



Frontera de Cristo

A Presbyterian Binational Border Ministry

Commissioned to Continued Service

by Miriam Maldonado and Mark Adams

When the PCUSA Interim Unified Agency decided it was ending World Mission and our service as Mission Co-workers, we felt deep sadness. In 2011, the national structure of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico had chosen to end its partnership with all of border ministry without consultation, and now, fourteen years later, the national structure of the PCUSA was doing the same.

Amid the uncertainty cast by the national office’s decision, Miriam said “Mark, this is an opportunity for faith to flourish.” And while the past year has not always been easy, faith, and the incredible outpouring encouragement and support from many faith-filled churches and individuals from both sides of the border, has sustained us. On Saturday May 2, the Presbyteries of Grand Canyon and de Cristo commissioned us to continued service as Mission Co-workers with Frontera de Cristo.

The commissioning service brought us great hope and encouragement after an unfortunate and devastating loss. It fills us with joy to see the commitment of the two presbyteries of Arizona, as well as many churches and individuals and Frontera de Cristo, affirm our call to continue to walk together in search of a more just, peace-filled, and loving world.

We’ve always known in our heads that the Interim Unified Agency’s decision to end World Mission and the ministry to which we sensed a deep call and commitment was not the church’s—much less God’s—rejection of the ministry we had dedicated our lives to. But during the commissioning service, hearing the sermon from PCUSA Co-moderator Tony Larson, seeing our partners from Frontera de Cristo, commissioners from both presbyteries as well as representatives from churches from Alabama, Michigan, South Carolina, and Virginia,



The laying on of hands as Mark & Miriam are commissioned as Mission Co-Workers at the spring meeting of the presbyteries of Grand Canyon and de Cristo. Photo ©2026 by Eric O. Ledermann, Chandler, AZ . Used by permission. All rights reserved.

and feeling surrounded by the Spirit when they laid hands on us and prayed, we knew—not just in our heads, but in our whole beings—that although the Interim Unified Agency had moved on from this particular model of relational and incarnational ministry, the broader church has not.

Thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support to us and to Frontera de Cristo throughout this past year and into the exciting future that God has for us.

Peace,
Miriam & Mark ☐

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Freedom, a Fundamental Right for All

by Marina Forero, Director, Children's Enrichment Ministry

"Freedom is to be at peace in a place that does not persecute me." —Nine-year-old Paula, participant in the Children's Enrichment Ministry

Peace Pals International annually extends a worldwide invitation to children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 16 to participate in an art exhibition. We participated for the first time in 2025—the theme was FREEDOM.

We excitedly began planning an invitation to all the children of the Ministry, including the city's Children's Home. We contracted the services of a painter (artist) who led intensive classes to offer drawing and painting tools.

The vast majority of the children initially expressed skepticism that they could do it, saying that they did not know how to draw and were not creative enough to participate in an exhibition of such magnitude.

I was amazed that in each of the steps, the children were attentive and open to learning each of the techniques. I was overjoyed to see the children develop an intense desire to express their own thoughts—and to do it with aesthetics and understandability, and above all have the self-confidence that their final painting expressed what was in their hearts and minds.

