

Services are stretched to the limit:

LAM joins Latin Link in responding to Peru earthquake

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

LAM News Service

Miami, FL (LAMNS)—Christians from both sides of the Atlantic are joining forces to help out in the wake of a severe earthquake in Peru.

The Latin America Mission is joining with its British partner, Latin Link, to channel resources to local churches working to help people rebuild their homes and lives.

The 8.1-magnitude quake that struck southern Peru on Saturday, June 23 killed 102 people and sent a tidal surge more than a half-mile inland. Dozens of beachside hotels have been leveled and fields have washed away. Scores of dead livestock - cows, mules, horses, and pigs - are scattered across once-lush farmland. Rescue workers plan to burn the dead animals to prevent the spread of disease.

Over two million hectares of farmland were destroyed in the earthquake according to Juan Carlos Diaz, a Christian who lives in the center of the affected area.

The temblor injured at least 1,374 people and left 47,696 people homeless.

On Tuesday, June 25, a 5.0-magnitude aftershock struck the devastated region, about 580 miles southeast of the capital, Lima, said Peru's Civil Defense. No major damage or deaths were immediately reported.

Schools in Arequipa, Peru's second largest city, which is in the center of the area where the quake struck, have been closed for at least a week. Latin Link's Rosemary Gibson, head teacher of the International College, reports that the school suffered only broken windows, but the safety of the building and the students is still a major concern.

Together with Latin Link missionary Ruth Green, Rosemary has been visiting the surrounding shantytowns, which have been worst hit, to see how they can help.

The situation in smaller, more rural towns and villages is worse. Mountain roads are blocked and many of the adobe homes have been destroyed.

Rosemary reports that while daytime temperatures soar, warm clothing and shelter are needed at night. Medical needs are acute, she says, as many older hospital buildings were damaged by the earthquake. Services have been stretched to the limit.

The Latin America Mission is receiving funds to help with Latin Link's work in the area. Tax deductible donations may be sent to the Latin America Mission, Box 52-7900, Miami, FL. In Canada, contributions may be sent to LAM Canada, 3075 Ridgeway Drive, Unit 14, Mississauga, ON L5L 5M6.

The Latin America Mission works in partnership with churches and Christian agencies throughout Latin America and supports missionaries and projects in many Latin countries as well as in Spain. LAM is seeking to place new missionaries throughout the region. The U.S. headquarters can be reached at Latin America Mission, Box 52-7900, Miami, FL 33152, by e-mail at info@lam.org, or by calling 1-800-275-8410. The mission's web site may be found at <http://www.lam.org>. LAM's Canadian office is at 3075 Ridgeway Drive, Unit 14, Mississauga, ON L5L 5M6.

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