Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Newsletter

Keeping in Mind Global Mission In South America

The largest humanitarian crisis in South America

Humanitarian crises can emerge from a range of events, crossing conflicts, natural disasters, and even infectious disease outbreaks. Humanitarian crises is an event or series of events that represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security, or wellbeing of a community or other large group of people, usually over a wide area.

International organizations define humanitarian crises as a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict, which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency, and which has been assessed to require intensive and extensive political and management coordination.

Humanitarian crises are typically characterized by, extensive violence and loss of life, displaced populations, widespread damage to societies and economies, a need for large-scale, multi-faceted humanitarian assistance, the hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints, significant security risks for humanitarian workers in some areas.

The humanitarian crisis is an emergency in which massive needs for humanitarian assistance has a far greater extent; and which, if not provided with sufficiency, efficiency, and diligence, leads to a humanitarian catastrophe

The causes can be political crises (international or civil war, persecution of a minority), environmental crises, which in turn can be predictable (bad harvests due to drought, plagues or in any case bad planning), which can produce famines, little predictable (hurricanes, monsoons) or totally unpredictable (earthquakes, tsunamis).

The major causes of humanitarian crises in the world are products of political crises where they not only highlight actions that do not generate the rebound of the economy but whose governments are plagued by bureaucracy and corruption.

Never has South America faced a scenario of characteristics like those of Syria, Rwanda or Kosovo. The collapse of Venezuela confronts South America to a crisis of proportions previously unknown.

UN reports that 2.3 million Venezuelans have left their country. The exodus does not stop, even worse, the migration of Venezuelans will worsen, even more, reaching figures comparable to the most dramatic international cases.

The images and testimonies multiply, the tragedy has ceased to be only Venezuelan, the current Venezuelan exodus is the largest mass population movements in the history of Latin America affecting every country in the region

How many kilometers do they have to walk to get from Venezuela to Colombia, to Ecuador or Peru?

How much desperation do they have to suffer to undertake such a trip?

They are called "walkers" because they walk up to 11 hours a day. They are the Venezuelan migrants leaving their country to stay in Colombia or crossing to Ecuador or Peru. All the walkers suffer serious needs regarding food, lodging, health, hygiene, and transport. Daily they face the terrible dilemma of returning to their points of origin or moving on to their destiny, walking and living on charity

Standing with those who are vulnerable and desperate

Under humanitarian crisis, churches have a role to play as promoters and weavers of links and networks, calling people to work together and collaborating with other religious, and non-religious organizations.

The church lives and works in history, interacting with a society and culture to fulfill its mission of communicating the uniqueness of the Gospel in the concrete reality of difficulties, struggles, and challenges. Faith helps people to understand that opening oneself to the love of God is true liberation.

Usually, when something bad happens, in many places people seek help in churches. Churches help to deal with disasters and crisis, mitigate and prevent their effects, and, learn to reduce the risks of future emergencies.

One of the greatest strengths of churches is the importance of relationships and accompaniment; recognizing the pains and inner suffering of people, responding with hospitality and pastoral care. Is natural for the churches to recognize that people have spiritual and emotional needs and that they deserve dignity and respect; sadly, assistance organizations do not always do this.

The church knows how to accompany and communicate the message of God's love and hope for the future. Prayer and pastoral care are also a key contribution, both for those who are going through a humanitarian crisis and for those who come to help.

In the context of unprecedented migration and humanitarian crisis, Latin American churches are providing humble and spontaneous services of solidarity and welcome to migrants. Several congregations in the Latin American companion churches are assisting, mostly in poor neighborhoods where congregations are and where migrants find some spaces to shelter.

Local congregations help with their scarce resources, offering a minimum of humanitarian aid, mitigating desolation, protecting fundamental rights, ensuring subsistence, safeguarding the dignity of people and communities' victims of forced migration.

In Colombia, IELCO Congregation Lluvias de Gracias in-Bogotá and Divino Redentor Congregation in Bucaramanga; Peru, IL-P Belén Congregation, Lima; in Argentina-Uruguay, IELU San Pedro-Posadas Congregation offer, under their limited possibilities, basic shelter, and services

We support compassionate survival assistance for refugees and vigorous international protection for them.

The world community has a responsibility to aid nations that receive refugees and to help change the situations from which they have fled.

In our own country, we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants.

We pledge to continue our church's historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants.

FOR PEACE IN GOD'S WORLD
(ELCA, 1995, Social Stament)

Churches offer information to migrants about rights, and connections with support networks, facilitate communication and family reunification; and humanitarian assistance in basic needs such as shelter, health, hygiene, food, used clothing store, employment information, and legal assistance.

ELCA Solidarity

ELCA / GM has established a strategy to deal with the Venezuelan migration crisis, comprehensively addressing support in border areas, accompanying the Lutheran Church in Venezuela and being supportive of its companion churches that are receiving refugees and Venezuelan migrants. ELCA companions can support their congregations by applying small funds through disaster aid projects facilitated by Global Mission / ELCA (ELCA Disaster Response) . ELCA/GM Disaster Response is also supporting Venezuelan migration initiatives from LWF – World Service office en Colombia. LWR-Peru; WACC en Colombia-Venezuela, EPES-Chile, CAREF-Argentina.

YOUR SUPPORT

A COMMITMENT WITH GLOBAL MISSION

HERE'S HOW TO GIVE:

Give through your synod office or mail your check to: ELCA, Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. By credit or debit card: https://community.elca.org/Argentina-Uruguay or call 800-638-3522

Make check payable to "ELCA Global Church Sponsorship" with "Gustavo Driau GCS2045" in the memo line.

ELCA missionaries have helped establish growing churches throughout the world. As a result, we are now part of a much larger story — a global community of more than 70 million Lutherans in 79 countries

PRAYER REQUESTS

-The Venezuelan migrants and the welcoming congregations in Peru, Colombia Chile, Argentina

-The end of the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, that food will be available and provided to those who need it, especially children.

-Those who need life saving and life sustaining medical care will be able to access it

-Those who have fled their country will be treated with dignity, respect, mercy and compassion.

-The ELCA Missionaries serving in Chile (Karen Anderson and Ryana Holt) and in Colombia (Curtis Kline, Katie Andert Kline)

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