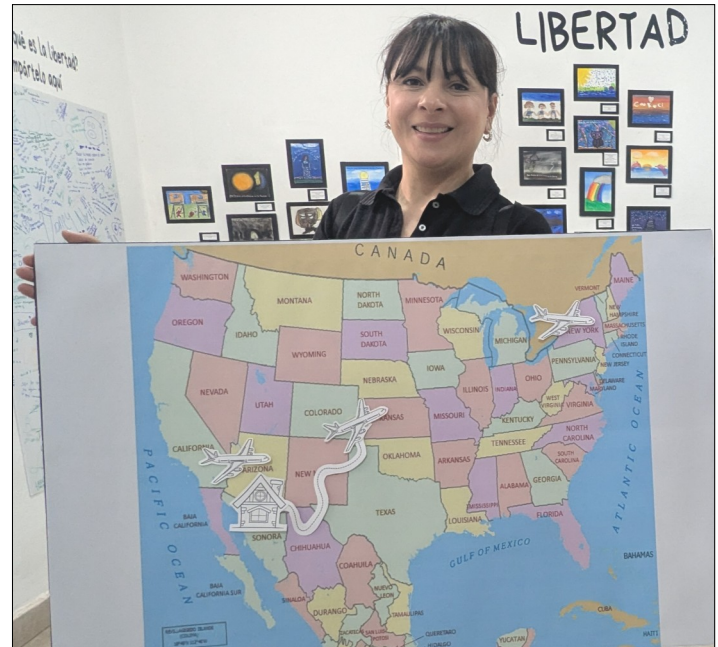
Each participant finished their work on the fifth day and gave an explanation of what their work meant.

Freedom means for:

- 10-year-old Camila, "It's making my own decisions; it's choosing the things I like without worries."
- 14 year-old Javier, "It's doing what you want, but with responsibility; it is feeling that you are doing it well."
- 10-year-old Horace, "That I can choose to go to the mountains or be in the sea, travel and see the animals."
- 8-year-old Karim, "Caring for animals and living beings that cannot defend themselves well."
- 16-year-old Leonardo, "It's having a life without discrimination; it is to be relaxed and with good thoughts."

Events like these give the children the power and the right to participate as citizens, to be able to choose without shame and without fear, to not only see themselves as individuals but as a community, to think of freedom not only as rights, but also as collective responsibilities and good stewardship of creation.

The painting classes and the exhibits that followed have been helpful in the forging of our own identity by identifying what we like, knowing who we are and self-mastery based on reason.



This beautiful art project took us to different locations:

At the Café Justo y Más coffee shop, the children and their parents participated in an artistic activity led by a local artist who had found, in art, a therapy to manage her states of deep sadness and depression. Now she is dedicated to sharing what she knows for the benefit of others.

Then we had the art exhibition at the Museum of Art and Heritage of the city with the doors open to visitors, with the intention that the families of the participants would see with pride the creation of these little artists. We also involved them in directed artistic activities that would promote the desire to dream big. For some of the families it was their first time visiting this cultural place.

Finally, the finalist who represented Mexico in this international contest was announced and the winner was a 14-year-old boy who has lived in Casa Hogar for more than five years. His reaction to learning that he was the winner among the fifty participants was one of great surprise and his face of joy lit up. The other children admired him and recognized his talent. This has been an unforgettable image of one of the thousand ways in which art can influence and touch others.

Now, the children's painting exhibition is on display at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas. In August, the paintings will travel to Phoenix, Arizona, where Young Arts Arizona will have multiple exhibits. We never dreamed that this project would reach such magnitude. People involved see potential and believe that the voice of children and adolescents deserve to be heard and seen. This is being family; here there are no barriers; here there is love and freedom.

We are now starting the process to participate this year in the 2026 Peace Pals International with the theme of "Together in Peace."

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God has blessed this ministry because it has contributed to the well-being of children in times when some of them struggle daily with mental health issues and others with school lag and learning problems. ☐



Take Action—Scan the QR code to watch the newest video of our Children's Enrichment Ministry.



Take Action—You can help the children's educational, social, and spiritual journeys by providing material goods to the Children's Enrichment Ministry. Just scan the QR code to access their Wish List on Amazon.



Good News for the World

by Lorena Ocampo Campos, Pastor for Children and Families

Critical Overview: The President of the United States has had yet another "brilliant idea"—this time, one that threatens to destroy the world. Meanwhile, the President of the United Mexican States believes that, with the help of her team of scientists, she can save her country and defeat any adversary.

