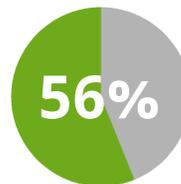


JOURNALS POSTED ON MARCH 12, 2016

Cena Politica: Where Is God? ~ November 2015 (Part 2)



RUTH MOONEY



SUPPORT PLEDGED



COSTA RICA

Dear Friends,

Several of you have written to ask what happened in our second “cena política” (political dinner). You will remember that in the first conversation, we heard horrifying accounts of the rampant violence in the countries represented.

The purpose of our second conversation was to develop a theological framework that would help us to respond positively to the situations of violence and death that we had described. In what ways is God present and how do we understand the action of God within our reality? What does Christian faith have to do with or say to this culture of death? I share with you some of our reflections.

Traditionally, we have understood salvation as saving us from hell: Jesus died on the cross to save our souls from the consequence of our sin, which is death. Jesus’ blood makes it possible for us to go to heaven after we die. But salvation involves much more. It begins with a new relationship with God that gives us a new purpose for living: to serve others. It transforms interpersonal relationships and communities. It seeks the salvation of the world that involves every element of human life.

- **Olga**, a nun who has been working in the *favelas* (slums) of Brazil, spoke of the constant need to nurture our spirits with a deep relationship with God in order fill us with God’s love, forgiveness, hope, and a sense of identity. Only then can we share with others.
- From his experience in the “new towns” (slums) of Lima, **Macoy** shared his conviction, developed in his thesis, that a transforming Christian education can empower people to be critical thinkers, resilient, able to make wise decisions and to unite in solidarity to change their negative situations.
- **Viviana** shared the work of Christian peacemakers in Colombia, in the midst of a civil war, building bridges and healing wounds from the physical, emotional, and spiritual violence. They proclaim a God of peace who opposes all violence, and teach alternative ways of resolving conflict.
- Direct action against the structures of violence can be very dangerous. But simple actions can be acts of protest. **Sonia** shared how, in Guatemala, where one of the casualties of war has been the breakdown of trust, Christians break through the mistrust to show compassion and build bonds, collecting food and donations for the widows in the neighborhood.
- **Salvation is for the hopeless and the suffering.** The group shared stories of serving children living on the streets, convicted prisoners, trafficked women, marginalized groups, proclaiming to them life and hope.

- **Salvation is personal but also social, and includes the struggle for justice** of the Indigenous peoples of Latin America, whose ancestral lands have been stolen and their people marginalized. Christians raise their voices to proclaim a God of justice.
- **Salvation is for all people**, and is not the private possession of any one group. In Colombia, a group of Christians unites many different denominations around a common interest in Bible study.
- **Salvation is not judgment but love, not condemnation but forgiveness.** It is not based on a moralistic obsession with who is “in” or “out” but on acceptance and radical hospitality.

I hope you are as inspired as I was to listen to these committed and visionary Christian leaders.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth".