



Blessed are the Storytellers

Michael Neuroth
Policy Advocate, International Issues

In Washington D.C., there is no shortage of issues to focus on these days. No lack of political and moral crises to keep one up at night. In my work, I have been reminded of just how closely intertwined our policy work is with personal stories and struggles—the connection between the prophetic and the pastoral. What happens in D.C. has a ripple effect across our nation, impacting the lives of many around the world.

This reminder has come, in part, from last week's Senate Judiciary Committee hearings for Brett Kavanaugh. His nomination, along with Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's courageous testimony, has brought to light stories of sexual assault survivors across the country, highlighting just how prevalent misogyny and the silencing of women are in our communities. Whatever the outcome, the sharing of these stories has forever impacted our society for the better.

The ripple effect of U.S. actions and policy is also felt internationally. Last week, I had an opportunity to travel to Cuba, and I listened to stories of how the U.S. embargo has strangled the Cuban economy and how a travel ban continues to keep families apart. Currently, it is nearly impossible for Cubans to get to the U.S. As we met with church leaders and pastors, we heard story after story of those unable to visit sick family members or receive needed medicine. U.S. policy toward Cuba is a minor issue to many in the U.S., but a matter of life and death for Cubans.

These are just two of the many ways in which decisions in D.C. ripple across the nation and world. Consider other policy decisions that have been made just in the past month. What impact will cuts to our refugee admissions goals have on those fleeing violence from Central America? How many lives will be lost from the U.S. ending support to the UN's Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) for Palestinians? How will brutal dictators be emboldened now that the U.S. has rejected the International Criminal Court (ICC)? In the coming years the impact will be felt and stories will emerge.

I believe we are called to share such stories and to bear one another's stories of hope and pain, however difficult that may be. At times, bearing such stories can be overwhelming or numbing. Yet I believe that our power comes from our stories both individually and collectively. On Capitol Hill, stories shared from those directly impacted by policies can change the hearts and minds of policymakers. Stories give us hope and remind us of our humanity—we are not alone. As we listen, bear, and give witness to each other's stories, I believe we live more fully into our calling as a 'priesthood of all believers.' Today, let us give thanks for the courage of the storyteller, and take courage from them to tell our own.

Blessed are the storytellers, for they can change the world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Neuroth is Policy Advocate, International Issues for the United Church of Christ.

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