While headlines are filled with political tensions and grim predictions regarding the border, there exists a parallel reality—one that fear and misunderstanding often prevent us from seeing. A second look is required to discover, amidst this uncertainty, the Holy Spirit at work through its sons and daughters. Under the leadership of Frontera de Cristo, they labor as brothers and sisters to bring love, hope, and faith to the places where they are needed most. This is good news for the world.

Today, I would like to share a different kind of story—one that transcends borders and diagnoses—a story worthy of being shared with the entire world, for it compels us to believe in the power of love to work miracles.

Seeds of Hope: Our children's program—working hand-in-hand with our Children and Family Ministry—has sown seeds of hope within 12 families (distributed across our various sites). These families include children facing challenges such as ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Hyperactivity, Dyscalculia, Auditory Processing Disorder (TPS), OCD, and Giftedness. Although these little ones often encounter barriers when it comes to reading, mathematics, communication, or adapting to their school communities, today—with the help of God and our dedicated team—they feel not only fully integrated but also fully capable.

Transforming Faith: For these children, faith and the study of the Bible have ceased to be mere intellectual concepts; instead, they have become the very motivation and strength that drive their lives forward. We celebrate every small step of progress with joy and gratitude to God. We rejoice in the miracles!

Community Garden: Frontera de Cristo has blossomed into a beautiful "community garden"—specifically within our Children's Ministry—where people of all ages, regardless of their background or which corner of the globe they hail from, are warmly welcomed. I pray for Pastors Mark and Jocabed, that their leadership at Frontera de Cristo may continue to inspire new generations. ☐

The Magic of These Borderlands

by Ximena Medina, Social Media & Events Coordinator, FDC

What do borders mean to you?

Frequently, when our ministry receives groups and delegations visiting the community of Douglas and Agua Prieta, we ask them this “simple” question.

Many of the answers are similar, although each one carries its own experiences and emotions. Still, certain words come up again and again: division, exclusion, separation.

When I hear these perspectives, something in me feels split in two. On one hand, I think about the customs and relationships that have been built in this region, where at times it seems like no wall exists. In Agua Prieta, we celebrate the Fourth of July and enjoy the fireworks, while many people from Douglas come in September to take part in our Independence celebrations with concerts, parades, and festivities.

At the same time, I can’t help but think about those who do not have the documents that allow them to cross this dividing line freely: those who are left out of the binational and intercultural dynamics that the border also represents. That is why I understand when people describe it as a place of division.

This is compounded by the way certain narratives have shaped the idea of the border as a place of fear and distrust, almost as if it were somewhere that should not be visited. It is often presented as a simple reality, reduced to black and white.

For me, it is not.

The border is a space full of nuance a place where realities intertwine: the good and the difficult, the inclusive and the exclusive, pain and beauty. Here,

contrasting scenes coexist: people crossing every day to see their families, while others are deported; cultures blending to the point of sharing traditions and language, while some lose their lives in search of better opportunities. Even within this daily closeness, our governments often struggle to understand one another.

And yet, the wall is still there—firm and imposing.

Even so, when groups spend a few days here, it is remarkable to see how their perspectives begin to shift. I cannot say that everything they once believed changes completely; some things match what they expected, while others are entirely new. But in the conversations we’ve had, I’ve noticed something consistent: they arrive looking for answers—political, social, cultural—and leave with something deeper.

They take with them the warmth of the community.

In this small city in the northern part of the state of Sonora, people from large metropolitan areas arrive with questions and, when they leave, they often share that they carry with them something more: testimony, action, hope, and community.

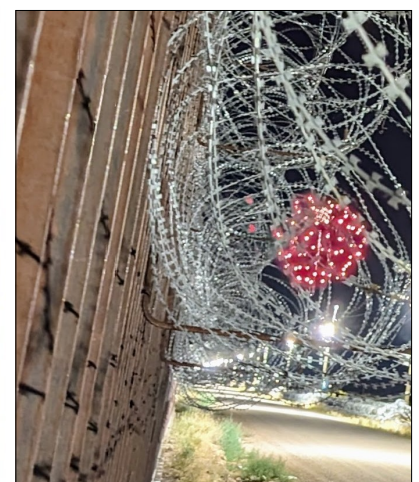
And I want to be clear: this is not about idealizing or highlighting only the positive. It is about recognizing that when people with different stories share life and ministry here, they experience different levels of connection, transformation, and renewal.

