



## MINUTE FOR MISSION

January 15, 2006

### Destruction in Guatemala

This report (edited for space) was written following the destruction brought about by Hurricane Stan in early October.

Gloria and I are in Quetzaltenango. We are not suffering. Oh, we had a few days without Internet access, and it is intermittent at times now and the cable TV was down for the same period, but we are living on higher ground—we are part of the privileged few who can afford to live in a place that is barely affected by the rains that have hurt so many here. Somehow that seems inconsistent with being a mission worker and identifying psychically with the indigenous—and it is the poor indigenous who are taking the brunt of this disaster, as it always is. Hillsides have collapsed and killed many living on them and in the valleys below them. Living on the hills here is not always a choice—they may be the only places available.



Hurricane Stan has left many people seeking safety. Photo: Silvia Montufar de Garcia, CEDEPCA, Guatemala

I went with an indigenous pastor yesterday to visit some communities along the river that courses through Quetzaltenango. We climbed a steep hill that gave us a panoramic view that would have been exhilarating if the wide swath of mud and destruction below that had buried cars, houses, crops, and buildings had not been so great. With a group of people who lived along the river, we descended from the top of the hill through destroyed corn and bean plants and came to the river's edge. I asked why the bridge over the river was yet, strangely,



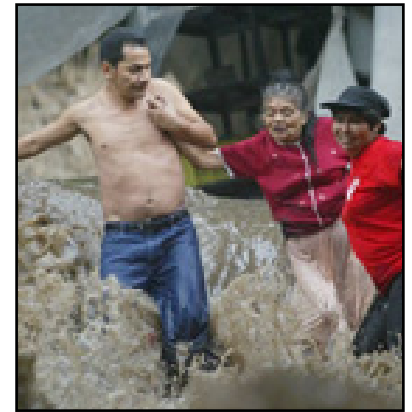
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on the other side of the river. I was told that the river had changed course, and that it had been directed away from its normal channel and was now running down a road and through houses.

We met a young man who was scavenging in what had been his house. He had one of his eight children with him, a little boy. He said he was an employee of a block-making company that provided him a house while he worked and guarded the place. Now he had no house and no job. He asked if we had any clothes for his kids or maybe some food since they were now sharing space with relatives near the area. Tears crept into the young man's eyes and the desperation he felt was now shared by the rest of us.

One Great Hour of Sharing has made it possible to send \$47,000 to help with recovery from Hurricane Stan. Your church, through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (a One Great Hour of Sharing ministry), has been involved since the outset and will stay involved for however long recovery takes. Please send contributions through Presbyterian Disaster Response for Hurricane Stan, DR000139. For more information contact Pamela Burdine, (888) 728-7228, ext. 5839.

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PC(USA) Mission Workers  
Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

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*For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-7228, ext. 5689, or [Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org).*

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