

THE JOURNEY OUT

2020: A YEAR OF CONFIDENT HOPE

On Sunday September 22nd, 2019, our Pilgrim Center team arrived in Juba, South Sudan. The next morning we were taken to the Anglican Church where we would host the first of two 3 day Healing and Reconciliation Retreats. As we gathered in our customary circle, there was a small group of individuals off in the corner of the building. At the first tea break, I was asked to come and meet this group, who were then introduced to me as representatives of the South Sudan National Media; TV, radio, and press. They were there to interview us. After setting up their camera and microphones, they asked me, "What message are you bringing to our country? What word would you like to speak to our people?"

A WORD FOR A NATION

That morning, in my devotional time, God had directed my heart to a familiar scripture, Ephesians 1:18, *"I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called - His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance."* That scripture formed the foundation for the message that I spoke to South Sudan that morning through their National Media, the word of CONFIDENT HOPE! Truly God is bringing hope to a nation that has been torn by conflict for decades. A hope for healing, a hope for forgiveness, a hope for reconciliation, a hope for shalom!

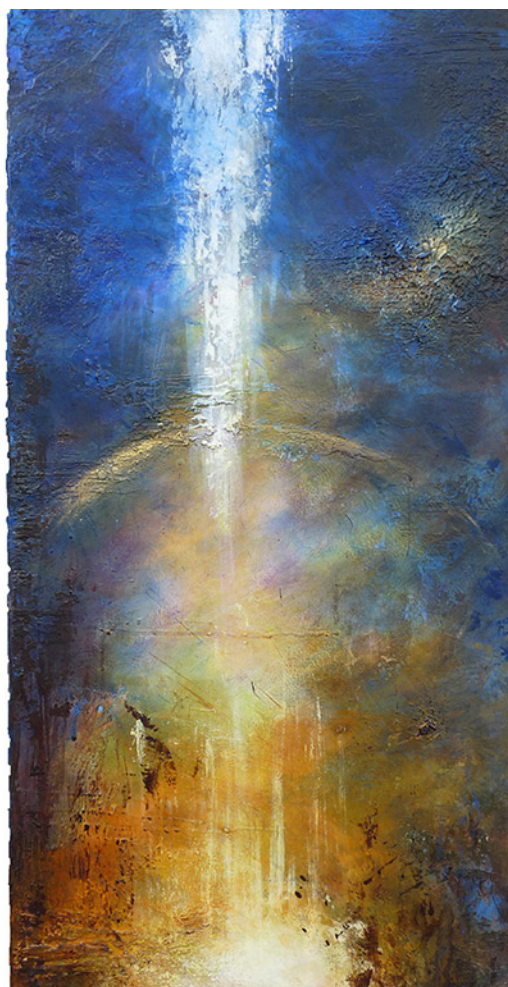
When I returned from that Journey Out I dug deeper into the scriptures related to hope so that I might understand more fully, and communicate more clearly, about this Confident Hope. Here is what I discovered:

WHAT IS HOPE?

Hope is much more than nice thoughts and wishful thinking! Hope has a depth and substance to it that is based on Who we are hoping in. As the Psalmist says, *"We wait in Hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for We trust In His holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you."* Psalm 33:20-22. That's it! Our Hope is in God, in His name, His word, and His promises.

WHERE IS HOPE?

Where does Hope show up? The prophet Micah says, *"But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me."* Micah 7:7 Yes! Hope shows up when we are looking and listening, in times of trouble, powerlessness, and grief. Hope's address is where our emptiness intersects with His fullness, when our weakness draws upon His strength. Hope arises when we need Him most!



"I PRAY THAT YOUR HEARTS WILL BE FLOODED WITH LIGHT SO THAT YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE CONFIDENT HOPE HE HAS GIVEN TO THOSE HE CALLED - HIS HOLY PEOPLE WHO ARE HIS RICH AND GLORIOUS INHERITANCE."
EPHESIANS 1:18

HOW DOES HOPE GROW?