I don’t have statistics to support this. What I do have is nearly two years of experience in this ministry, where, visit after visit, I have witnessed these changes. Rather than seeing it as repetitive, I see it as a living expression of God’s love, compassion, and authenticity.

I was born and raised here, in a community where many important decisions are made far away. For a



July 4th fireworks display in Douglas, Arizona, as seen from the Mexico side of the border wall in Agua Prieta



July 4th fireworks, seen through the razor wire on the US side of the border wall

long time, I believed my path was also somewhere else. Today, I understand that it was here where I found my purpose. Looking back, I am grateful to the ministry and to the people who helped me value what I once overlooked: a city that welcomes you with open arms, embraces differences, and allows you to grow.

I see this every Wednesday at the table we share during our devotionals. My colleagues come from different places—Colombia, Chiapas, Tabasco, Durango, North Carolina, South Carolina, Sinaloa, among others—and yet they have made this community their home and their mission.

Here, pain and joy coexist: walls and barbed wire stand alongside celebration, unity, and hope. This is how the city leaves a mark on those who visit.

Today, I see it as an agent of change—a place that remains in the memory and hearts of those who pass through. Agua Prieta extends beyond its territory and population; it lives on in stories, photographs, and conversations that continue far from this border, shared by those who have visited.

That is why I believe the ministry of Frontera de Cristo not only reveals the reality of migration and the border, but also reflects, through its actions, what for me is one of the most beautiful values taught by Jesus: the ability to welcome others, make them feel at home, and build community with them.

It fills me with joy to think that God has chosen this place—my hometown—for so many people to experience His love and goodness. And although, just as in any city, there are challenges to face, I feel deeply proud to be from here and of what this place represents.

Thank you to those who have allowed me to share my community with you, and with it, a part of who I am.

Because in the end, this is not about me, but about the encounters, conversations, hugs, and stories that this place has made possible. For more than 40 years, Frontera de Cristo has woven together a space where the everyday and the simple become something deeply meaningful—a space where we can all live together under the same reality and as part of the same society: children of God. □



Take Action—Organize a delegation to the Border. For more information about bringing a delegation to the borderlands and doing life and ministry with us, email us at office@fronteradecristo.org. You can also review our Mission Delegation Manual and get other details on our Website: <http://fronteradecristo.org/delegation-info/> □

Witnessing the Fruits of the Spirit

by Mark Adams, FDC Co-Coordinator

Frontera de Cristo has had a binational internship ministry for more than 25 years where young adults from the US and Mexico come to become part of our community for a year; to reflect on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ when borders divide; to serve together with our community partners; and to experience and witness to the reality that “Jesus is our peace, has broken down the dividing walls of hostility, and is building us together to be a holy dwelling in which God dwells by God’s spirit” (excerpts from Ephesians 2:11-22).

So in 2006, when the Tucson Borderlands Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) Program, a site of PCUSA’s national YAV ministry, asked Frontera de Cristo (FDC) to work with them and provide placement opportunities in Agua Prieta, we enthusiastically accepted.

This year we are blessed to have Jay Stone and Olivia Phelps serving with us. Jay initially came to FDC as part of a delegation from Queens University



and then expressed their desire to come back. Olivia was placed with us directly through the YAV program. Olivia has been a part of the Children’s Enrichment Ministry team, and shared in a recent blog post:

“I encounter the fruits of the Spirit every day here in the Borderlands. With the people I meet on the street, my fellow YAVs, and the communities of Frontera de Cristo and First Presbyterian Church of Douglas, there is an abundance of love, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness present. But when I reflect on where I most clearly witness the fruits of the Spirit as a Borderlands YAV, I instantly think of the joy I experience with the children I work with through FDC’s Children’s Enrichment Ministry.”

