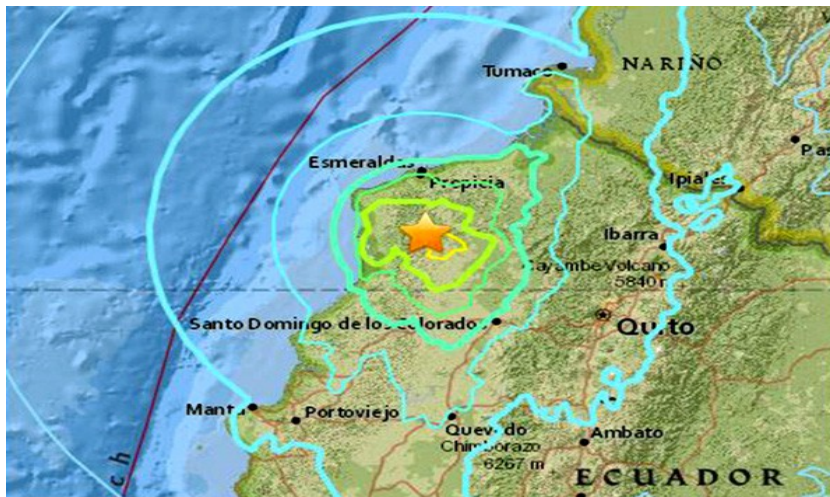


Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,

The Day of the Earthquakes

On April 16, one day after my return to Ecuador, a series of earthquakes, including a 7.8, hit the coast. We live 100 miles inland and could feel it strongly in the community of Carcelen. Darrell and I took cover under his desk as our floors and walls swayed back and forth for 40 seconds ! Praise be to God that we and our home survived, but for many others this is not the case !



The official reports are: more than 700 aftershocks, 640 people found dead, more than 100 still missing, more than 100 rescued alive, approximately 12,500 injured, more than 26,000 homeless, approximately 7,000 buildings destroyed, and 2.5 to 3.8 billion U.S. dollars will be needed to rebuild!



When Death Comes Unexpectedly

The world of the coastal Ecuadorians has been turned upside down. Families are grieving the loss of loved ones, friends, neighbors, and church family. A woman, a good friend of a Reach Beyond missionary couple, named Marianita, has lost six family members. She and her family were attending a church activity when their world and the building came crashing down. She and her family members were trapped inside the rubble for two days. Marianita and her grand-daughter who were within hearing distance from each other, talked, cried and prayed. When her grand-daughter's cellphone rang, Marianita pleaded with her to answer the phone. But the the phone was never answered and her grand-daughter never responded to her plea. It is because she went home to be with Jesus. **Many other stories like this have been told.**



Herman, Reach Beyond Missionary Praying with Marianita

One of the many things I had set out to accomplish during my recent trip to the U.S. was to visit my childhood friends, Mona and Sandy. Each of them has had significant health challenges, and because I don't know when the next time will be that I will visit the U.S. I knew I needed to spend some quality time with them. Sandy has had a pacemaker for several years now and has recently developed a hole in her heart. She may need surgery. Mona currently has five diagnosed lung diseases. The doctors say "she has already surpassed her expiration date by six years!" And now things are progressing even more. So I know I need to prepare. **Praise God that both of my dear friends are Christians so that when their time here on earth ends, the three of us know beyond a doubt where they are going!**

Also, while in Wisconsin, I visited another dear friend - Elaine. We met as single-moms and co-workers more than 25 years ago. Elaine too has had her share of health problems. **During most of our friendship, Elaine did not know Christ as her Lord and Savior. And this concerned me deeply.** So, I shared my testimony and the gospel with her and encouraged her to consider attending church and to begin reading her Bible. For many years she resisted. So I prayed with all my might. **Then, praise be to God, a few years after her daughter accepted the Lord as her Savior, Elaine decided to do the same.**

Why do I share this? Because, much to everyone's surprise, Mona is still here with us, but the same day the earthquakes took the lives of so many Ecuadorians, the Lord called my dear friend Elaine home. Darrell asked if I wanted to turn around and go back for the funeral. I paused and said "No, I'm good". We had spent many hours together and the last thing I said to her was, "I love you Elaine and I'll see you later either here or there (meaning heaven)."

