

# The Fourth Update from the Disaster Zone

## An Update from the Heart of Despair and Hope in Antioch

Dear Cherished Prayer Partners, greetings in the steadfast love of our Savior.

Riza and Pastor Cagdas, representing our church family at the Protestant Church of Smyrna, once again navigated through the disaster-ridden zones of Antioch at the close of September. This marks our fifth organized journey into the earthquake area, each mission bearing its own story of anguish, resilience, and an unwavering belief in Divine providence.

Our dual-purpose mission aimed firstly to forge collaborative efforts with our brethren from the Protestant Church of Antioch, exploring avenues through which we could facilitate their building project. Secondly, we sought to inspect the seven water purifiers, generously made possible through your kind donations, ensuring their strategic placement and functional operation.

The emotional atmosphere of Antioch, despite our previous experiences, unanticipatedly gripped our hearts. Observing the almost stagnant recovery and tangible despair after a grueling eight months was both heartrending and demoralizing. Voices from the depths of despair shared harrowing realities - estimations of 200,000 lives lost in Antioch alone and a speculated decade before normalcy can caress their days again. The fortunate find shelter in 21m<sup>2</sup> (216 ft<sup>2</sup>) container houses, while others resort to tented living. Amidst the wreckage and precariously standing structures, many attempt to resurrect their businesses in containers, endeavoring to stitch together remnants of normality. Despite some residents seeking refuge elsewhere, the magnetic pull of home has drawn them back; for an Antiochene, Antioch remains their unwavering home.



*There are still many buildings waiting to be demolished. The ground is covered with rubble and people are trying to live between heavily damaged buildings that may collapse in a small earthquake.*





Yet, within the despair, seeds of hope have sprouted. The water purifiers now quench the thirst of approximately 20,000 individuals daily, residing in six diverse locations, including Container House Villages, Tent Camps, and a Volunteers' Base. Our spirits were simultaneously disheartened and uplifted – knowing that while the struggle for clean water prevails, our collaborative effort is providing relief. Your impactful donations, under the gracious guidance of the Lord, have not only garnered the appreciation of the communities but also gained the attention of the government aid organization, Red Crescent (Kizilay), inspiring them to invest in similar systems. Signs emblazoned with “The donation of the Protestant Church of Smyrna” and our church’s logo proudly adorns five of the systems, a beacon of Christian compassion amidst the debris.

### 1 - Koç Container House Village



### 2 - Kızılray Container House Village



### 3 - Savunma Sanayi Container House Village





#### 4 - MOBSAN Container House Village



#### 5 - Üzümdalı Tent Camp



#### 6 - Volunteers' Base

*We couldn't take pictures of the system even though we visited the base.*



From the depths of our hearts, we express boundless gratitude for your unwavering support and spiritual companionship through prayer. We entreat you to persist in keeping us and the embattled people of southeast Turkey in your prayers. Please lift up pleas for mercy, healing, wise leadership during the recovery endeavors, the fortifying power of the gospel, and the abundant opportunities to sow the seeds of Jesus Christ's good news among those navigating through these tribulations.

For any further inquiries or thoughts, please feel free to reach out to us. Once more, we extend our deepest appreciation for your munificent spirit and compassion.

In heartfelt gratitude and faith,

Pastor Fikret Bocek and Pastor Cagdas Coskun