



IMPACT PRAYER ALERT

June 4, 2005



CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Latin America is a region of contrasts, where the gap between rich and poor is often vast – in Brazil, for example, the poorest 20% of the population account for only 2.2% of the country's income (Source - Tearfund). Many people live in poverty-stricken slum areas, where open sewers run down the streets, and families live in over-crowded, poorly-built housing.

There is frequent political unrest in countries such as Colombia, and the unstable environment contributes to high numbers of street children in many of the Central and South American nations. When families are displaced, children are often separated from their parents. Children are also amongst the most vulnerable to injury during times of conflict, and have been used as child soldiers in civil wars in the continent.

There is not always access to education – in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, only a third of children go to school, leading to the illiteracy of half the adult population (Source - Tearfund). 1 in 8 children in Latin America have to work, so a significant proportion of them lose out on the opportunities which education would bring, to move away from the cycle of poverty.

Street children

Children living and working on the streets face a huge number of risks: they are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, ill health, and many other dangers. Many of them become addicted to solvents or other drugs, as they try to drown out the cold, hunger and loneliness of their lives.

Children end up on the streets for all sorts of reasons – their parents might have

died or abandoned them, or they may be running away from abuse in the home. Many more sleep at home but spend their days on the streets, begging or doing casual work to supplement the family income. Around the world, there are 150 million street children – it would take you over three years to say each of their names, if you took one second per name.

In Guatemala, a team working with street children met a young boy named Mycol. He held a rag soaked in solvent over his nose and mouth, and his speech was slurred. He told them that he had been living on the streets for years, after being thrown out of his home. He earned money where he could, wiping car windscreens at traffic lights, or washing up at restaurants in exchange for food.

When the team had to leave, Mycol hugged them all, pleading “Come tomorrow, come tomorrow”. He told them that it was his birthday the following day.

The next day, the team came back with a birthday cake, but Mycol wasn't there. He eventually arrived, looking upset and clearly very affected by drugs. He told them that he had been sleeping on the steps of the cathedral when two young policemen had beaten him up, kicking him and striking him with their truncheons. For them, it had been nothing more than a bit of fun to relieve the boredom of their night duty. To them, street children like Mycol are seen as worthless, and are frequent targets for this kind of abuse.

(Source: Ron Newby, Global Care)

Violence and conflict

90% of casualties in armed conflict around the world are civilians – and half of these are children (Source - Unicef). In Colombia, 6000 children are actively involved in the conflict, with thousands of others at risk of harm from landmines and street violence. Over a million have been displaced due to conflict in the last 15 years, bringing a lack of security, family income and community structures.

A partner organisation of Tearfund works with children in Medellin, Colombia, where violence is common in everyday life. Club Deportivo teaches young people football skills, giving sports training and also Bible study and mentoring. They work on relational skills so that violent behaviour can be prevented and disagreements settled peacefully. Danilo, a coach for the club says, “It's not the sport that transforms them, but they do enter into a very different dynamic than just hanging out on the streets, smoking marijuana or carrying arms for the adults. By bringing them together through sport, you are in a position to work with them. They begin a process of getting to understand who God is and what that means in their lives. So little by little we start getting them closer to the church through different activities. We are working with the local church and getting them to pastor the children.”

(Source: Tearfund).

Prayer points:

Pray that the poor of Latin American nations will be equipped with understanding, motivated by vision, and enabled with guidance and seed money required to create wealth and employment through new micro-enterprise business opportunities.

Pray for all the children living on the streets in Central and South America, and around the world. Pray for protection, and for just treatment by the

authorities.

Pray for guidance in how Jesus would have you involved in this Millennium Mission.

Pray for positive outcomes regarding the following:

**FOCUS ON HUNGER IN THE U.S. A.
THIRD ANNUAL HUNGER AWARENESS DAY
June 7, 2005**

Statement by Senator Elizabeth Dole:

June 3rd, 2004 - Mr. President, one year ago I shared my thoughts here on the Senate Floor on a matter that weighs heavily on my mind. I reserved my maiden speech on the floor for a topic I chose to make one of my top priorities as a U.S. Senator.

Hunger, Mr. President, is the silent enemy lurking within too many American homes and a tragedy I have seen firsthand far too many times throughout my life in public service. Today, on National Hunger Awareness Day, I call once again for a hunger free America.

The battle to end hunger in our country is a campaign that cannot be won in months, or even a few years – but it is a victory within reach. What we need is to help our fellow Americans understand the terrible reality of hunger...and how to put a stop to it. As Washington Post columnist David Broder said, “America has some problems that defy solution. This one does not. It just needs caring people and a caring government, working together.”

Pray throughout the year to come for a hunger free U.S.A. even as your pray for a hunger free world.

FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP & GOVERNMENT

Pray that God would anoint the following persons with wisdom, courage, compassion, and the will to do right:

President George W. Bush

Vice-President Richard Chaney

Members of the U.S. Senate (follow link)

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives (follow link)