



Bringing hope in the time of Coronavirus

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble
(Psalm 46:1).*

Preparation for Easter, like everything else in our lives, has no doubt been turned upside down by Coronavirus.

For some the lockdown will be a challenge due to isolation and being far away from friends and family, or conversely of being on top of family 24/7 and craving space. For others, it will involve economic difficulties and future uncertainty, or tragically grieving loved ones.

On the positive side, it may provide opportunities to reconnect with people, both far and near, or to spend time reflecting on priorities in life and drawing closer to God, or even of moments of creativity and celebration among the suffering and uncertainty.

One of the most poignant memories I have of my time working with Paz Esperanza in Peru is the time people took to celebrate life, to celebrate each other, to celebrate successes and God's goodness in the midst of hardship. These moments are like glimpses of God's Kingdom breaking through in a world that we struggle to understand.

At Easter, through Jesus' death and resurrection, God's Kingdom broke into the world in a way that changed it forever. In a way that brings life, that gives us hope for the future, despite our ongoing struggles.

Whatever the challenges and the joys, I pray that this Easter you will know the power and comfort of our risen Lord Jesus Christ, breaking in to your life and in to the lives of those around you.

I also ask that you join with me in praying for people in the countries where Paz y Esperanza is working, and for their response to the Coronavirus as they continue to bring hope and see God's love breaking through in very challenging circumstances.

Graham Gordon - Director PyE UK

Paz y Esperanza
OFFICES

Peru
More than 860,000 Venezuelans have arrived in Peru and more than 394,000 have applied for refugee status.

Ecuador
Approximately 500,000 Venezuelan citizens live in Ecuador, and at least 15% would be in irregular status.

Colombia
The number of Venezuelan migrants living in Colombia already exceeds 1.6 million.

We are living through a pandemic that has forced different Latin American states to implement social (physical) isolation and curfew as a prevention of widespread infection.

This isolation has meant that many migrant families and people living from day to day do not have the resources to cover their daily expenses, as they have no guaranteed income.

At this time of health emergency, Paz y Esperanza continues its work and needs to continue providing psychosocial assistance, hygiene kits and food to the most vulnerable people.

HEALTH EMERGENCY
COVID-19

Coronavirus response by Paz y Esperanza offices

The challenges faced in many developing countries are much greater than we have seen so far in Europe and the multi-billion pound bailout we have received in the UK simply isn't an option.

Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and other Latin American countries have health systems that already struggle to serve the whole population and currently do not have the workers, bed spaces and equipment to cope with the spread of the virus.

The impacts of poverty mean that social distancing is impossible, with families living and eating together in one room, and with limited access to water or sanitation.

There are millions of people who are beyond the easy reach of the state e.g. indigenous communities and those in slums and shanty-towns, who will struggle to access economic support or medical care. These include the migrant population, such as the millions who have arrived from Venezuela in the past 2-3 years.

The majority of people earn a living from the informal economy, through buying and selling goods or casual work, and don't have savings to rely on or other income. If they don't go to work, their families don't eat.

Paz y Esperanza is bringing emergency supplies of food and basic hygiene kits to these vulnerable populations, with particular focus on the Venezuelan migrants. The response has been made more difficult through the social distancing measures, but PyE together with the church networks with their long-term relationships and reach into all communities has provided a lifeline for many people.

For regular updates on the situation, check our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PazyEsperanzaUK/>

Please pray for

- A slowing of the spread of the Coronavirus
- The governments across these countries as they respond effectively through healthcare services, social security provision, and support for businesses and people's livelihoods
- For technical and financial support from developing countries to limit both the health and economic impacts
- For the response of Paz y Esperanza and the wider church as they seek to serve the most vulnerable in society and to speak out for those who are often overlooked.

If you are in a position to give financially to help Paz y Esperanza's response, please visit our COVID-19 appeal by clicking on: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/pyecovid-19response>

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