



*Preaching Christ in Caracas, Venezuela*



## Ministry Update

### The Task is Just Overwhelming

The level of devastation in La Guaira—the area hardest hit by the double-earthquake that struck Greater Caracas on June 24—is staggering. It looks as if the city has been bombarded. Rescue teams are still scattered in the area in small groups, most of them privately organized by relatives and friends of those still missing under the rubble. Though untrained and unequipped, even three weeks after the disaster, they continue searching for signs of life in the desperate hope of finding their loved ones. As we walk by collapsed buildings in areas where no official rescue team has ever shown up, the rotting limbs of victims protrude from the rubble in plain sight—a horrific scene that will be difficult to forget.



Government involvement in actual rescue operations is minimal, if not completely absent. Instead, the administration has inexplicably saturated the area with armed soldiers rather than putting picks and shovels in their hands. This has only heightened the frustration and desperation among survivors, sending public rejection of the government through the roof. To date, the official toll stands at 4,930 dead and 16,740 injured, many of whom have suffered amputated limbs. However, the government refuses to release an official number for the missing, which is estimated to be no less than 30,000.



A stench of death hangs in the air everywhere you go from thousands of decomposing bodies. When we get home from visiting the area, we rush to put our clothes in the washer and shower immediately, because our clothes, bodies, hair, and even vehicles retain that nauseating odor. It is truly not a place for the faint of heart. Yet, despite this surreal and desolate situation, soul-winners from our and other independent Baptist churches, have been actively involved in taking relief to and sharing the gospel with survivors. And praise the Lord, many have come to know Christ as their Savior.



## Our Approach to Providing Relief and Sharing the Gospel

Prominent American non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have mobilized to provide medical attention, along with massive amounts of humanitarian relief in the form of food, medicine, clothing, and other supplies to survivors. In fact, supplies are overflowing at refugee camps close to the disaster areas. However, there are many remote, almost forgotten locations where little of this aid or medical attention is reaching survivors.

We have decided to target these exact areas. Our team brings medical attention, medicine, food, and other supplies directly to them—but above all, we bring the Word of God. Please pray that our efforts open doors for the gospel and that many more come to know Christ as their Savior.

Our group of up to 35 volunteers consists of:

- **A Medical Team:** Up to three doctors and two nurses providing medical care and distributing medicine.
- **A Children's Ministry Team:** Bringing Bible lessons to the youngest survivors.
- **Barbers & Hair Stylists:** Church volunteers offering free haircuts while actively sharing the Gospel.
- **A Logistics Team:** Dedicated entirely to organized food distribution.
- **A Soul-Winning Team:** Spreading out through each site to share the gospel.



Sharing the gospel



Bringing food to Rescue Teams



Sharing Christ while Serving

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## Strategic Location



Our church is strategically located as the closest independent Baptist church outside the earthquake disaster zone in La Guaira. Being the largest congregation in the area, we have naturally become a central donation-collection hub—not only for some smaller churches in the region but also for the general public.

Thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers who drive into the affected areas, we have maintained a continuous flow of food, clothing, medicine, and other vital supplies.



## A History of Faith in the Midst of Tragedy

The first independent Baptist church ever planted in La Guaira—Iglesia Bautista La Espada (Sword Baptist Church)—started 21 years ago as a simple Bible study in a rented hotel room. It was led by Brother Rafael Ramirez, who was then a Bible college student and serves as its pastor today. Soon after, we began bussing people in to attend our Sunday morning services until we finally decided to formally plant a church in the area. Today, it is the largest independent Baptist church in La Guaira and serves as our secondary hub, receiving and distributing a massive portion of our relief donations.



All four of the other independent Baptist churches in the state of La Guaira were planted out of Pastor Ramirez's church, and all of their pastors were trained in our Bible college. Tragically, all five of these churches have been heavily affected by the earthquake. Three have already reported the deaths of church members, and after three weeks, there is little hope that those still reported as missing will be found alive. Pastor Eros Oropeza (mentioned in our previous update) reports that a staggering 70% of his congregation is currently dead or missing under rubble. It is an unspeakable tragedy.

### Here the churches in La Guaira and their pastors

1. Iglesia Bautista La Espada (Maiquetia) • Pastor Rafael Ramírez
2. Iglesia Bautista del Caribe (Caribe) • Pastor Eros Oropeza
3. Iglesia Bautista Roca Firme (Catia la Mar) • Pastor Enrique Díaz
4. Iglesia Bautista Monte Horeb (Ciudad Caribia) • Pastor Alexis Capote
5. Iglesia Bautista La Antorcha de Dios • Pastor Tony Perez (Carayaca)

Please pray for all these pastors, their families and their churches.



## Teaming Up



I have invited two other pastors to join forces with us to maximize our impact. Two of us (Pastor Klixon Castillo and I) serve with Macedonia World Baptist Missions, while Hector García is a missionary sent directly out of West Gate Baptist Church in Tampa, FL. As I write this letter, we have just begun working together to reach earthquake survivors with both relief and the Word of God. We firmly believe that by working as one, much more can be accomplished for the glory of God. Please pray for us as we minister together to those in need.



## **Support Our Relief Efforts Financially**

If you feel led to help us purchase food, medicine, and other essentials for the victims, you can give securely online through two channels. All donations are fully tax-deductible, and 100% of these funds go directly to on-the-ground earthquake relief.



***Macedonia World Baptist Missions, Inc.***  
Clicking here >>> [\*\*MWBM - Venezuela Earthquake Relief\*\*](#)

Thank you very much for caring for the Venezuelan people. Thank you very much for your prayers and financial support.



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