



JJ TenClay

Dear Friends,

In January 2013, my husband, Tim, attended a clergy conference in Rome hosted by the Waldensian & Methodist Church of Italy.

We had no idea that attending this conference would profoundly change our lives and ministry forever.

While speaking to Waldensian leaders during the conference, Tim learned about the growing number of people—primarily from Africa and the Middle East—arriving on the shores of Italy and other European countries after crossing the Mediterranean Sea to find humanitarian protection and refuge in Europe. He also began hearing stories of the large number of people dying on their journeys. When Tim returned home from the conference, he shared some of these stories with me, and by the end of 2013, we had accepted an offer to move to Italy and work with the Waldensian & Methodist church to provide care for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

In 2013, there were approximately 55.2 million people forcibly displaced from their homes worldwide and in need of refuge.

In 2018, as we continued to watch the numbers of refugees and forcibly displaced people grow at an alarming rate, my family and I took another leap of faith and returned to the United States, and I accepted a new role as Refugee Ministries Coordinator for RCA Global Mission.

In 2018, there were approximately 70.8 million people forcibly displaced worldwide.

I had absolutely no idea how God would use me in this new role, and whether or not I would be able to find and keep enough partners willing to support this work, but I knew I had to try. God had placed a call on my life, and my faithful and loving response was “Yes”. After walking alongside people I met during my time in Italy who experienced so much trauma, loss, and dehumanization due to displacement (and other compounding issues), I was all in. The scales had fallen from my eyes. My heart was bursting with sadness and anger as I listened to their stories of displacement and forced migration, and frustration and despair at the obstacles they experienced while in search of refuge. And it was also being mended with love, compassion, joy, and blessing with every glimpse of God I saw in the faces of those I would come to meet, with every obstacle that was removed, every heart that began to heal, and every hand that reached out to help.

Here we are, ten years since my family said yes to refugee care ministries and five years since the creation of my new role as Refugee Ministries Coordinator. To God be the glory.

Some of the highlights of this ministry in the past five years include:

- \$45,000 raised to rebuild a school for Yazidi children in Northern Iraq that serves around 800 children and their families, equipping them to return home after over six years of forced displacement;
- \$65,000 raised to continue the work of 8 schools for Rohingya refugee children in Myanmar and Bangladesh serving around 600 children and their families;
- More than \$300,000 was raised to evacuate vulnerable Afghans after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, and provide care for those who were left behind (758 were evacuated from Afghanistan, and more than 5,000 received clean water, food, medical care, and/or protected housing through these efforts);
- Raising funds on an ongoing basis for the RCA Global Mission Refugee Care Crisis Fund, which is used to send emergency funds to respond to global refugee emergencies (these funds have recently been used for emergencies in Ukraine, Sudan, and Lebanon);

- Currently raising \$85,000 to continue the work of providing peacebuilding, social cohesion, and trauma care for South Sudanese refugees living in Uganda (\$65,000 of the \$85,000 raised to date);
- Currently raising emergency funds to support the work of a mission partner in Lebanon who is providing care for thousands of people recently displaced along the Lebanon-Israel border;
- Continue to consult on numerous cases of Afghans who were left behind in Afghanistan or who are stuck in another country without a legal, safe pathway to long-term resettlement and humanitarian protection (including work with 6 different countries exploring resettlement to date);
- Continue to consult on other individuals cases (nationally and internationally) to secure a path to humanitarian protection for refugees and displaced people;
- Created World Refugee Toolkits as resources for pastors and faith leaders to use for worship and teaching for World Refugee Day (June 20), and collaborated with pastors and congregations to host World Refugee Sunday and World Communion Sunday events;
- Created the *Theology of Migration* resource page for the RCA;
- Created and curated the *This is My Story: Migration Storytelling Project* for Faithward;
- Created and curated the *Migration and Immigration Resources* page for Faithward;
- Co-created the *A Meal for Peace* for South Sudan toolkit with Kelli Gilmore (RCA Global Mission staff) and Nancy Smith-Mather (RCA/PCUSA missionary);
- Continue to work with local, national, and international mission partners providing care for refugees and displaced people;
- And continue to work with pastors, elders, deacons, mission teams, congregations, classes, regional synods, RCA staff, RCA missionaries, educational institutions, and beyond, inviting them into the sacred space of caring for refugees and displaced people—locally, nationally, and internationally.

You can find links to most of the resources listed above on my webpage: www.rca.org/tenclay

Thank you! This ministry would not exist and could not continue without your support.

