

The Guatemalan Tragedy

By Gabrielle Dinardi



I am sure that many people have heard of the recent deadly eruption of Mount Fuego, a volcano which resides in the southern region of Guatemala in early June of this year. The latest death tolls are currently ringing in at 114 victims, with hundreds of others injured and/or still missing, and with over 1.7 million people being affected by the current harsh conditions spread throughout the country.

When I first heard the news of this terrible natural disaster, I was shocked.

Myself, along with a few of my friends and some other members of my church have been planning on going on a mission trip to Guatemala in just a little over a month. Because of these plans, hearing this devastating story made me very upset, especially since it hit a nation that is close to my heart. We still plan on attending the missions trip, but the plans have been slightly altered so that we will be partnering with nonprofit organizations based out of Guatemala and beyond to help with cleanup efforts, volunteer in homeless/emergency shelters, and helping out in any way that we can. I cannot possibly imagine why this sort of tragedy happens in our world, but if there is any way that I can be of assistant to the people hurting, I would like to. A pastor from the church we are partnering with in Guatemala stated in a Facebook video explaining that they are currently working with an organization called Code Red, and in doing so they are grieving with parents who have lost their children, children who have lost their parents, and those who are still searching for family members.

When most people think of homeless people, they think of someone who ran out of money, got evicted, and ended up on the streets. However, this current news story brings thought to a whole other type of homelessness that can be just as devastating, which is that caused by a natural disaster. It has been reported that over 4,000 citizens of Guatemala are currently homeless, as entire villages are completely covered with toxic ash and chemical gasses. One story also points out that the majority of these victims had previously made a living through their farming efforts, which have been destroyed as well. These people have undergone such a terrifying, devastating event that will change their lives forever, and they are going to need help getting back to whatever they will be able to make of their previously “normal lives.”

Guatemalan government has stated that new housing will be provided to those who lost their homes in the eruption, but this kind of solution will take time, and it will likely be years before these people are settled into new homes. Homeless shelters in the area are currently at over twice their capacities, with a lack of abundance of available food and clothing to provide for those who now have next to nothing. Although no efforts will ever make this tragedy disappear, I hope that I can be a part of a response that can make dealing with the aftermath slightly less painful for everyone involved.

References

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