Jay has been teaching English with DouglPrieta Trabaja and has also made the crosses for our cross-planting ceremonies, during which we remember those who died crossing a border that is increasingly weaponized: where we as a government use deserts and mountains as lethal deterrents. They recognized the importance of remembrance and ritual and also remind us that crosses are not enough:

“Some justify these actions (weaponizing God’s creation through increasingly draconian border policies) through religion, through a version of Christianity that protects power instead of people.

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“I Guess They’ll Have To Arrest Me, Too”

On the Border with Shirley Jewell

by Mark Adams, FDC Co-Coordinator

“I guess they’ll have to arrest me, too.”

These words are prophetic words.

These words are healing words.

These words lifted my spirits when I was very discouraged.

And these words were the last words I expected to hear from Shirley Jewell, the 92-year-old founding member of Frontera de Cristo whom I was visiting on July 2, 2019.

When I arrived that day in Shirley’s living room, she almost immediately asked me, “Mark, what is the matter? You look so down.” Shirley has always shown me and my family such care and concern, but that day she was visibly worried about me.

I shared with her that I had just learned that our government was going to retry Scott Warren, a professor of Arizona State University and a volunteer with No More Deaths. He had been arrested and charged with two counts of criminal conspiracy in the furtherance of illegal entry and harboring of two men from Honduras who were in distress in the Sonoran Desert.

Earlier in the summer, Joca Gallegos and I had responded to the call from our sister organization No More Deaths for clergy to be present at Scott’s first trial in which he testified. It was one of the most spiritual experiences I have ever had. With deep humility and calmness, Scott shared without fear about his life-giving actions. His testimony was grounded in three things: reverence for creation, the importance of recognizing the dignity of every human being, and the practice of hospitality found in almost every spiritual tradition.

Ten people on the jury voted to acquit him and two voted to convict. Despite the lopsided tally, our government announced earlier that day to retry him. I told Shirley how disappointed I was in our government, first of all to try him in the first place, threatening him with 20 years in prison and a \$200,000 fine, but then after such a lopsided hung jury to decide to spend so much more time and energy and money to retry him for doing what Jesus, in Matthew 25, clearly said we are to do. I lamented that our government was increasingly declaring that it was illegal to be Christian.

Shirley looked at me and said: “Well, I guess that they are going to have to arrest me, too.”

She went on to tell me how over the years she had opened her doors to many people who were in



Shirley being interviewed by Steve Zeoli in her living room, August 2023

transit, providing food, water, a listening ear, prayer, a phone to call loved ones. She said she never asked if they had papers to be in the country legally, she only saw human beings that God called her to love. These surprising words broke through my despair and unleashed a fountain of hope and challenged me not to lose faith.

Shirley grew up on a ranch in New Mexico and when she was a child, many of her friends spoke Spanish. She also took Spanish in high school and college, so when she and her husband John moved to Douglas, Arizona, in the 1960s, she was glad to be able to communicate with people in both English and Spanish. Both Shirley and John were educators by vocation; she was a teacher at Stevenson Elementary School and he was one of the first teachers at Cochise College.

They joined First Presbyterian Church. Shirley was in the choir, a leader in the Presbyterian Women's group, and elected an elder of the church.

In 1984, when leaders of the national Presbyterian churches of Mexico and the United States were looking for leaders in Douglas to help found a binational ministry and to create a new model of being in ministry together, Shirley said yes.

Over the years, she has told me over and over again that she didn't know why she was asked because "I didn't really know much and didn't think I had anything to offer, except maybe knowing a little Spanish." But Shirley said yes.