Many of the coastal Ecuadorians did not have the opportunity to accept Jesus as their Savior before the earthquake hit and took their lives. But those who did are now in heaven with my friend Elaine. I like to think that she is looking out after them. Of those who survived that terrible day, others, like Marianita, immediately went about God's business witnessing to others! Please pray for strength for the survivors of the earthquake, and that many will now come to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord over their lives!

When Two Days Turn Into Eight

During the days and weeks following the 7.8 earthquake, Reach Beyond began responding to the needs of the people on the coast. The first team was sent within days, the second team was sent the following week (then the third was sent with future teams to follow). Darrell and Cesar, the water engineer for Reach Beyond's community development ministry, left for the coast to check on water projects that had been installed some time ago, hoping that the earthquake had not disrupted the clean water supply. **Originally, Darrell was to be gone for only two days. But soon, two days turned into eight when the medical team asked him to stay and help for the rest of the week!**

Darrell, Hermann (another Reach Beyond missionary), and Doctors Wisecup and Guevara traveled from Atacames (near the epicenter) south through several small communities that had not yet been reached or who were in need of extra assistance. Check out the links below to blogs from the medical team which include photos of Darrell:

<https://calloftheandes.wordpress.com/2016/04/29/notes-from-the-quake-zone-sixth-in-a-series/>

<https://calloftheandes.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/notes-from-the-quake-zone-eighth-in-a-series/>

<https://calloftheandes.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/notes-from-the-quake-zone-ninth-in-a-series/>

<https://calloftheandes.wordpress.com/2016/05/04/notes-from-the-quake-zone-sixteenth-in-a-series/>

Included in the activities for the week was a special trip that Hermann made to the location where Samaritan's Purse has set up their field hospital. This portable structure is set up in the community of Chone. The temporary hospital is located halfway between Esmeraldas, in the northern part of the coast and Guayaquil, in the very southern part of the western coast. Reach Beyond has partnered with Samaritan's Purse during past disasters and once again is making connections to see if they can offer assistance in the months to come.

Darrell and the other members of the medical team were blessed by staying in a hotel in the city of Atacames, which belonged to a friend of a Reach Beyond missionary, and later by staying in the only hostel left standing in the community of Canoa. The people they were serving were not as fortunate. Most were now living (and will be for several months) in tents or newly constructed crude structures of bamboo (or wood) and plastic. Their beds were now donated mattresses wrapped in plastic that were placed upon wooden pallets. With electricity, food and water supplies damaged and cellphone batteries dead, utility workers, the military, and cellphone companies vans (containing portable chargers) worked diligently trying to heal the damaged infrastructure of those communities. Police, military, and firefighters driven by adrenaline searched for victims buried under the rubble. Psychologists and chaplains are working to comfort the fears and to calm the people as they now suffer from panic attacks from experiencing an incredibly high number of aftershocks. **The Reach Beyond medical teams are committed to serving the hurting people not only with medical care, but hugs, smiles, tears of compassion, and prayers given with the love of Christ. Only God can heal the wounds of these people - not the government, nor the relief organizations, nor we the Christians. Yes, we need to show the love and compassion**

of Jesus. Yes, physical and financial assistance can and should be given. Our handshakes, smiles, hugs, listening ears as they share their stories, and shared tears of empathy will all help in the healing process. But it is your prayers that are desperately needed! Only God can heal them completely! PLEASE remember the people of Ecuador and keep them in your prayers in the coming months.

Check out the blog link below concerning one missionary's thoughts ' what God knows'.
<https://calloftheandes.wordpress.com/2016/05/24/what-does-god-know/>



Darrell and Sondra Holden

Serving with Ripe For Harvest - Partnering with Reach Beyond



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