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Rescuing the rest in Colombia

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The release of Ingrid Betancourt and 14 other hostages has focused attention on the complex political activities in Colombia. Ms. Betancourt was kidnapped Feb. 23, 2002, while campaigning for the Colombian presidency. The subsequent winner of that election, Álvaro Uribe, arranged the successful undercover rescue after years of fruitless negotiations.

In recent years there has been much finger-pointing and political posturing regarding hostages. All those involved in this wisely planned, safe, and precisely executed mission deserve congratulations. Instead of seeking the limelight, those involved quietly achieved their objective without bloodshed. As Ms. Betancourt exclaimed, "Thank you God..."

While friends and family rejoice at the successful return of their loved ones, let's not forget those hostages still languishing in remote jungle prisons. The Colombian government estimates 700 remain in FARC custody (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). Other sources say the number may exceed 2,000. While many hostages might be unnamed, let them not be forgotten by prayerful people. All are worthy of rescue and of being returned to their lives and families.

Perhaps those familiar with the power of prayer can consider themselves part of a special-forces team assigned to rescue the remainder through prayer. In the military, Special Forces are carefully trained individuals prepared to function under adverse circumstances. Confident, calm, and single-minded, they perform missions that others might consider impossible.

Praying people are the "special forces" of God. They undertake the humanly impossible and show that all things are possible with God.

Those willing to pray might begin by affirming that God is the governor of both FARC guerrillas and their hostages. The Supreme Being does not distinguish between captor and captive. God recognizes each individual as the worthy, intelligent son or daughter of God. Each one has inherited good qualities from God. Mercy, compassion, hope, faith, courage, and unselfishness characterize all the beloved men and women under God's command.

We can pray that individuals identify themselves first as children of God rather than as part of a political group. Putting ourselves and others under God's authority realigns the mental balance of power. God is good, and good is supreme. This spiritual fact can strengthen hope and remove frustration. It is a mental force for good that is felt by captives, even as it rebukes captors.

With God, each individual can achieve each one's right desires. Opportunities and resources seem limited, but turning to God can open the windows of heaven. Frustration flees before the inspiration of divine Mind.

The Scriptures assure us, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17). The Spirit of the Lord reaches the remotest jungle. Every individual can feel God, Spirit, directing and sustaining each one as the power of divinity frees humanity. It's divine power that truly frees men and women, in body and in spirit.

Mary Baker Eddy wrote, "The law of the divine Mind must end human bondage, or mortals will continue unaware of man's inalienable rights and in subjection to hopeless slavery, because some public teachers permit an ignorance of divine power, – an ignorance that is the foundation of continued bondage and of human suffering." And she continued, "God made man free.... All men should be free.... This is your divine right" ("Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," p. 227).

Pride and fear cannot resist the transforming power of faith and prayer. No one is outside God's care. No one is excluded from the divine plan. No one is useless or unwanted. Each individual is remembered, valuable, and valued. Through prayer we can support the individual's ability to feel the presence of God, of good, even in the midst of turmoil. God's message of hope and freedom, coming continuously, will sustain them.

Then, as the special forces of God continue to pray confidently, captives and captors alike can be rescued from this weary conflict.