

Damage to evangelical churches reported widespread in El Salvador

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LAM News Service

Miami, Florida (LAMNS)—Information is emerging from El Salvador that the evangelical church there has suffered heavy losses in the wake of the January 13 earthquake that claimed 726 people plus six in neighboring Guatemala.

Juan Carlos Hasbún of the Salvadorian Evangelical Confraternity (CONESAL) reports that 560 churches were damaged nationwide while many evangelical families suffered tremendous loss.



Among the damage reported:

- El Sembrador (The Sower), an independent church, lost its building plus one of its worship leaders
- Filadelfia Church, located in Santa Tecla where a landslide buried an entire section of the town and hundreds perished, lost 12 members, with more than 25 families homeless—amounting to over 100 people.
- A pastor and his family who were serving a Nazarene church were all killed.
- The Church of God Biblical Institute in Santa Tecla was destroyed along with five churches
- The Kingdom Community church in Santa Tecla counted eight members buried in the slide and their church building severely damaged.
- Nazareth High School in Santa Tecla lost 15 students along with their families.
- The El Salvador Baptist Association reports churches destroyed in the areas of Tacuba, Ahuachapán, Santa Elena, San Agustín, Santiago de María and Ozatlán.
- The Friends churches report three churches destroyed.
- The Assemblies of God report 20 deaths among its members, 88 pastor's homes destroyed and 119 churches damaged or destroyed

In one church alone, The Friends of Israel Bible Baptist Tabernacle, 39 members were killed in the earthquake.

Two weeks after the deadly quake, dozens of local and foreign volunteers are still digging for bodies buried under mountains of dirt in and around the capital.

In addition to the more than 700 deaths, the 7.6 magnitude earthquake injured 4,440 people and damaged or destroyed more than 190,000 homes. More than 850 public buildings also were damaged in the quake.

By far the worst damage occurred in Las Colinas, a densely populated neighborhood in the city of Santa Tecla, 10 miles west of the capital, San Salvador.

The landslide buried 300 homes, and local residents say as many as 1,000 people are still missing.

The Latin America Mission is supplying relief funds to Dr. Mario Valencia, a Christian dentist and lay pastor who lives just blocks from the landslide. Dr. Valencia is leading a team of doctors and dentists who are working in small communities around the capital, San Salvador, reaching out to many who have not been helped by other relief agencies. He and his team are also working to plant churches in those communities.

Contributions for El Salvadorian relief may be sent to The Latin America Mission, Box 52-7900, Miami, FL 33152, or in Canada to LAM at 3075 Ridgeway Drive, Unit 14, Mississauga, ON L5L 5M6.

The Latin America Mission works in partnership with churches and Christian agencies throughout Latin America and supports missionaries and projects in many Latin countries as well as in Spain. LAM is seeking to place new missionaries throughout the region. The U.S. headquarters can be reached at Latin America Mission, Box 52-7900, Miami, FL 33152, by e-mail at info@lam.org, or by calling 1-800-275-8410. The mission's web site may be found at <http://www.lam.org>. LAM's Canadian office is at 3075 Ridgeway Drive, Unit 14, Mississauga, ON L5L 5M6.

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