In an interview with Steve Zeoli in 2023, she mentioned not knowing what to expect, but that the "excitement of being part of something new...just imagining what could happen...the two countries and churches maybe getting together somehow and understanding each other. So that was a nice thing, I thought, getting together our cultures, understanding one another. We lived right next door. Why not know each other and understand one another?"

To this day, the core tenet of Frontera de Cristo is cultivating relationships and understanding across borders as we seek to respond in faith to the realities of migration and the realities of the drug culture.

Shirley cherished the unexpected relationships which she formed over the years through the ministry of Frontera de Cristo. Amelia del Pozo, a single mother from San Luis Potosi, was another of the early founders of Frontera de Cristo and a strong leader of the ministry for many years. The first Presbyterian worship services in Agua Prieta happened in her apartment in 1985.

"Amelia was a leader of leaders and a real go getter. You didn't fool her. And she corrected quite a few men, too." Shirley shared while remembering how this binational feminine duo of Frontera de Cristo sometimes encountered pushbacks from the macho culture. "There were so many things that we were not supposed to do as women, but God called us to be in this ministry and we were on a journey together."

Shirley, together with Amelia and other early strong women leaders, set a path to take away obstacles for female leadership in the ministry. Because they said yes to God, they opened the door for Frontera de Cristo to be blessed by incredible female leaders throughout the years.



Mara Salazar, Café Justo Manager, and Shirley Jewell, FDC Board Member, meet during the construction of the coffee shop

In 2016, when Shirley was serving her last active term on the Frontera de Cristo Board of Directors, she met Mara, Amelia's granddaughter for the first time as a grown-up, at the construction site of Café Justo y Más, a partnership of Café Justo, the CATPSIC drug rehab center and Frontera de Cristo. Mara was the first manager of the Café Justo coffee co-operative, and was overseeing the construction of the coffee shop. She currently serves on the Board of Frontera de Cristo. *(continued on page 8)*

“I Guess They’ll Have To Arrest Me, Too”

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Reflecting on the founding of Café Justo y Más, Shirley said: “I think it is marvelous. It’s a place where everybody meets. It’s a place also where we as US Americans who know nothing about Mexico meet and can begin to get to know the rich culture and faith of the Mexican people. [It is a place] where folks from Mexico can know who we are as Anglo Christians, and we can learn from them.”

Over the years, almost without fail, one of the first things Shirley asked me when I arrived for a visit is “how are we doing?” While she had not been able to be as active over the last few years as she would have liked to have been in the ministry, she continued to hold the ministry deep in her heart and in her prayers.

“Being a part of Frontera de Cristo has just been marvelous. It has been perhaps not *the most* marvelous part of my life but *one of the most* marvelous parts of my life. It’s absolutely wonderful to have two languages going at the same time and there are no finer people than the people from Mexico I have worked with—very loving and giving.

“I thought I was doing something God wanted me to do. I think God expects us to love everyone, even though we are not always very lovable. But we are called to take care of one another and do what we can. I’m so happy that I have been a part of Frontera de Cristo. And I think that God is as well.”

When Shirley said yes to God’s call to be a part of a crazy thing called binational ministry, she did not imagine what it would become. The seeds that she and Amelia (and so many other women and men who said yes) planted have grown into many different plants and have borne fruit way beyond what they could ever have imagined.

“It’s a dream come true. I didn’t really have that dream ’til I got here.”

Shirley died January 21st at the age of 97 in the home where she and John raised their daughters. During the last weeks of her life, she rested in the living room where throughout the years she welcomed friends, family, the hungry, the thirsty, and friends she had never met before. She received the loving care of her daughters Robin and Wendy with the support of hospice.

During one of my last visits, I asked Shirley what she would like us to pray for. She said, “Frontera de Cristo and my daughters. Pray that they will be okay when I am gone. Don’t pray for me, I am in God’s hands.”

