

Marvelous Wound

Jesus' broken body loosed a river of healing, not only for our personal wounds, but also for the massive divides we face as His body, the Church. These divides are many and complicated. Yet how mighty is the flood of blood, water, and Spirit upon broken ones who seek to 'be brought to complete unity' (JN 17: 23)!

I share a bit in the wound between Catholics and Protestants. It smarts when I hear either party speak smugly about the error of the other. When I do, I cling to the Crucified and allow a fresh draft of mercy to keep the wound clean. More and more, that burn and that mercy seem to define our Living Waters ministry.

On the eve of our 40-day fast for the Church, I had the privilege of visiting Santiago Chile where Ruth Olave and team have dug a deep well of 'living water' in the Vineyard Church there. I originally helped envision them to do Living Waters a decade earlier as a fellow evangelical. Last week I returned as a Catholic.

It is difficult for North Americans to understand the historic wound between Catholics and Protestants in South America. While Catholics continue to be a minority in the diverse religious culture of the USA, Catholics ruled both church and state in the south; in spite of independence from Spanish domain a century ago, the RCC still predominates and has often discriminated against evangelicals. Combine that with 'born again' former Catholics who eschew their history as false and serious Catholics who view these 'sectarian zealots' as false. Wounded!

In light of our love for each other, the evangelical team of Living Waters leaders in Santiago had concerns about our new 'whole church' approach to the program. I entered into our time together not knowing how to answer all their questions, which came fast and hard during meetings in which many leaders expressed concern about Catholic influence, wanting to work with Catholics, etc.

All I could do was hide myself in the wounds of Jesus. That's where the water is! I can never fully know another's suffering due to religious conflict but I can feel my own pain and take refuge in His merciful side. Answers flowed from love, however halting and imperfect. By the end of our time, we agreed to walk together in love for any broken person seeking mercy. On Christ, the one foundation (1Cor. 3:11), we will build together. Living Waters alone—His very mercy--makes a way.