And it is essential that this ministry continues.

In our world today (as of December 2023), more than 130 million are forcibly displaced. This number has increased by more than 60% in the past ten years.

So, my prayer as we end 2023 and begin this 11th year of refugee care ministries is this:

Come, Lord Jesus.

Be with all who suffer due to conflicts and wars, persecution, political and economic corruption and instability, natural and manmade disasters, and so many other factors that lead to mass death and forced displacement.

Heal lands that are currently uninhabitable, heal bodies broken or emaciated, heal hearts that are scarred by trauma and loss, heal minds tormented with thoughts of violence and hatred and division, heal souls that yearn for your peace...peace that surpasses all human understanding.

Help us to see, help us to listen...then help us to act.

We know that we can't do everything and serve everyone. But we can do much more than we imagine and can serve many more than we are because when you call, you equip.

Let our hearts and minds and voices and actions serve as daily reminders to us and the world that there is a redeemer and sustainer.

Yet we, as the faithful, are called to live in this "already, but not yet" existence, knowing that you have already conquered sin and death, but that we live in a current reality of growing pain, suffering, and lack of peace and wholeness.

Help us to see, help us to listen...then help us to act.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Amen.



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M I N I S T R I E S

Merry Christmas Friends!



Divine and Maira shopped in San Jose to purchase items for the 100 Christmas Gift Boxes that were given to children and their families for Christmas.

— Divine Canapit and Mark Salcedo and to visit our newly dedicated sister church, Chapel By The Beach. We enjoyed interacting with the children from our weekly kids' ministry. They, along with many volunteers, greeted us with a dance program and wonderful home-made food. We brought gifts of sports equipment, musical instruments, craft and office supplies. The children made Christmas cards to give to our kids' club in California and sang Christmas songs to us (*Christmas is celebrated September through December in the Philippines*). Our team also participated in a baptism service and in the grand opening of our ministry center in San Jose. In mid December, 100 children received Christmas gifts through TWOP from The Gathering Church which included a pair of shoes, a colorful blanket, a toy and a family food box— from their U.S. family with love!



Merry Christmas from the staff and volunteers of The Way Out Ministries Philippines!

Give Thanks To The Lord!

We celebrated Thanksgiving once again in partnership with the L.A. Mission—doubling our outreach to needy families this year with 100 **Thanksgiving Food Boxes**. Thanksgiving day followed in Hawaiian Gardens with our volunteers serving the homeless in the community at our 41st annual **Thanksgiving Dinner** where we fed hundreds of people.

For God So Loved The World

The gift that God so freely gave on that first Christmas was for the salvation of the whole world. That "whosoever" believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). There are no exclusions—except for those who will not believe and receive that gift who is Jesus Christ the Lord. Of Himself Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). We have been proclaiming this simple truth for 40 years now— first in the city of Hawaiian Gardens California and now all the way across the world in San Jose, Philippines. Thank you for being our partners in sharing "the way out" of sin, shame, and suffering and the way into God's peace, hope, joy and love. Jesus is the reason for the season and for all of the good works that we do together in His name. Merry Christmas friends!

The Way Out Philippines (TWOP): Our Holiday season began October 19 when five of us visited the Philippines. This time I was able to take my daughter Rachel (*our Coordinator of Ministry Affairs*) who has helped so much in establishing the ministry there. Our Board President, Sarah Park and her husband Leo also joined us along with Maira Dulin who is a member of our church, The Gathering. What a joy it was to encourage our two staff members

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MINISTRIES

Merry Christmas!



51234 Jesus is the reason for the season

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Our Annual Christmas Concert filled The Way Out Ministries with families, friends and visitors and abounding Christmas cheer. Ryan and the band put on a great show with all the classic songs and brought the true meaning of the season home by giving thanks to the Lord!

At our Christmas Store, mothers, fathers and grandparents were able to select gifts for their kids and wrap them. This year we added a gift box of household products along with several pairs of children's socks.



Pastor Barry helps a happy grandma bring Christmas cheer to her daughter and kids from The Christmas Store.

Party, Party, Party!

Our Christmas parties, as usual, just kept coming! Our annual Grace Stop Christmas Party for our homeless friends celebrated Jesus with brunch, a sing-along, and Christmas Bingo with

prizes! Everyone left the party with a gift bag filled with items including a hydro flask and a rain poncho.

Volunteer and founder of Grace Stop, Beverly Yaden, with Ruben at the party.



