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QUE PASA

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A Publication of International Children's Care
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GOD PROVIDES SAFETY IN A TIME OF STORM

It seems that natural disasters as well as tragedies caused by man are getting more and more prevalent in our world. We are seeing this in so many of the areas right now where we have our ICC Projects around the world.

As you will read in this edition of Que Pasa, even though our projects are being hit hard by many of these tragedies, God has continued to keep our children safe.

Our projects are certainly not without damage of one kind or another, but God is bringing "His kids" through these events no matter what.

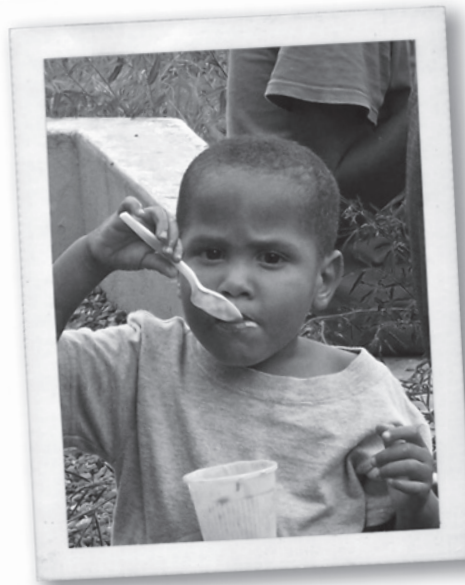
Tropical Storm Olga, a rare December cyclone, hit the Dominican Republic with devastating force. Pounding rains triggered major floods and landslides.

In the northern city of Santiago the flooding led to the release of water from the Tavera dam, which swept down the Yaque del Norte River Valley taking out all in its path.

Throughout the Dominican Republic 34,500 people were evacuated because of the floods and many of an estimated 5000 homes affected were completely destroyed.

The Dominican Republic had already been hit hard by Tropical Storm Noel in late October.

There are large parts of the country that have been left completely without communication. In some areas, drinking water and food can only be flown in by helicopters.



An ICC child in Nicaragua enjoying a meal.

Areas where they grow plantain, yucca and batata [a type of potato] in the South and Northeast were nearly ruined. Now there is an apparent abundance of potato-like tubers to buy, because those who had yucca and other harvests that were affected tried

to get it before it was completely ruined. But they have no way to get it out to the cities, and it's going to waste.

Nearly 95% of agriculture in the areas of Constanza, Jarabacoa, and San Jose de Ocoa, which are the principal producers of vegetables in the country, were wiped out. Other regions, such as lower Yuna, which includes the Northeast (San Francisco de Macoris, Nagua, Arrenoso, Villa Rivas, and Las Coles) were 100% ruined.

Just in the lower Yuna from Villa Rivas to las Coles, more than 100,000 tareas (about 14,000 acres) of rice were ruined that was about to be harvested.

Hurricane Felix inflicted similar damage to Nicaragua on September 6th. As many as 38,000 people have suffered in some way from the storm, with 13,000 homeless and almost 6,000 homes severely damaged.

So how does this all affect our children's villages?

In the Dominican Republic:

The most important thing is, all our children are safe! Thank you to all who prayed for the safety of

—Continued on back page—

In the *CROSS FIRE* of WAR

Frustration mounts as the fighting in the Congo continues to get worse. Rwanda has decided to close its border with Congo and the President of Congo may declare war with Rwanda. The government is losing ground in its fight against the rebels who have been getting reinforcements (mercenaries) from neighboring countries. This is a Rwandan fight that has spilled over into the Congo between the Tutsi's and the Hutu's. Soldiers on both sides of this war are even going into the refugee camps and recruiting young children to fight. The rebel leader says that he wants peace but according to our administration there, this is NOT so.

Masisi (an area where a lot of Tutsi's live) is now empty. Most

of the food grown for the country comes from Masisi. This is also where most of the cattle in the area were grazed. Our cows and everyone else's are gone, probably eaten by the army or rebels. Even when the local people can return, they cannot farm because of roaming armed groups. Rebels and army soldiers alike rape women who leave their villages to farm. Child malnutrition is rising, and displaced people are forced to flee with no food, leaving them dependent on handouts. Anyone who can afford to leave Goma is leaving. Over 800,000 people have been displaced and this number grows daily. The UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) is asking for help from other countries to try to avoid a humanitarian disaster.

Of our staff and children, the only one remaining in Goma is Désiré our Congo Administrator. Everyone else is on the island.

ICC sent money to our administrator in Congo so he could purchase any extra supplies he could get. We are not sure what the future holds for our dear children. We have been asked "why not buy more staples?" Right now there is no remaining food in the area and the borders are closed. Désiré had to request special permission from the army to take the extra food out to the island a couple of weeks ago.

Please make this situation a matter of prayer each day. The Lord can intervene between armies. If it doesn't change, there are going to be many more orphans.

God provides safety in a time of storm - *continued*

the children. As for the damages to the village, many of our crops were ruined.

With much of the crops in the country devastated and a large part of the roads washed away or covered with mud, our food bill has sky rocked. The budget for food this month has gone up 500% from last month. Fuel is moving up too, which adds to the price of any products or goods we need for the project.

In Nicaragua:

Here, like in the Dominican Republic, all of our children are safe. Unlike the Dominican, most of their crops survived the storm!

Food and products here too have gone out of reach of most local people. Imagine paying \$37.00 for a large sack of beans one week and having to come up with \$94.50 the next week. A large bag of rice was \$33.75 and now cost \$45.90. Vegetables are even more expensive. This is the time when produce is usually lowest. What will it become mid-summer?



