

From Our Pastor

October 6, 2018

Sabbath Greetings to everyone!

Is Venezuela becoming the Syria of the Americas? For two decades their neighbors in the hemisphere have watched as this once very prosperous nation followed the path of Zimbabwe into chaos and economic collapse. The population of nearly 33 million is suffering shortages of every kind, especially food. Some reports assert that the average person in Venezuela has lost over 25 pounds due to lack of food to eat. The armed thugs who run the nation appear to be doing well, but poverty and misery are rampant and growing among the population.

Result? Millions want to leave and go where life is better. Reported by the Washington Post, "According to U.N. figures, some 2.3 million Venezuelans — about 7 percent of the population — have left their homeland over the past couple of years. Other estimates place the number at closer to 4 million." A 7.3-magnitude earthquake shook the northern coast of Venezuela in late August. A popular satirical website tweeted that the earthquake was the result of a tectonic plate trying to flee Venezuela — a dark joke gesturing to the thousands of Venezuelans seeking to escape the country every day.

But where will they go? Venezuela's neighbors are talking about military intervention in order to stop the flow of refugees and even to replace the corrupt government. Last week at the United Nations, US Vice-President Mike Pence attended a special meeting called by Colombia's new president, Iván Duque, on South America's expanding refugee crisis spawned by Venezuela's downward spiral.

The Christian Science Monitor stated, "Mr. Duque – who earlier in September had refused to sign on to a declaration of regional leaders opposing any use of force to end Venezuela's crisis – pulled no punches in asserting that the "dictatorship" of Mr. Maduro must be brought to an end. ...Colombia's embrace of a hard-line approach to Venezuela reflects a broader shift across Latin America to more interventionist rhetoric as the region grows increasingly alarmed at the spillover from their neighbor's humanitarian and political crisis."

The war of words is just beginning but may soon include larger powers. President Trump took a moment in his UN General Assembly speech last week to slam Maduro and his destruction via "socialism" of a once-wealthy country. Everyone knows that any intervention in Venezuela could only be done with the might of the USA assisting, and that is not likely any time soon.

So, the people of Venezuela will continue to suffer, the hunger will increase, and more refugees will be on the move. Every passing day brings us another illustration of the truth of God's word in Romans 8:22, "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."

The people of Syria have endured and suffered seven years of fighting and bloodshed. Will the man-caused disaster in Venezuela last that long? Zimbabwe has experienced nearly thirty years of gradual national suicide. Who is next? Apparently South America is joining the train ride to disaster and collapse as fast as they can.

Referring to rulers of the earth before the return of Jesus Christ, Psalms 82:5 says, "They do not know, nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness." But this Psalm has a happy ending, "Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations. (verse 8)." When that day comes the creation will groan no more.

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