The Apostle Paul helps us here when he writes, *"We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."* Romans 5:4-5 What an interesting progression! Again we see that hope actually begins in the place of suffering. The word perseverance means, "to remain under." Naturally when suffering comes we want to fight or flight, yet here we are invited to submit our suffering to Him and allow Him to shape our character through those sufferings. This is not resigning, but rather a deeper invitation to relinquish our lives into His hands. As we do, like the potter working clay, He forms in us a container that is perfectly shaped to carry the Hope that He will lovingly pour into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

WHY HOPE?

The prophet Isaiah spoke to a people living through difficult and desperate times. In the midst of their distress he lifted up their eyes to a bigger story, His story that was still unfolding. He reminded them that the end of the story had not yet been written, and that their great God was going to bring about a great restoration and renewal. *"Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed."* Isaiah 49:23b

Every generation and people face challenges, and we certainly find ourselves living through a difficult and distressing season in our country and the world right now. Yet we do not have to react with fear and panic but rather we can respond with faith and Confident Hope as we understand what that hope is, where it can be found, how it will continue to grow in us, and why we can hold on to that hope. The end of the story has not yet been written! Our God will accomplish His plans, purposes, and promises for His people and this world He came to heal and reconcile in love.

JIM OLSON, PCR PRESIDENT





OUR GROWING CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

“Celebrating Our Legacy, Pursuing Our Destiny” was the theme of our 25th Anniversary Fall Celebration last November. To honor the inspiring legacy of all who have supported this remarkable work through the years, and to build upon that support as the movement grows in the coming years, we established our *Circle of Friends* giving partner initiative.

We are profoundly humbled and grateful for your generous response! From 2018 to 2019 our Circle of Friends grew by 20% Thank you for joining us in this amazing journey of reconciliation as we continue to bring hope and healing to a wounded and waiting world.

Anyone who contributes to the Pilgrim Center is automatically welcomed into our *Circle of Friends* as a giving partner. Within this *Circle of Friends* we also recognize those who choose to partner in particular ways. These include the following:

SUSTAINING PARTNERS

These are individuals and churches/organizations who have chosen to make recurring monthly or annual contributions. These partners help provide predictability for future planning.

JOURNEY PARTNERS

These are individuals and churches/organizations who give \$5000 or more per year. These partners enable us to develop our existing work and grow our work into new places reaching new peoples.

LEGACY PARTNERS

These are individuals who have decided to include the Pilgrim Center in their estate planning. These partners help to create an enduring foundation for our work.

Will you join us as a giving partner in our *Circle of Friends*? Contact our office for more information. You can make a difference in lives and communities through your giving. Now more than ever this message and ministry matters!

KNOWING WHAT MATTERS MOST

**A LEGACY IS NOT WHAT WE LEAVE
FOR OTHERS. IT IS ABOUT WHAT WE
LEAVE IN OTHERS.**

What if your next decision was one of your better ones? What can I do to make the world a better place? What do I want my legacy to be?

Questions. Important questions that we all ask ourselves as we journey through this life. What matters most to us? How do we want to be remembered?

We all have a vision of what life could be, the best version of ourselves and our lives. Through the years, our understanding quickens, we know who we are, and we know that we need a focus for the passion inside us.

A legacy is about who you are and how you touch people's lives. It's a way to pay it forward, to serve, and it develops from the inside out - from personal to public. That's how it all happened for me, this broken girl in this broken world.

**HOPE, HEALING, FORGIVENESS, THE
MENDING OF TORN LIVES. IT SPOKE
TO ME WITH SUCH CLARITY,
AUTHORITY, AND INTEGRITY.**

In 2003 I was introduced to the Pilgrim Center For Reconciliation in my home church in Ossipee, NH. Founders Arthur and Molly Rouner were speaking about their time and work in Rwanda, Africa. They spoke of the hope it brings to all who experience reconciliation with God and the relationships in their lives. Hope, healing, forgiveness, the mending of torn lives. It spoke to me with such clarity, authority, and integrity. I had to know more, and the more I knew, the more I wanted to know.

