

Accompanying on the Journey to Justice

by Rev. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

In the past year, I have visited with our global mission partners in the Middle East, in Colombia, and throughout Europe. In every setting one theme emerges: the United Church of Christ remains passionately dedicated to living out of a strong commitment to gospel justice.

In Colombia I saw what our commitments to restorative justice made possible. Former FARC rebels whose indiscriminant violence tore apart villages deep in the Andes were found working side by side with villagers to build roads high up the mountains. Our partners visited some of them while they were serving their prison terms and talked to them about speaking their truth and seeking forgiveness in a land divided by 52 years of civil war. I stood with some of those former rebels who confessed their crimes, told their own stories of being kidnapped as children and forced to serve in the rebel troops, and begged forgiveness of the very women upon whom their violence had been visited.

In Sicily I visited a holding facility for African refugees who crossed the Mediterranean Sea in a rubber raft in the hopes of landing on safer shores. I spent the evening around a dinner table with members of the Waldensian Church there who housed, fed and cared for many of these refugee families.

In Gaza I visited a hospital that struggles to keep people healthy and alive in a city where they average four hours of electricity a day – and must rely on fuel to operate generators for the 150 or so patients every day they care for. And in Jordan I visited another refugee camp where Syrians lived in a tent village in the desert, listening to a father talk about how for the first time - in this strange and barren land - his child slept peacefully through the night.

My two years as General Minister and President have served as testimony to me of what the Holy Spirit sees in us, and why She will continue to invest in our future. All around the world we are challenging ourselves to be present where people live in the margins. We listen to them. We minister with them. We accompany them on their journeys to justice. We advocate with growing sophistication in the halls of power for changes they require for health, wholeness, and the pursuit of happiness.

We live out the gospel every day in places far and wide.

We embody love of neighbor and incarnate our commitments to build a just world for all.

What I have seen makes me proud and reminds me how critical it is not just to talk about love but to witness its fruit borne of action and works of justice.

I invite you all to seek your own pathway to participating in actions of love and justice – and fulfill your baptismal promises to be a disciple of Christ.

Let your love so shine before all that the power of fear is cast out; and justice begins to roll down like the waters of an ever-flowing stream.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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