



Update from JJ TenClay May 2021

Dear Friends,

I want to start this letter off with some amazing news. Thanks to the generous prayers and financial gifts given by many of you, the school rebuilding project in Iraqi Kurdistan is now complete! This project (a partnership between Partners Relief & Development and RCA Global Mission) was scheduled to be rebuilt in the spring of 2020, but due to the evolving COVID-19 situation, was delayed for a year. In February 2021, Partners began rebuilding the school with locals who were personally affected by the Islamic State occupation in the region providing labor for the rebuilding project. **The school was projected to serve 400-500 children who had been forcibly displaced from the region and suffered unspeakable loss and trauma by the Islamic State, but more than 600 children have enrolled so far; some have not received formal education services in over six years.** Partners was also able to build a soccer (football) field for the children, and to see children who have suffered such atrocities have the opportunity for education and play fills my heart with such deep joy and gratitude; I hope it has the same effect for you as well.

Here is a video provided by Partners Relief & Development giving a summary of this project: vimeo.com/547494673/c582b93fe9.



Again, I thank you for joining me in these efforts. I often have people ask me how we, as a small Christian denomination in the United States, Canada, and U.S. territories, can share God's love and compassion for refugees and displaced people worldwide. My answer is: This. This is one powerful example of how we can do it. Praise be to God.

I'm currently working with global ecumenical partners to identify a new project opportunity to provide care for refugees and displaced people, similar to this project in Iraq. Please join me in praying that the next project will come together and be fruitful as well. As always, if you or your church, small group, youth group, classis, etc. are

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interested in donating or raising funds for refugee care, please contact me at jjtenclay@rca.org and we can discuss opportunities.

At the same time that I'm rejoicing in the rebuilding of this school in Iraq, I continue to lament the issues in our world today that have led, and continue to lead, to forced displacement and death of people all around the world. Wars and violent conflicts. Political corruption or instability. Persecution. Economic collapse. Climate change and climate or natural disasters. Profound and pervasive threats to life and liberty. We know that in our world today, over 80 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes, and over 26 million are formally categorized as refugees.

I believe God laments this, too. I believe God calls us to care for those who are displaced from their homes and are seeking refuge, whether they live in our communities or thousands of miles away.

World Refugee Day is one opportunity for us, as individuals and within our faith communities, to spend time focusing on refugees and discerning how God may be calling us to care for refugees, both locally and globally. This year, World Refugee Day (June 20) falls on a Sunday, which makes it a great year to participate, even if it's your first time. Will you join me in observing World Refugee Day? If you're interested in receiving a copy of the RCA's World Refugee Sunday Toolkit, please contact me at jjtenclay@rca.org. If you or your faith community participates in World Refugee Day, I'd love to highlight your participation in an upcoming Dear Friends letter or other communication, so please send me photos and other highlights from the event at jjtenclay@rca.org.

May Grace and Peace Abound,

JJ TenClay

Missionary and refugees ministry coordinator

WORLD REFUGEE SUNDAY

2021 TOOL KIT

