



Immigrant Rights Sunday, 2011

Jesus was gone, crucified. The disciples hid in fear (John 20: 19-29). What would they do without him? What would happen to them? In the midst of their fear, the resurrected Christ appeared among them bringing the gift of the Holy Spirit and calling them to do God's will. As Christians, we continue to listen to Jesus' call to do God's will for the world.

This picture shows a section of the U.S.-Mexico border wall in Tijuana. (This is just the first layer of what has become a multi-layered, taller, more heavily fortified, higher-tech barrier.) The image of the crucified migrant reveals the reality of immigration today. Immigrants face abuse, betrayal and oppression as they seek a way to support their families. Driven from their homes by poverty made worse by the North American Free Trade Agreement, they risk death in the desert on their way to find work in the North. Even if immigrants successfully reach the U.S., their suffering continues. Raids on homes where immigrants live, have caused the separation of families as loved ones are detained and deported. Youth and young adults brought to the U.S. as children are denied opportunities and are subject to deportation. Does national security have to come at the cost of broken families? The still-speaking God cries out for more humane immigration policies in the U.S.



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Imagine: Transforming Walls into Tables

Confession

We have heard stories of dislocation and distress from those forced to leave families and homes to risk the dangerous migration to the border, and often across it to find work in the U.S.

We are all created in the image of God. We come together as the diverse and interconnected Body of Christ. Yet we confess that we build walls where we should build bridges. We create barriers of division because of our perceived differences. We acknowledge that we have helped build this wall and many others that cut across God's creation.

We confess as the Body of Christ that we have failed to live out the words of Jesus, to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31), and to offer hospitality to the Stranger as we would Christ (Matthew 25:35). We have not done enough to turn the walls of our world into tables of shared love and reconciliation.

Our Commitment

We commit to identifying the walls that exist in our communities—from language, education, residency and economic disparity, to other political, religious and social boundaries. These walls impede the creation of God's Realm on earth.

We commit our congregations to changing walls that divide into tables of welcome for everyone, regardless of immigration status.

We commit ourselves to respond to the gospel call to welcome the stranger, for we have become even more aware that we are “no longer strangers and aliens, but citizens with the saints, and also members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

The confession and commitment are excerpted from the **Statement of the Participants of Turning Walls into Tables: A Border Conference** February 13, 2011. Seventy members of Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ congregations in the U.S., together with leaders of the Disciples and Congregational Churches of Mexico, gathered in San Diego, California, February 10-13, 2011.

Photo by Rev. John Dorhauer



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