We wish our Volunteers, Laura and Judith, the Very Best!

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We have successfully completed 10 years of working in this beautiful and challenging country and our work has been very rewarding. We don’t know what the future holds but we are very grateful for all the support we have received.

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The concept of implementing communal change can seem daunting, especially when observing the tension in the Middle Eastern countries around us. Many Israelis and Palestinians seem to associate change within the context of political change and peace treaties. As we entered into our reconciliation journeys, however, we discovered that we all have a personal and a communal story. We are the broken pieces of the puzzle that God is trying to bring together, full of biblical narrative and prophecy, and putting to the Messiah.

The descent from our next spiritual high found us on the road testing for respectability, crossing into Jordan. The West Bankers were learning firsthand to deal with the rest of the world, to Aga in the south. The reality of their situation hit them with a deep current, directing the deep, emotional, by our walk. We were flooded, by our walk. We have been blessed to yet again see our youth laughing as they helped each other up the hard sand hills before we gathered for our dinner, worship, and a lesson. Questions have large sociological and theological implications and are a point of many that need to be asked. The temptation is of course to stay away from them and pretend they don’t exist, but as we are learning in the trip, we need the willingness to even consider the prophets of change who are being marred by bitterness or frustration.

The goal behind this pre-trip training was to raise a group that would first, be a model for others to follow; second, to be an arena for youth leaders to grow and experience leadership; and third, to be a place of outreach for Musalaha. After the first session introducing to the concepts of reconciliation, Musalaha’s goals and methods, and principles of youth leadership, the leaders attempted a second session where they were split into 4 groups and were responsible for preparing the teaching, the other responsible for leading the activities. The groups prepared and designed all the teaching, and kept in contact as to how they prepared.

On our second morning in the desert, all of us were awakened by the sound of the male youth leaders charging them to rise into the mountains in which the voice among them for the first time since a long time. We had the privilege of participating in the teaching. The teaching challenged the audience to consider the needs of others, to become better leaders, to understand and respect the voices of others, and to become better men and women.

The theme of this desert encounter week was only. The leaders taught and discussed with the youth the topics of the impact of the church’s treatment of racial differences, the church’s treatment of its own community, and the church’s treatment of its neighbors. The leadership the relationships the leaders established prior to the trip brought a special element to this excursion as they were living amongst a group of 27 young disciples of Jesus. The relationships were deepening, the friendships were building, and the leaders were experiencing a new sense of community.

In the desert unity, youth laughter as they helped each other up the hard sand hills before we gathered for our dinner, worship, and a lesson. Questions have large sociological and theological implications and are a point of many that need to be asked. The temptation is of course to stay away from them and pretend they don’t exist, but as we are learning in the trip, we need the willingness to even consider the prophets of change who are being marred by bitterness or frustration.

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