Please join us in thanksgiving for the life and ministry of Shirley Jewell—

“Well done, good and faithful servant.” □



FDC founding member Shirley Jewell with Doña Soraida Santiago, founding member of the Café Justo cooperative



Rosario Viesca Dávila and Shirley, enjoying each other’s company at Frontera de Cristo’s 40th anniversary celebration in October 2024

Frontera de Cristo participates in the Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) at the United Nations

by David Bonilla, Asesor en Administración en FDC

I had the honor of participating as a representative of Frontera de Cristo at the Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), held at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York City from May 5–8, 2026.

Thanks to the Presbyterian Church, which supported various partners around the world working on behalf of migrants, we were invited to take part in this important space for international dialogue and collaboration.

As a representative of Frontera de Cristo, I actively participated in meetings, dialogues, and working groups that began in January of this year with the goal of building a joint declaration focused on the dignity, protection, and human rights of migrants. After months of collaborative work among organizations, churches, and international representatives, this effort came to fruition with the adoption of the “*Progress Declaration*.”

The IMRF promotes safer, more orderly migration with respect for human rights. During the forum, key topics were addressed, including safe, orderly, and regular migration; the protection of migrant women, girls, and

children; labor mobility; family reunification; access to basic services; and combating human trafficking and smuggling.

In addition, this space creates opportunities to strengthen cooperation among organizations, governments, and border communities in order to improve humanitarian assistance and protect the dignity of migrants.

Therefore, throughout this gathering, the importance of strengthening international cooperation and promoting migration policies centered on human rights and the dignity of every person was reaffirmed. This is what was agreed upon by all the nations that signed the IMRF agreement, with the exception of the United States, which did not sign it.

Mexico has shown support for this international cooperation, while the United States has maintained a position more focused on border security, migration control, and strengthening the border wall.

For example, in Douglas there is currently an increase in the federal budget for infrastructure, surveillance, and modernization by the government, resulting in a considerable number of migrants seeking asylum in the United States becoming stranded in Agua Prieta, since the commitments and contributions outlined in the IMRF are neither signed nor upheld by the U.S. government.

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United Nations

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That being said, we must work to strengthen the migrant shelter “Centro de Atención a Migrantes Éxodus (CAME)” in order to support these individuals. Frontera de Cristo will continue supporting the shelter, which daily assists migrants and vulnerable families by providing:

- temporary shelter,
- food,
- basic care,
- guidance,
- humanitarian support,
- accompaniment for migrant women, children, and families.

In the future, if the shelter’s needs increase, additional support and resources could be sought through Mexican institutions such as the Sistema DIF, the Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados (COMAR), the Secretaría de Bienestar, and Cáritas Mexicana, since the Mexican government increased its budget for assisting people in transit, as well as for social and humanitarian programs, after signing the agreement.

This is how border wall policies and increased border enforcement continue to place pressure on Agua Prieta and Douglas. However, there is also the possibility of strengthening the humanitarian work of organizations such as CAME in order to continue supporting those who need it most.

In addition to the IMRF, on May 3rd I had the opportunity to share and teach at Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, where I spoke about the work we do at Frontera de Cristo accompanying migrant communities and promoting justice, hospitality, and human dignity at the border. Likewise, on May 10 I participated at University Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, once again sharing about our mission, experiences, and the impact of our community work with children, as well as speaking about economic development projects.

This experience allowed me to exchange perspectives with leaders and organizations from different countries, strengthen international partnerships, and reaffirm Frontera de Cristo’s commitment to humanitarian accompaniment and the defense of migrant communities within the framework of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I am grateful to Amanda, Joseph, and many others for their work before and during the IMRF, as well as to Sam, Cynthia, Howard, and Lee Ann for their hospitality in Buffalo. □



Above: David at the United Nations. Below: Lee Ann Grace translates for David during worship at University Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, NY



Take Action—Contact your congressional representatives and encourage them to support a fair and just immigration system and a simpler path for asylum seekers.