In 2003 I went to Africa...afraid and unsure of what, if anything, I could bring. It was more about what I took away. Healing happened, restoration happened, and I was on my way. The Holy Spirit was moving through this work and in my life. This reconciling work became my passion, my focus.



Theresa Shatzer Max and Horst Max

**THIS WAS THE SOMETHING BIGGER I
WAS SEARCHING FOR, THE WAY TO
MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.**

I proudly became a legacy donor that year because I knew that this work mattered. Giving a portion of my long-term giving could make an eternal impact. The investment made was what I could do to connect deeply with something bigger, better, lasting. Legacy giving is a way to share your vision. Investing even a small portion of your estate will make a huge difference. A legacy is not what we leave FOR others. It is about what we leave IN others. That is what matters most.

What if your next decision is to leave a lasting legacy of love, of reconciliation, of renewing people and communities? I have never looked back on this decision. It matters.

Theresa Shatzer Max, PCR Legacy Partner

PROVISION UPDATE

Through the faithful and generous support of our *Circle of Friends*, we were able to bring hope and healing to more people and more places than ever before last year!

INCOME: \$305,400

EXPENSE: \$322,000

As we now step into 2020, we are developing more ministry here in the USA, growing our ministry in Rwanda, and launching new ministry in Uganda, South Sudan, and beyond.

PROJECTED FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR: \$346,500

We recognize that these are challenging days, yet we have Confident Hope that God will continue to provide for this rapidly expanding movement of reconciliation. Thank you for your faithful, generous support!

LIVING RECONCILIATION EVENINGS

PCR's Living Reconciliation Evenings are more than informational, they are experiential. They stimulate us in thinking about reconciliation related topics. We bring in guest speakers or panelists to share on a subject and then give time for group discussion around tables, an interactive exercise, or dialogue in a question and answer session.

This past year our presenters included Dr. Ramon Pastrano talking about the danger of digital tribalism and Kyong-min Song reviewing how differences in political views don't have to divide us. We brought together diverse panelists from Sankofa - A Civil Rights Journey - to talk about their experiences learning about the impact of racism.

These evenings are free and are typically hosted at one of our partner churches, drawing in a diverse group of people. Our goal is to equip and engage around reconciliation related issues in a meaningful way. If you have a subject of interest, or potential suggested presenter, we would love to learn more.

JOURNEY OUT TO MEXICO

A COUNTRY CLOSE TO MY HEART

It was a great privilege to travel to Mexico with our PCR President, Jim Olson. Having grown up there, it is a place that's near and dear to my heart, so it's always good to go home. More importantly though, this was a significant ministry trip for me because for many years I have been burdened by the tremendous need for healing in Mexico. Mexico has gone through significant challenges over the years that have left many people wounded, including many Christian leaders who have had their hearts wounded in the line of duty.

ESPERANZA VIVA

Our first Healing and Reconciliation Retreat was with pastors and leaders Esperanza Viva, an orphanage outside of Puebla. We found that there were many with a strong desire to be healed and whole. When we began to meet the participants, we found that some were expecting a conference or seminar with large crowds and were surprised to find that 30 something was on the large side for our retreat. They were also surprised to find the chairs in a circle instead of rows and some random guy (me) leading worship without a band or sound system...even though the sound system was right there!

After setting the expectations for what would be taking place in a retreat, and receiving the invitation to retreat, their hearts were opened. We had barely begun with worship and the tears, openness and transparency began. There was such a tangible awareness of the presence of God during that time and it continued throughout that whole retreat. At one point during the retreat we began to cry out to God to come and heal the land. As I was praying I was brought back to the thousands of years of tribal conflicts, bloodshed, and then the genocide of the Spanish Conquest, and even now the ongoing bloodshed of the drug war over the last 20 years. There has been so much injustice and trauma in all Latin America, and the impacts continue to this day.

