



## LITURGY OF THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

of the Latin American Anabaptist Women Theologians Movement

MAY 2011

### Specific objectives of this gathering:

**Communicate with** respect and dignity among men and women.

- **Intercede** with humility for the pain, suffering, marginalization and violence of the people suffering in Guatemala, Argentina, Cuba and Haiti.
- **Encourage** ourselves to continue being salt and light and thus contribute in building the Kingdom of God.

### Have ready:

- **Four candles** - one for each country.
- **Four copies of the guide** - one for each country for which there will be intercession.
- **Four different meeting spaces** - each representing the different countries for which we will pray. They are Guatemala, Argentina, Cuba and Haiti.
- **Four signs** in large letters with the names of countries for which we will intercede.
- Put newspaper clippings representing each country beside the signs. It is best to have news about the problems, but also some news that reflects hope.

### Beginning the gathering

#### 1. **Welcome:**

Arrange a time to greet and extend our hands to each other. Recognize all the sisters and brothers who have come together in the same spirit for a time of prayer. Sing a well-known song that encourages us during the fraternal greetings.

#### 2. **Read the Bible passage:** 2 Chronicles 7:14

"If my people, who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (New Revised Standard Version, 2001)

### 3. Background of the text.

The people of Israel were easy prey for social and religious influences of their surroundings. King Solomon was the first to break their allegiance to God by adopting idols and religious rites of other peoples. The immense importance of the temple, priesthood, religious rituals and the moral law is stressed. Here we can see that when the monarchs reproach God's law, unequivocally punishment overtakes them, while those who honor God's ordinances, thrive. This text is a call to humility, prayer, seeking God's face, conversion, and not walking in evil ways. If this takes place, the all-merciful Lord will forgive our sins and heal the earth where we live.

### 4. Teaching.

- God calls us now to renew that covenant. God will hear us if we humble ourselves and call upon Him. He will hear our prayers and will answer.
- Like in the Old Testament, in faith communities today there are influences that make us move away from our commitment to God. Can we name influences in our context that lead us to forget that we must be faithful to God?
- We express our humility before God and show in our way of living that we constantly seek God's face. Especially difficult times and delicate situations are opportunities to turn to God in prayer. We are certain God is willing to listen to us.

**GUIDE 1: GUATEMALA.** The person previously chosen to be leader has this guide ahead of time and asks the women and men participants to come to the area that has been prepared to read the general information, show the news articles, and read the prayer requests.

POPULATION: 12, 007.580 (2005 Census)

**Guatemala** comes from the Nahuatl word, *Quauhtlemallan*, which means "place of many trees". Its official name is the **Republic of Guatemala**. It is a country located in Central America with an indigenous culture, which is the product of a Mayan heritage and a Spanish influence during the colonial era.

Guatemala has a wide variety of climates, due to its mountainous terrain that ranges from sea level up to 4,220 meters above sea level. There are many different ecosystems in the country ranging from mangrove wetlands of the Pacific to the high mountain cloud forests. The country has an area of 108,889 square kilometers. Its capital is Guatemala City, officially called the *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*. Its indigenous population makes up a third of the total population. The official language is Spanish. There are also 23 Mayan dialects. In addition, Xinca and Garifuna are languages spoken by people of African descent in the province of Izabal.

#### Intercede for:

- a. Uncontrolled violence against bus drivers.
- b. Unemployment and underemployment. Only an estimated 55% of the population is economically active.
- c. Family breakdown and absence of values. This encourages young people to be easy prey for gangs.

- d. Violence against women. This is manifested in discrimination, abuse, homicide of women, and other ways.

### **Prayer**

"Lord, we ask you to help us humble ourselves before you in order to plead for the violence in Guatemala, due to unemployment, underemployment, and broken homes, widows, orphans, youth gangs. We pray for women and children experiencing violence.

We pray for those who know your Word. We pray that we may share your Word with those who need it and that we may be light and comfort in times of pain.

We ask forgiveness for every one of us that know your word, but are afraid to share it. We ask forgiveness for us because we often do not cry out for these people who suffer.

May your love be in each one of us, in order to be able to share with others. Also give us the ability and willingness to be women and men united in prayer and cry out to you. "

### **Community**

We invite those who wish to take one of these requests and pray for it. We will end in silent prayer. May the God of peace bring comfort to Guatemala, and may our prayer bring strength to the people who live there.

Light a candle of thanks to God, because we are confident that our prayer has been heard.

### **Sharing a testimony**

Telma is a sister who has suffered greatly as a result of crime and the deaths of so many bus drivers and assistants. Her husband worked as a bus driver and because of gang threats stopped working. Then he spent several months without finding a new job. This situation caused complications for an illness of the uterus she experienced, to the extent that she needed emergency surgery. It was a very difficult time

But she humbled herself and yielded herself to God, who heard her prayers and acted. God gave her husband a job and performed a wonderful miracle of completely healing the condition of her uterus. Upon her arrival for the surgery the doctor said she no longer needed it. Now she testifies of God's mercy on her life and her family.

**GUIDE 2: ARGENTINA** The person previously chosen to be leader has this guide ahead of time and asks the women and men participants to come to the area that has been prepared to read the general information, show the news articles, and read the prayer requests.