Christmas parties for Kid's Club, Zion Youth, Unite, The Lion's Den, Beyond Grief and others were also filled with fun and fellowship making The Way Out Ministries the most happening holiday place in the city! Keeping in mind and heart the most important theme—Jesus is the reason for the season!



Zion Youth and zany reindeer games!



Good Christmas fun at Kid's Club!

Thank you for helping us bring Jesus to so many people. We wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year—and "God bless us...everyone!"

3 Easy Ways To Donate

1. Send a designated check through the mail in the envelope provided.
2. Give securely at thewayout.org by clicking on the "donate" tab.
3. Give through your phone with Pushpay
 - Go to messages on your phone
 - Text thewayout to 77977
 - Follow the easy phone directions



If you have any questions about giving then please call us at 562.429.2397

Please note: all undesignated giving will go into our general fund. Thank You



Cornerstone Prison Church Newsletter

As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious **cornerstone**,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame."

1 Peter 2:4-6

January 2024

EXPANDING THE KINGDOM FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

GLIMPSES OF GOODNESS

The opening verses of Luke 2 provide the setting and situation for the birth of Christ. Many of us put up manger scenes and reflect on the reality that the King of Kings was born in a dingy place. We are reminded at verse seven that Mary and Joseph weren't granted better accommodations because there was no place for them in the inn.

I try to imagine the transition it must have been for Jesus. Having eternally existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and taking a first breath in a cattle stall. The glaring contrast between rolling out the red carpet for people of great importance and the messy arrival of the Messiah should shock us. As we begin a new year it should serve as a reminder that from the very beginning Jesus brought great hope and joy in unlikely places. Remembering what was less than desirable as Jesus arrived should help us remember how he continues to bring hope and joy in less than desirable times and places.

The last quarter of 2023 was filled with further changes and challenges for Cornerstone Prison Church. Chapel programs have continued to be impacted by policy changes and staffing shortages. Outside of the chapel, the lives of the men have also seen changes and challenges. There are less jobs, less hours to go to rec, less single occupancy cells, and at times less time out of the cells for everyone.

One of our annual programs was directly impacted by this reality. Every year we partner with the other chaplains in the South Dakota DOC Chaplains Advisory Committee to provide a sack of Christmas goodies to all the inmates. The last few years we have had a team of guys help us pack the roughly 800 sacks for the Hill and have distributed them at the rotunda as the men head back from their evening meal. This year, an unexpected lockdown of the facilities meant there was no help from the guys in the packaging process and no opportunity for them to come to us to receive their gifts. Instead, while the whole prison was on lockdown a few of us brought the Christmas sacks to every cell in the prison.

(Continued on back)

This was a lot of work, and a sharp contrast to what was expected. But it was also a unique gift. That in the middle of undesirable times a reminder of hope and joy showed up in unexpected places. Many expressed the relief of a moment to feel like being home with family, enjoying a special treat, and the sense of joy of simply receiving a gift and knowing the care that it represented.

This last year there have been many frustrations, but there have also been many glimpses of goodness right through them. Maintaining our ministry hasn't been easy, but the Lord has been faithful to show up bringing joy when the situation has people feeling down and to share hope with the hurting. Whether you have put away your Christmas decorations or will do so soon, I encourage you to take an extra moment imagining the light of the world showing up in a dingy cattle stall and then say a prayer for the hurting, the addicted, the incarcerated, and the families they have been kept separate from, inviting God to continue to show up as the Messiah that enters our messes showing us the love of our faithful Heavenly Father.

*New Year's Peace,
- Pastor Scott*



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Cornerstone Annual Benefit Banquet

Save the date!

When: Monday, April 1, 2024 - 6:30pm.

Doors open at 6:00pm.

Where: Trinity CRC - Rock Valley, IA

Cedar Rock Café out of Rock Valley, IA will be providing the food.

Please join us for an evening of celebrating how the hope of Jesus Christ is working in hearts and lives of inmates in the SDSP!

A freewill offering will be taken to help with Cornerstone financial needs.

RSVP to Kim at 712.476.5292 or at www.cornerstonepcsd.org

Give your gifts to Cornerstone Prison Church

Enclosed is a \$ _____ gift for Cornerstone Prison church

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Please make checks payable to *Cornerstone Prison Church*.

Donations are tax deductible.

Donations can be sent to:

Cornerstone Prison Church, c/o David Vande Kamp, Treasurer,
801 S. Gordon Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57110.