CHOLULA

After that retreat we went to see one of the nearby cities of cultural significance, Cholula, which is known to have 365 Catholic churches and is also known as the "capitol of witchcraft" of Mexico. That's certainly a strange combination until you realize that one of the practices of the Conquistadors was to build the Catholic church on top of the temples and altars of the conquered people. We visited the main pyramid that had been covered with dirt over the



years with a cathedral at the top. It's very interesting to see the excavated base of a pyramid at the bottom of what appears to be a hill. Stop to think about the significance of building a church over the place where human sacrifices had been practiced every day to "help the sun rise." What may have seemed like a good idea at the time (removing evil human sacrifice and placing the "true God" in its place) has at times led to an integration of pagan shamanism and superstition into Latin-American Catholicism and therefore into the overall Latin-American culture. That deep and abiding connection with rituals of bloodshed and the ongoing bloodshed of the drug war...blood that is being shed in the US and Mexico...injustices that have been perpetrated over the years in both directions, had me heavy in heart for the healing of the land. I was left with a powerful reminder of the significance of the blood of Jesus to cleanse the land, and to cleanse and heal individuals.



AGUA VIVA

We went on from that retreat to be with people at my home church, Agua Viva, who had suffered ministry wounds and betrayals as well as those who had suffered directly at the hands of the cartel. There was such a tiredness over the group that was lifted as we went through the retreat. At some point they realized that they were carrying a collective trauma for the ongoing stress of living in the midst of this conflict and then the added wounds and weights that they had been carrying from life...all together the loads were too heavy. You could see the loads lifting as they opened their hearts up to Jesus and those around them. By the end of our time together they were celebrating and smiling. One of the prophetic

pictures that had been shared of wounded and bandaged people being healed was fulfilled over our time together. It was truly an honor to be able to come alongside my friends, and even mentors, to help bring them this message of healing, restoration, and reconciliation.

MISSIONARIES GATHERED IN GUADALAJARA

Our final retreat was with a group of missionaries and some of their Mexican co-laborers from the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies who gathered in the city of Guadalajara. Many had come in carrying things they knew of, and others were carrying things they were not aware of. Some hesitated in taking 48 hours to unplug from ministry, but in the end everyone was so thankful for the time of healing prayer and deepening relationship with each other.

God spoke to the people of Israel at the dedication of Solomon's temple words that I believe apply to Mexico, Latin America, the USA, and the whole world where the people of God are recognizing the works of the curse brought about through bloodshed, trauma and injustice:

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."
II Chronicles 7:13-14

We saw God begin a work of healing, not only in hearts of individuals, but a spiritual shift in the land that is taking place as almost 100 healed leaders begin to minister healing to others. There is a desire to see the land of Mexico healed and for that healing to spread to the nations. After all of these ministry opportunities there were repeated invitations to return and do more retreats and training retreats. I believe that God wants to heal the land of Mexico, restore good relationships, not only between individuals, but between countries, and destroy the demonic works of death and destruction that have dominated Mexico throughout their history.

REV. SAM SNYDER, PCR SENIOR FACILITATOR

ARTHUR ROUNER MINISTRIES

After retiring from the Pilgrim Center's leadership, PCR's board generously provided a stipend which made it possible for me to have the help of Laury Baars to continue my communication with the world. She has developed a website that hosts weekly blogs, my ministry in media (TV and print), and the ministry of presence.

My "Starbucks ministry" of connection and prayer has moved to the fireside at Covenant Village.

Advent and Lenten Bible Study gatherings continue at Hilltop and the daily Faith Line is still being recorded. These have allowed for a continued low-key ministry for sharing my heart concerns on our "life and times."

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WWW.ARTHURROUNERMINITRIES.COM

Dr. Jim has asked that I let the wider Pilgrim Center family know of this personal work in case you might want to explore the website, read the blogs, call the faith line, gather for Advent and Lent Bible Studies, or make an appointment at the fireside of Covenant Village. Love to you all, and thanks to the Pilgrim Center.

ARTHUR ROUNER, PCR FOUNDER

THE PILGRIM CENTER is called to bring hope and healing by renewing individuals, restoring relationships, and revitalizing communities through the ministry of reconciliation.

Our work takes us to places of historic and contemporary conflict and pain to minister reconciliation by loving presence, healing retreats, and peaceful witness.

