

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL UNION OF VENEZUELA AGAINST THE MILITARY RAID, FOR THE PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF THE VENEZUELAN NATION

Venezuela, May 5, 2020

²¹ He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? ²² For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. ²³

Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" ²⁴ And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still, more will be given you.

Mark 4:21-24

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ, sister Churches and Mission colleagues in the United States and Canada, colleagues in Mission and Ministry in Venezuela, Latin America, the Caribbean and the world. The Evangelical Pentecostal Union of Venezuela (UEPV) greets you with everlasting affection, praying to God for your care for all of you.

The present Pastoral Letter, which we address openly, is intended to share our institutional position regarding the serious events that occurred in our nation in the early hours of May 3, 2020, when several armed groups penetrated our territory along our coasts.

The UPEV, together with our churches, reject these actions against our people, because it is the people who suffer, and God has entrusted us with this people, we are their shepherds and shepherdesses, that is why our hearts ache for all injustices that is made to pass.

Our Venezuelan Navy, together with the people, fishers among them in the area where two of these groups ventured, was able to defeat this military attempt that aimed to assassinate our nation's president and fill our country with violence and death.

Sisters, brothers, colleagues from the Ministry and Mission, do not allow your government to lie to you. The groups that invaded us are terrorist cells trained in Colombia and financed by the government of President Donald Trump. According to the testimony of those who were captured, there are two that belong to the security of Donald Trump.

This military incursion into our nation had already been announced since President Trump and the United States Attorney General, William Barr, declared President Maduro a terrorist and drug trafficker on March 26, 2020, which is a big lie. This is a tactic with which they try to justify the actions of invasion and death that they are trying to carry out against our nation.

Sisters, brothers, colleagues of Ministry and Mission, the situation our people and our churches are going through at the moment is extremely challenging and delicate. As you know, we are suffering extreme needs in terms of food and medicine due to the economic blockade that the Trump government has illegally imposed on our nation. Added to this circumstance is the situation generated

by the COVID-19 pandemic, with which our government and our people are currently struggling to keep the contagion curve under control.

President Trump's actions are aimed to cause social explosions, which, if successful, would serve as justification for the military invasion of our country. And it is evident that the conditions of vulnerability that we are going through would facilitate such an objective. However, the Venezuelan people have been praying and resisting bravely.

Sisters, brothers, colleagues in the Ministry and Mission, in the name of God, we beg you to help us combat this death plan that President Donald Trump has unleashed against our nation. We are facing a real and present danger of death and destruction against innocent people.

We are your brothers and sisters in faith, your family from Venezuela. The powerful and the politicians who have seized power and government of the United States pretend to speak on behalf of our Venezuelan people, who supposedly and according to them, suffer for the violation of their Human rights, and for this, they want to invade us. But, brothers and sisters in North America, you have visited our country on countless occasions, and you know our reality up close. You know this is all a lie.

Sisters, brothers, Jesus teaches us today, as he taught in the past, that the instruments that provide light, like a lamp, should not be hidden, but should be placed on high so that they illuminate. That means that we must be jointly bearers of hope for our suffering humanity. In the circumstances as dangerous as these, where our lives and security are threatened, God is inviting us to be the Light that shines against the works that are prepared in the occult, from the darkness, to sow death and destruction. Let us be Light of God!

Jesus taught that all works of destruction and death, which are prepared from the shadows, hidden from the vision of the human, must be exposed (Mark 4: 21-24). The light of God that we possess will make them disappear. With the Light of God that we own, Let us make love and justice shine! With the Light of God that we possess, we defend the right that we all have to live and to live well, in peace with everything that surrounds us.

May the Light of God, which fights the works of injustice and the actions of death that operate in darkness, illuminate our existence in such a way that we never stop appreciating it and searching for it with careful effort.

Our call to you is for prayer, to a commitment of solidarity in the construction of Peace and the Kingdom of God in Venezuela.

Evangelical Pentecostal Union of Venezuela Bishops Council

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Bishop Eseario Sosa R. (Deputy General Bishop UEPV)

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