

Our Confession

We are 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, who have gathered in San Diego, California, February 10-13, 2011 to participate in the conference "Turning Walls into Tables". Here we traveled to Tijuana, Mexico and visited communities living in the shadow of the border wall, subjected to the poverty and abuse created by the *maquiladora* economy of the borderlands, the North American and Central American Free Trade Agreements (NAFTA and CAFTA), and other global economic policies. 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.

As members of the Community of Faith we have come together as a diverse group interconnected by the fact that we are all created in the image of God. 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 Call

Based on our experiences along the borderlands of San Diego/Tijuana, presentations by border and immigration experts, participation in workshops and theological reflection, we call on our two denominations and their congregations to be more welcoming of all migrants by

- Learning about the borderlands of Mexico and the U.S., and the vibrancy and the challenges of life here, including the root causes that push and pull migrants to the U.S., and the devastating impact of the separation wall on families and communities, the environment and natural life;
- Opposing the militarization of the border and the conflation of migrants with terrorism;
- Providing humanitarian assistance to immigrants in need, especially those who risk the journey of terror across the U.S./Mexico border;
- Speaking out against economic practices that make corporate profit more important than respect for human life;
- Speaking out against unjust state and local immigration policies in communities across the country, and advocating for national immigration reform that is just, fair and compassionate;
- Speaking out against anti-immigrant attitudes within our congregations and broader society, especially those directed at the undocumented;
- Building relationships through immersion experiences with communities along both sides of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and by seeking to engage and share ministry with Hispanic and Latino/a communities in cities across the U.S., whether immigrant or not;
- Reviewing our ideas, assumptions and language regarding the "other" and what it means to be "American," "citizen," and even "Christian"; and
- Providing the resources needed within our denominations to make immigrant pastors and congregations full partners in ministry.

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).