breakdown. Feeling the same as Lupe I say, if my people could understand that the failed Honduran nation model was imposed by us, the United States. If we could see and hear the Central American displaced people who are wanting to enter the United States, we would hear the cry that condemns the perversity of the security forces that kill and crush the will of the people; we would listen to the lament that shows the failure of a system that cannot go on any longer. If we listen to them, we would know that the government of the United States is an accomplice of this pain; and we would feel indignation with the announcement of militarizing the border to prevent outsiders from entering our land. It frustrates me that many of my people listen more to media outlets that label migrants as criminals, instead of hearing them and hear inside themselves God who forces us to be neighbors with the stranger.

The Honduran exodus demands that:

- We confess ourselves as accomplices of the interference in Honduras that led away public policies aimed at guaranteeing human rights;
- We firmly condemn the criminalization of the migrant population and treat them in accordance with International Humanitarian Law;
- We exalt the values of the kingdom and put them above any strategic business and geopolitical interests in the region.

Honduran migrants, like all Mesoamericans, demand a new nation pact that ends the model of extractive development and the warmongering logic that violates human rights and crushes the will of the people.

The Honduran exodus reminds us that the gospel is a moral obligation:

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory... All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

“Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Matthew 25:31, 41-46 New King James Version (NKJV)

Respond to the Lord

Thank you for joining me in the 3 reflections of my visit to Honduras.



En Ágape

Read the 2 previous reflections by clicking on these links:

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