

New El Salvador earthquake renews relief work

By Kenneth D. MacHarg
LAM News Service

Miami (LAMNS)—“Our group of doctors and dentists and the Beautiful Vista Baptist Church are redoubling our efforts in light of the new earthquake,” reports Dr. Mario Palencia following a second strong earthquake in a month to jolt El Salvador. “We are making packets of food to deliver to those who were affected.” Palencia, who is a dentist and the pastor of the church, says that his group made two trips in the first two days following the February 13 quake to take supplies and medical care to those who were affected.

The new temblor measured 6.6 on the Richter scale and left over 250 dead, over 2,260 injured and more than 2,000 houses destroyed. This quake followed a 7.6 earthquake on January 13 that killed 844, injured 4,723 and destroyed 278,000 houses.

Hundreds of people are still unaccounted for from last month's quake, which triggered a landslide burying whole blocks of the capital city's Santa Tecla suburb under mud and wrecked thousands of homes.

Officials said the death toll could sharply increase due to numerous landslides that had blocked highways and prevented access to some communities.

Over 560 churches were reported destroyed or damaged in the January earthquake.

The Panamerican Highway was heavily damaged and will be out of service for the foreseeable future.

San Salvador, the nation's capital city, which was not affected seriously by the quake, had no drinking water after pipes in the city collapsed.

Dr. Palencia reports that the series of earthquakes and thousands of aftershocks, some of them very powerful, have left the population very nervous. “In the place where there are many homeless people from the January earthquake there was chaos yesterday. The atmosphere was one of cries, tears, pain and agony.” He said that the efforts of doctors and psychologists will have to be increased in those areas.

“President Francisco Flores has issued a call for help from the international community to rescue the victims, help the doctors and provide mobile hospitals for all of the people affected on Tuesday,” he says.

“Your prayers will support us,” he says.

The Latin America Mission has already been involved with Dr. Palencia's work in the affected areas. “God has moved in the hearts of people who are contributing to relieving the emergency in El Salvador,” says José Zirena, Finance Manager/Controller for LAM.

“An initial check has been sent and more will follow as God continues to work in the midst of this difficulty.”

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.

Material from the Associated Press and Reuters News Service was used in this story.

New El Salvador earthquake renews relief work, *LAM News Service*, Feb 14, 2001