

## An Expression of Worldwide Love

During this past week there have been multiple earthquakes in the South American country of Ecuador. The largest quake (to date) registered an intensity of 7.8 in the coastal areas. Inland, the capital city of Quito had 6.5, 6.2 and 6.0 quakes. Collapsed buildings and entire fissured roadways have created a disaster zone over many miles. The subtle concern goes beyond the physical damage. Ecuador is a poor nation. Its citizens have few possessions to begin with. Destroying what little they had is heartbreaking. In an impoverished country like Ecuador, the poor have become poorer.

There is a close connection between Ecuador and Kernersville. Fountain of Life Lutheran Church takes a mission trip there each year, working through Pan De Vida ministry and Extreme Response. Janela Cevallos, a staff member from Pan De Vida, is currently in Kernersville for a six week internship, splitting her time between the church and the Kernersville Family YMCA. Had she been in Ecuador at the time of the quake she would have rolled up her sleeves to help in the relief effort. Her heart breaks for fellow countrymen trying to rebuild their lives.



Natural disasters happen. This one has killed more than 600 people and, at last report, 130 people are still missing. Twenty-five thousand people are displaced from their homes. There have been 400 aftershocks, so every day brings another wave of uncertainty.

God cares deeply for people everywhere, and as we know from scripture, He can work good from a very bad situation — through us. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).* God is working to bring some good out of this situation.

One of the “good things” is placing Janela in a caring community in the United States at this very time. While He could have used Janela’s efforts in Quito, He placed her here among us now. Janela has the heart of a servant leader. She is a wonderful, hard-working, caring person. (I know that because she is instantly washing pots and pans and loading the dishwasher after meals in our home, beating me to the punch.) She has shown great courage in dealing with this situation so many miles away from home. Working at our church and the YMCA, Janela has won the hearts of everyone she meets. Perhaps people will see her giving, caring attitude and be inspired to contribute to the relief efforts. She is helping to bring relationships between the people of Kernersville with the country of Ecuador.

Jesus taught us to be compassionate to other people. He taught us to help

### Who is Janela Cevallos?

Janela has been the office manager at Pan De Vida ministries (Quito, Ecuador) for the past 8 years. During that time she has hosted mission trip groups from Fountain of Life Lutheran Church, Kernersville. She is in the United States for 6 weeks as an intern, sharing her time with Fountain of Life Lutheran Church and the Kernersville YMCA. Her goal is to observe programs at the church and a faith-based YMCA. She will take back ideas that can help the needy in Quito, Ecuador. She is a lovely, caring young lady, and has made many friends in Kernersville.



Janela Cevallos

### What is Pan De Vida?

**Vision:** To gather the resources needed to help the less fortunate people in Quito to come to a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and to develop to the fullest their God given potential.

**Mission:** To spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and meet the immediate needs of the less fortunate in Quito in cooperation with other organizations by providing: nutrition and hygiene, biblical teaching, counseling, and fellowship, and education and work training.

**Kernersville Involvement:** This is the 7th consecutive year Fountain of Life Lutheran Church is sending a mission team to Quito.

Pan De Vida is joining forces with other organizations to help in relief efforts.

**Pan De Vida means “bread of life,” based on John 6:35—** *Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

people because we love them. And we love others because God first loved us.

Disaster relief efforts are **not** about the money, contributed to help people we don't know. It is about **the people** being served. Contributing to Christian efforts is an expression of love toward people that God knows. Some of the people being helped don't yet know the Lord, but will seek Him in gratitude when they learn faith is the driving force that motivates us to help. Matthew 5:16 says, *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*



Supplies being collected at Pan de Vida to be sent to the most affected areas

When God needs you to do something, He places you where you will be most effective. Sometimes we don't immediately recognize His plan, but God's wisdom is perfect. Janela is here in Kernersville for us to get to know, to love and to be inspired by her caring, courageous spirit. Just as we believe in her, we support her passion for helping the people in Ecuador.

**Question:** What do you think is God's plan for you when disaster strikes?

**Prayer:** Dear Lord: We thank you for our many blessings. We also thank you for people we meet from other countries, who inspire us with their hard work and dedication. Please bless their efforts to help out in this time of severe devastation in Ecuador. Amen.

### A Word About Today's Devotion

My weekly devotions often are about current events as the initial point of reference. Then, I apply a biblical faith lesson to show God at work. Earthquakes in Ecuador have been front and center in our world news over the past week. The faith lesson of today is about helping others as part of God's plan. Why did God place Janela in Kernersville at the time of the series of earthquakes? To me the answer is that her presence in Kernersville helps our community to have a first-hand relationship with the wonderful people of Ecuador. God's plan is not linear, but instead, involves many people. God is counting on me to help get the word out.

Janela is staying in our home these six weeks, and we have come to love her. I can help her tell the story. Her role these six weeks is to help her missionary work back in Quito. Kathy leads our church mission trip to Pan de Vida each year, so we share a long term friendship.

Pan de Vida is collecting food, water, medical and sanitary supplies and sending them to the areas most affected by the earthquakes in Ecuador. Should you wish to support Pan De Vida's disaster relief efforts, their website is: [www.pandevida.org.ec](http://www.pandevida.org.ec). Or, mail support to their US office: Pan de Vida, PO Box 480, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Please indicate contributions are for: PDV Ecuador Relief Effort.

## A Christian Viewpoint of Natural Disasters

Natural disasters are not always created by God, but are the natural evolution and ecology of our planet earth.

1. Helping others because of your faith is a witness, and may encourage people to come to faith. (*Matt 5:16*).
2. Your ministry can be comforting to others. *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).*
3. Help meet the needs of others. *The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea (Acts 11:29).*
4. *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:10).*
5. Our lives are fragile. There may be a time when you need help yourself. *At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need (2 Corinthians 8:14).*

### Disasters can:

- Turn people to God
- Bring people together
- Help people appreciate what is important in life.