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Mr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez  
President of the Republic of Colombia  
Casa de Nariño  
Santafé de Bogotá:

Ref: Open Letter

Dear Mr. President:

I write to thank you for the realities you construct for the good of Colombia and its people. As a Colombian expatriate, it is with pleasure that I assure you that the image of Colombia once lost in the darkness of social injustice, violence and the drug trade, you are recovering. I celebrate from the depths of my spirit your respect for the Constitution and the law. Within a frame of real justice, you have put order to our house.

Mr. President, I wish to dedicate to you chapter 7, "Human Angels," from my book, "Blessing Given." In my laments of terror I expressed within said chapter... *"There would be no future. Not for them, not for us, none for society. We were all doomed and no one in Colombia knew how to stop the pain and blood from flowing."* The reality of those times has changed. One exists who has removed the affliction and has stopped the unjust spilling of blood of an overwhelmed people. This unknown defender for whom I once cried out in desperation, today has a name. He is called... Alvaro Uribe Velez!

Under the domain of chaos of the 1980s, when the country was crumbling and as a second year law student, I wrote the following lines in the newspaper, El Colombiano, under an article titled: "Amor a lo Nuestro."

"The greatness of a people is found within the principles and ideals they protect. It is time to ask ourselves if it is not the hour to adopt a committed position with the hope of salvaging the little that remains. We must express more frequently our appreciation, collaboration and respect to our institutions, which today are ever so battered. And if criticize we must, may it a critique directed to their improvement. This critique, I think, must not be uttered unless conscious analysis and real solutions are offered along with it.

We must not complain about the state of affairs. We must fix them. And, if guilty parties it is we are after, why don't we start with ourselves, asking... "And I, what have I done for Colombia, for Antioquia, for Medellín?"

Mr. President, thank you for returning us as a country where peace and law reign.

With admiration and appreciation, this servant greets you.

Rafael Giraldo