The **Republic of Argentina** is a sovereign nation located at the southeastern tip of South America. Its territory is divided into 23 provinces and one autonomous city, Buenos Aires, the nation's capital and seat of the federal government. The average indices of its 40 million people's human development, per capita income, level of economic growth and quality of life are among the highest in Latin America. Its size, 2,780,400 square kilometers, makes it the second largest country in Latin America, fourth in the Americas and eighth in the world.

Read the following **prayer requests**

- a. In the news one hears of women who have been attacked and set on fire. Denouncements of violence against women between 2006 and 2010 have increased tremendously. They increased from 31,084 in 2006 to 52,374 in 2010. It is unknown whether the cases actually increased or whether more women have dared to denounce the attacks.

- b. A bill is in process, which proposes the creation of family courts specialized in domestic violence. This would speed up the resolution of cases and it would provide more specialists to work with the family involved, whether victims or the offenders.
- c. Teenage mothers. This does not happen only because they lack sex education or are not responsible in the use of contraceptives. Some get pregnant on purpose because they think that through it they are more respected by all. It is as if they are raised to another category in the role of being a mother. They are more valued by their parents sometimes. Ultimately, it is sad they seek their identity on a path they are not ready to tread and, on top of that, they do not see how it will affect them, and eventually, their children.
- d. The spread of the kingdom of God in Argentina.

### **Community**

Four people are invited to take a request to pray for this situation and we end by praying in silence.

Light a candle of thanks to God because we are confident that our prayers have been heard.

### **GUIDE 3: CUBA**

The person previously chosen to be leader has this guide ahead of time and asks the women and men participants to come to the area that has been prepared to read the general information, show the news articles, and read the prayer requests

POPULATION: 11,000,018

The **Republic of Cuba** is a country located in the Antilles, also known as the Caribbean Sea. The main island, known as the Island of Cuba, is the largest of the Greater Antilles and is of orogenic origin. Also a part of the archipelago is the Island of Youth, formerly called the Island of Pine Trees, and a multitude of keys or small islands around these larger ones. Among these keys are: Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo, Cayo Largo del Sur, Cayo Jutia, etc. Cuba is ranked 51 in the Human Development Index prepared by the United Nations Organization. It is fourth among Latin American countries, following Chile, Argentina and Uruguay.

Read the following **prayer requests**.

- a. Pray for the men and women committed to seeking peace and justice.
- b. Pray for their international relations with neighboring countries.
- c. Pray that the basic needs of the people would be met.
- d. Pray for equality between men and women
- e. Pray for the leaders of their government.
- f. Pray that the Kingdom may be spread in Cuba.

### **Community**

Five people are invited to take a request and pray audibly for this situation, and we end by praying in silence.

Light a candle to thank God because we are confident that our prayer has been heard.

#### **GUIDE 4: HAITI**

The person previously chosen to be leader has this guide ahead of time and asks the women and men participants to come to the area that has been prepared to read the general information, show the news articles, and read the prayer requests.

**Haiti** is officially the **Republic of Haiti**. The total area of Haiti is 27,750 square kilometers, housing a population of 10,033,000 inhabitants according to the 2009 census. Its capital and largest city is Port-au-Prince, which was destroyed by an earthquake on January 12, 2010.

Haiti's economy in 2009 generated a nominal GDP of 6.908 million U.S. dollars and a per capita income of \$772. It is the poorest country in the Americas and one of the most disadvantaged in the world. According to *The World Factbook*, 80% of its population live below the poverty line and two-thirds of it is dependent on a sector of agriculture and fishing. Traditionally it is organized in small subsistence farms that are weakened by the lack of available land and impoverishment, and foreign aid. Overuse of the land and soil erosion is the result of intensive and uncontrolled deforestation that has taken the wooded area of Haiti from 60% in 1923 to less than 2% in 2006. Devastating tropical storms that occurred throughout 2008, affected the poor communications infrastructure in the image of the industrial and service sectors. They suffer from the lack of sustained investment because of the instability and violence.

Read the following **prayer requests**

- a. Victims of the earthquake of 2010 living in camps in unhealthy situation
- b. The cholera epidemic that broke out in Port-au-Prince and that the authorities fear will hit the camps where 1.2 million people who are victims of the earthquake now live. The rapid deadly infection is new to Haiti and there is widespread confusion about the disease. In less than six weeks since the first confirmed case in a rural area of central Haiti, almost 1,900 people died and more than 84,000 were infected. Pray for the healing of the sick and the collaboration of civil society to stop the epidemic.
- c. The extension of the Kingdom of God in Haiti

#### **Community**

Three persons are invited to take one of the requests for prayer and pray audibly for this situation and end in silent prayer.

Light a candle of thanks to God because we know that our prayer has been heard,

**5. Song** Choose a song that speaks about hope in Jesus and trust in his promises.

**6. Words of blessing and farewell.** We make a circle and we ask those in the circle to put each of their hands on the heads of those who are on each side of them and repeat together:

"The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26

We ask that after conducting the liturgy in May you would submit your reviews and testimonials from this time to Esther Bornes to be placed on the blog so all of us may be enriched.

Email: [esterbornes@hotmail.com](mailto:esterbornes@hotmail.com)

Thanks to the following:

- Sisters who participated in the preparation of the liturgy of this year in Guatemala with Martha Julieta Vasquez Gomez coordinating it.
- Esther Bornes for sending information for prayer for Argentina.
- Olga Piedrasanta for comments and corrections.
- Estela Armoa for preparation of the promotional poster for the DMO.
- Rebecca Gonzalez for integration of the material.
- And special thanks for the guidance of the Spirit of God.