Harvest earlier this year. _____



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(800) 422-7729
Doug@ForHisKids.org

A Personal Note

Dear ICC Family,

Gonzano and Florencia and their four children were living in a remote village in northern Guatemala, accessible only by the Passion River. Gonzano had his own business and was prominent in civic affairs of the village, while Florencia cared for Estuardo 7, Milton 5, Melvin, 3, and baby girl, Lizech. Gonzano was a good provider, owned his own home and everything seemed to be going his way until disturbing news reached their village. “There are some suspicious strangers hanging around town,” he told Florencia. “And I’ve heard that other villages are having problems with them, too. Their purpose seems to be to criticize our government and try to enlist people to join in a rebellion.”

Frightening news coming over the radio became more and more common. There were kidnappings of prominent government officials and business men. “Do you think we are in danger here?” Florencia asked her husband one day after hearing of a problem in their area.

“I guess it is possible. The thing that concerns me is that some of the leaders here in our village seem to be sympathetic with these rabble rousers, Gonzano answered with a worried expression. “I hope our country isn’t getting into a civil war. When I go to the capital on business next week, I’ll try to learn more.”

On the morning that he was to leave, the family was up early. Gonzano wanted to leave on the first boat going down the river. After kissing his wife goodbye, he turned to the little boys, “You be good now and help Mama all you can. I’ll be back soon.” And he was out the door.

Estuardo and Milton anxiously waited for the day when their father would come home. “I wonder what Papa will bring us this time,” Milton remarked to his brother. “He always brings something.” The morning of the expected arrival of their father, Estuardo asked his mother, “Can I go down to the wharf and meet Papa? He may need some help carrying things home.”

With his mother’s permission he ran off to the river to watch for the passenger boat. It seemed to the little boy that it would never come, but finally they heard the familiar whistle from down the river. As the boat pulled up to the wharf, Estuardo saw his father among the passengers, and he excitedly called out, waving his arms, “Papa! Papa!”

With a broad smile on his face, Gonzano waved back to his little son. Estuardo could hardly wait until his father stepped off the boat. But just at that moment two strange men came from behind him, one of them with a rope in his hand. Before the terrified eyes of the little boy, the men grabbed Gonzano tied him, with his arms behind him, with the rope and roughly hurried him to a waiting car. It was all done so fast, the little boy stood numbly watching, unable to believe his eyes. As the car pulled away rapidly, he tried to run after it, crying, “Papa! Papa!”

In after years, Estuardo would never forget the abject terror of that moment when it seemed his little heart would stop for the fear and grief. There was nothing for him to do but to run home, crying. Florencia met him at the door. “What is the matter, sonny?! Where is Papa?”

At first his mother could hardly make sense of the words tumbling from the child. “They took him away, Mama. They tied him up and made him get in a car. I couldn’t even talk to him!”

It was the beginning of the nightmare that changed the lives of Florencia and her children. She ran to the village, trying to find someone to help her. The local police promised to do all they could. Neighbors gathered around Florencia’s house, trying to comfort her, but were also terrified for their own safety. The Civil War had come to their village!

In the days that followed, Florencia tried to believe that, somehow, her husband would get free or be found, but there didn’t seem to be a clue. She sent word to her family in Livingstone, a fishing village across the Dulce River from Puerto Barrios on the Atlantic coast. Finally, she received word that her

sister would be coming to help her. When all hope seemed to be gone, her sister advised, “You need to come home to Livingstone with me. You aren’t even safe here.”

Finally, the two women packed up all that they could take with them, closed and locked the door and, with the four children, left on the passenger boat, finally arriving at her parent’s home in Livingstone. It wasn’t a happy time.

Although her family in Livingstone were unable to help her with her children, one of her uncles helped her find a place to live, and she set up housekeeping as best she could with the things she had brought and different articles her family brought to help her. She arranged for Estuardo and Milton to enroll in the local school. For some time she waited anxiously for some word from her village about Gonzano, hoping against hope that he was still alive and would escape. She knew that he would expect her to go to her family in Livingstone. But the months went by and her hopes began to fade that she would ever see her husband again. Florencia had married young and had no real skills to earn a living. She knew her family wouldn’t be able to support her forever.

One day a man told her, “You know, Florencia, I am working at a new Children’s Village for orphan children. It is a unique organization. They have individual homes on small acreages with Christian house parents, actually making homes for homeless children. They even have a school and a church. Why don’t you think of asking them if they could care for your children while you go and get some training, maybe to be a secretary? Then some day you could support your children again.”

After discussing the idea with her parents and siblings, Florencia asked him, “Could you talk to them when you go back and see what they say?”

“I’ll be glad to. I know the founders and present directors, Pastor and Mrs. Fleck. You might have heard of them. They used to be missionaries here in Guatemala. Pastor Fleck was the Mission President. His wife was always interested in helping abandoned children. Now, in their retirement, they have started this program.”

“Thank you, I’ll be anxious to know what they say. I know I have to think of the future. I’m afraid Gonzano is dead. These terrorists are killing so many people.” Florencia began to cry. She knew she was fighting a losing battle to keep her little family supplied with their most basic needs. “I would hate to be separated from my children, but it would help to know they are in Christian homes with good care.”

With our love,

Aleyou and Ken



This story will continue over the next several months, concluding as ICC celebrates its 30th year anniversary in the Spring of 2008.