

UCC- DOC Global Ministries Team Update

Submitted by Rev. Nancy Bacon



The UCC/DOC Southern California Global Ministries Team focuses primarily on five world regions. We determined several years ago that we could do more by focusing our efforts. We remain open to the needs of other locations as situations change, but for the past few years we have been committed to partners in Mexico, Japan, Palestine/Israel, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Central America/Caribbean nations.

MÉXICO: Our closest foreign neighbor acquires our attention due to needs of immigrants who congregate at the border seeking admission to the United States. This confluence of people has increased crime and certain illnesses. We work with our global ministry partner, Albergue las Memorias to provide help and support for people recovering from addictions and living with HIV and sometimes tuberculosis. Some from our team work with other organizations providing beds and bedding to needy immigrants stuck at the border. We have not made a pilgrimage to Tijuana since before the Covid pandemic began, but we hope to visit later this year and also experience what other partnerships are providing through the Dan Romero Center.

JAPAN: Our missionary, Jeffrey Mensendiak has recently visited California and reported to some of our churches about his experiences in Japan. After the Fukushima earthquake and nuclear disaster, the Japanese government was eager to calm people's fears, with some amount of downplaying concerns. Jeffrey and our global mission partners were able to test rice and other products for contamination and provide actual data to help people be safe.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL: Several members of our team have visited Palestine/Israel in the past and have built relationships with regional organizations seeking peace and prosperity for all in the Middle East. There is much current concern over political matters in Israel and an uneven level of concern for Palestinian hardships. Our team tries to keep up with current activities occurring and is planning a witness pilgrimage for November of 2024.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: Paul Turner was our missionary to the Congo for several years. He is back in the states now, but during his time there, a project to obtain eyeglasses for people was created. Healthcare outreach has been ongoing, especially to the underserved pygmy population. Monitoring upcoming elections will be a near-future endeavor.

CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN NATIONS: For many years an annual group trip to this region has been arranged by Rev. Michael Fronk and David Roger. Often there has been some work-trip component, but also an educational and ambassador element for us to learn about the status and concerns for Christians in the places visited. A future trip, perhaps to Cuba, is being discussed for early 2024.