“Hope for Colombia”

a film by Raphael Buenaventura

Produced by Grace Media
in cooperation with AV-Tonic

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PRESS SERVICE

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“Hope for Colombia” follows the 10 day Grace Pilgrimage through and around the Colombian capital Bogota in November 2010. It is a portrait of two projects – Tamera, a peace research centre in Portugal which organized the pilgrimage, and the Colombian peace community San José de Apartadó. It follows the leaders and participants of the two projects as well as the international participants from Israel, Palestine, Germany and other countries and shows the coming together of the two communities, their encounters with other peace activists and groups in the city of Bogota, shanty towns and remote areas, and with government officials to create a network of protection for the peace community in Colombia and to show a possible path toward a global culture of peace in a seemingly hopeless situation.

OUTLINE

1. Beginning: The participants have their first encounters with the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Colombia. The participants encounter displaced people who now live in the shanty towns surrounding Bogota. The situation of the peace community San José de Apartadó, their struggle for justice and their courageous decision to declare a neutral zone in midst of the conflict area become visible along with the importance of creating community.

2. Middle: Introduction of the work of the two projects and their leaders. Sabine Lichtenfels: What is the power of Grace in a seemingly hopeless situation? The two projects come together. A demonstration in front of the federal prosecutors building and the meeting with the Vice-Presidents office.

B story: the “Theatre of Hope“ with young people from both Projects.

3. End: Meeting and exchange with other projects and places affected by the conflict. The idea of the Global Campus. Why models of a peaceful society give hope for Colombia and the whole world.
The 120 participants of the pilgrimage walk in the name of Grace, “Walking in the service of a higher mission, in the service of life and its inherent justice” as Sabine Lichtenfels, founder and one of the leaders of the Grace Pilgrimages expresses it. The 5th such pilgrimage leads its participants through and around Bogota, together with the human rights activist and Jesuit padre Javier Giraldo from Colombia and members of the colombian peace community San José de Apartadó. They do not come to accuse. They do not come to impart a new ideology on a country or on a land and its people – they come in the service of openness, perception and support. And they come to witness the conflict situation in Colombia in solidarity with the peace community.

For the 10 days of pilgrimage the participants are constantly on the move, on foot and by bus. Each day they witness the many aspects of the conflict in Colombia with their own eyes: family homes completely destroyed by the military, shanty towns inhabited entirely by displaced people, countless stories of disappearances, torture and murdered people. But they also find voices of solidarity and hope.

Sabine Lichtenfels shows why she chooses to go to seemingly hopeless crisis areas in the name of Grace and why she has hope that something can change. She demonstrates the power of Grace not only in her speeches but also in her actions in encounters with activists, victims and police and government officials as the pilgrimage also leads to several government institutions in order to raise the profile of the peace community San José de Apartadó and make its international solidarity known, concluding with a meeting of a delegation of the pilgrimage with the Vice-Presidents office.
Through the pilgrimage the two communities get to know each other more closely. The international members of Tamera get to know the situation of the peace community San José de Apartadó and its long struggle for freedom and peace and how they have lost almost 200 members in massacres, executions and kidnappings by the military, paramilitary and guerillas. They understand why the group decided to set up a neutral zone in midst of the conflict area and why are they living in community. And the Colombians get to know the international participants and why many of them decided to dedicate their lives to creating a peaceful world. They also meet activists from other crisis areas like Palestine, who are part of the global peace education initiative “Global Campus”.

The youth of the two communities start performing a political theatre piece together, showing the real-life situation of youth both in western countries and in the conflict zones of the world.

**SCOPE OF THE FILM**

1. Give an insight into the current political and human rights situation in Colombia.
2. Show the situation of the Colombian peace community and their decision to declare a neutral zone, resist the attempted displacements and the attacks and create a peace community.
3. Introduce the idea of Grace and the Grace Pilgrimages and why Sabine Lichtenfels leads such actions and why she believes that it creates hope in a seemingly hopeless conflict situation.
4. Show how the two communities come together, how trust is created and how international solidarity and cooperation can look on a very deep human level.
5. Show the greater vision of the projects involved and the importance of community.
6. Show how the cooperation of the two projects creates a powerful message of hope.
LENGTH, DISTRIBUTION AND MEDIA

1. Target length: 50 minutes target length on DVD.

2. Distribution: film and cultural festivals and organized screenings at cultural centers in Colombia, compressed internet version on website.

3. Video: HDV

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

1. Footage recorded from 2 HDV cameras during the pilgrimage: approx. 30 hours.

2. Interviews: approx. 7 hours.

End of Treatment.