



August 12, 2026

A Pastoral Letter for Colombia

Beloved,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Our hearts turn now to the people of Colombia, who awoke this week to sudden and staggering loss. On August 10, a powerful earthquake struck the department, or province, of Chocó, in western Colombia - the strongest the country has recorded since record-keeping began. Whole communities have been shaken to their foundation. Lives have been lost, families are searching for the missing, and the ground beneath so many has quite literally given way.

The Wesleyan tradition has never asked us to choose between faith and action. John Wesley taught that personal holiness and social holiness are bound together - that we cannot love God without also tending to our neighbor's wounds. In moments like this one, that teaching stops being an idea and becomes a summons: to show up, to give generously, and to accompany those who grieve.

This is what our faith asks of us.

A disaster of this scale has a way of collapsing distance. Colombia may be far from many of our congregations, but the Body of Christ does not recognize that kind of distance. Paul's words to the Corinthians remain true here: if one part suffers, every part suffers with it. The grief rising from Chocó, Cali, Quibdó, Manizales, and so many other places is grief we carry too, because those who suffer there are not strangers to us. They are family.

This week, as leaders from across the Methodist family gather for the World Methodist Council in El Salvador, we will sit alongside sisters and brothers from Colombia and from Venezuela - a reminder that our connection is not only in doctrine but in shared sorrow and shared hope. We carry Colombia with us into that gathering, in prayer and in purpose.

Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), we have a trusted and faithful channel to extend that care. UMCOR is mobilizing to assess needs on the ground and coordinate with partners already present in Colombia, so that relief - food, clean water, medical care, and shelter - reaches those who need it most. Even as the full scope of the damage is still coming into focus, that presence matters: a sign that no community grieves alone.

I ask you to join this effort in every way you are able. What we give, even now, becomes food on a table, clean water, and shelter for a family that has none.

You may give through UMCOR at the following link:

[Click here to give](#)

Giving is not the whole of our response. Prayer carries what money cannot.

For those who grieve tonight, that they would not carry their sorrow alone.

For the injured and for the hospitals straining to care for them, that strength would be renewed.

For families still waiting for word of the missing, that hope would not fail before hope is due.

For those who have lost their homes, that shelter would come quickly and stability would follow.

For rescue workers and responders laboring past exhaustion, that their strength would not run out before the work is done.

For the Methodist Church in Colombia, that it would keep bearing witness to God's nearness even now.

May Christ's peace steady us, and may God's compassion move through us into action.

Walking with You in Christ's Mission,

Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr.
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church