Witnessing the Fruits of the Spirit

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But standing behind faith to excuse cruelty is not faith at all. Christianity at its core is not about borders, punishment or exclusion. Jesus was not aligned with the powerful. He was a liberator for the oppressed. Any belief system used to rationalize suffering has been stripped of its moral foundation.

This is not just about the border. It is about who we decide is worth protecting, whose lives are mourned, and whose deaths are explained away. It asks whether we will stay silent because it is easier, or have courage because it is right, despite the cost.

I made a cross, but crosses should not be the only response we give.” □

For Such a Time as This *Gratitude for the Bonilla Forero Family* 2015–2026

by Mark Adams, FDC Co–Coordinator

In the fall of 2015, Frontera de Cristo had a vision of starting a children’s enrichment center and working with Café Justo and CRREDA drug rehab center to start a coffee shop. The ministry had a vision, but did not yet have the personnel necessary to make it possible. In such a time as that, the Mennonite Central Committee Mexico asked Frontera de Cristo if we would like to have two of their mission workers, an educator and a pastor/administrator come and be a part of the Frontera de Cristo family.

Marina Forero and David Bonilla arrived with their children in December of 2015 with the gifts, experience, and faith needed. Within six months, Café Justo y Más was dedicated, and the first site of the Children’s Enrichment Ministry was started at the New Hope Community Center. After ten years, Café Justo y Más continues to have a strong presence in the community, hiring people in recovery from addictions to have jobs that support their recovery, and providing space for children, youth, and adults to share their artistic abilities. And becoming the largest buyer of Café Justo. The Children’s Enrichment Ministry has expanded to include four different sites with a fifth planned to start in the fall.

This spring a church in California shared with David and Marina their vision of starting a new Spanish-speaking ministry in their community. They saw the gifts, experience, and faith in David and Marina and invited them to help make their vision a reality.

Marina and David shared with the board of FDC:

“This decision has not been easy for us. During the past 10 years, Frontera de Cristo was not only the place where we served; it became our spiritual family, our community, and a very important part of our lives and ministry. Here we grew, learned, cried, celebrated, and witnessed God’s faithfulness working through many individuals and families over the years.

We want to express our sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve alongside all of you. We will always carry in our hearts the experiences we shared, the friendships we built, and the privilege of walking together in the mission of sharing the love of Christ along the border.”

For such a time as this, David and Marina have ended their time of ministry with FDC to begin a new chapter of life and ministry. While their ministry with FDC has ended, their ministry has born much fruit over these 10 years and will continue bearing fruit. □



Marina, David, Aisha, and Ian

Take Action—Join us in giving thanks to God for the life and ministry of Marina and David and praying for them as they work to start a new worshipping community.

Take Action—Watch the [Friends Across Borders video](#) and share with your family, friends, and church networks.



Take Action—Sign the Friendship Pledge and find ways in your local community to make your community a safer and more welcoming place for the most vulnerable among you.



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Take Action—Join us each Tuesday evening for the “Healing Our Borders Prayer Vigil” at 5:15pm Arizona Time via Zoom or in person.
Email office@fronteradecristo.org for the link or for details.



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Sharing the Good News in Word and Deed by

- Cultivating Relationships and Understanding Across Borders
 - Responding in Faith to the Realities of Migration
 - Responding in Faith to the Realities of the Drug Culture

www.fronteradecristo.org

Frontera de Cristo is one of four binational border ministries of the PC(USA)'s Presbyterian Borderlands Ministries. Frontera de Cristo works with churches, presbyteries, and organizations on both sides of the border to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.



Connect With Us

- Sign up for our monthly e-letters at <http://fronteradecristo.org/>
- Volunteer with us on the border. For details, email mark@fronteradecristo.org
- Organize a delegation from your church, university, or other organization to experience the border firsthand.
- And don't forget to order your coffee ...