JOURNEY OUT CONTRIBUTORS:

Crissy Ginther, Graphic Design
Theresa Shatzer Max, PCR Board Member
Rev. Dr. Jim Olson, PCR President
Rev. Dr. Arthur Rouner, PCR Founder
Rev. Sam Snyder, PCR Senior Facilitator



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ORIENTING STRATEGY: SUSTAINABLE

A certain harbor in Italy can be reached only by sailing up a narrow channel between dangerous rocks and shoals. Over the years, many ships have been wrecked, and navigation is hazardous. To guide the ships safely into port, three lights have been mounted on three huge poles in the harbor. When the three lights are perfectly lined up and seen as one, the ship can safely proceed up the narrow channel. If the captain sees two or three lights, he knows he's off course and in danger.



In a similar way, we at the Pilgrim Center have established three lights to guide us as we discern and discover a way forward. Our three Orienting Strategies are Sustainable, Reproducible, and Contextual. When all three are in alignment we will see this movement of reconciliation grow exponentially.

The first orienting strategy, sustainable, suggests that we expect that the work of reconciliation will become self-sustaining within the communities, countries, and cultures in which it is embedded. Robert Reese writes: *"Sustainability means that persons and groups have the desire and capacity to mobilize local resources (resources that God has put close at hand) in order to own, sustain, and operate the work locally as well as multiply beyond the local context."* There are a couple of practical ways that we at PCR are endeavoring to implement this orienting strategy.

LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Our desire is to come alongside to encourage and equip indigenous leaders to carry on this work within their local context. One of the greatest encouragements on a recent trip to Uganda was when our PCR Ugandan Country Director Bob Mayonza gathered leaders from around the country for a planning retreat in Kampala. Clearly this group of leaders has taken deep ownership of this work in their country and are putting together clear and comprehensive plans for the coming year.

LOCAL RESOURCING

We expect that the leaders and groups who are receiving and doing this ministry of reconciliation will also provide the primary resources for the work, people, talents, materials, and eventually funding. As my friend Jean Johnson writes in her brilliant book, *We are Not the Hero*:

"Imagine if we viewed every person within each segment of society as a contributor - if we saw all people as possessing all manner of gifts and talents. Let's approach missions with the premise that we are not meant to be external saviors, with the firm belief that there are local champions everywhere, needing a word of encouragement to mobilize their local skills and resources. So-called external saviors come and go, but local champions are there for the long haul."

Yes! In our Ugandan planning retreat we were overjoyed to hear how our newly forming Ugandan leadership team is already tackling the issue of local resourcing including developing long term plans for local funding. This is a significant step forward towards our goal for growing a sustainable movement of reconciliation!

As we seek to be both faithful and fruitful in this vital work of reconciliation we will keep sustainability as one of our three guiding lights.

JIM OLSON, PCR PRESIDENT



NEW BOARD MEMBERS CRAIG ANDERSON

Craig and his wife Sue live in St. Paul, MN. They are longtime members of Bethel Christian Fellowship where our PCR President Jim Olson served as pastor. They have been partnering with the Pilgrim Center since 2016. Craig is a retired Financial Officer and enjoys serving and supporting non-profits in their financial administration. He will be serving as the PCR board treasurer.

ANNA JEIDE-DETWELER

Anna is the proud granddaughter of PCR Founders, Arthur and Molly Rouner. She and her husband Nathan live in Minneapolis, MN. Anna has been involved with PCR since childhood having made two Journey Out trips to Africa. Anna has experience in community health, youth ministry, and education, specializing in communication and development. She has a deep passion for peace building and reconciliation, particularly for the younger generations.

SPECIOSE SINYIGAYA

Speciose and her husband Ildephonse were born and raised in Rwanda and came to the USA in 1997 to the St. Paul area, becoming members of Bethel Christian Fellowship. They have been involved with PCR since 2016 and Speciose has gone through our Facilitator Training process. She is a psychotherapist and specializes in working with trauma survivors. Out of her education and experience she has an expansive heart and skilled hands for healing and reconciliation.