

John Calls for Repentence — Luke 3:1-18; Isaiah 40:1-11

This story in Luke 3 can also be found in John 1:19-28. It draws my attention because the gospel of John begins by recognizing the sovereignty of God from the beginning of creation. In that context of recognizing the superiority of God over humankind, John the Baptist appears as one chosen to give testimonies about God. John went through different situations in his life and ministry, but he was always a living testimony and remained faithful to the word of God. He was a man of principle with a clear vision, especially regarding the purpose to which he was called.

As we start a new year, these words of John are very appropriate. We are literally living in a global desert where the vegetation of love cannot be seen, especially in the United States, where in recent months many events promoted hatred, lack of love, rejection, discrimination, the superiority of one race over another, disunity, corruption, and so forth.

John encourages us to turn from the wrong direction that the world has taken, repent, and “prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight” (v. 4). If we do this, we will provide hope that encourages the hearts of humanity and transforms this desert into a beautiful forest where the life of every human being is valued.

Recently, a woman came to our office with her eight-year-old son Carlos, who had crossed the border a few weeks earlier with his aunt Maritza.¹ During the interview, Carlos never made eye contact with us while his mother told us the story. It was obvious that he still had in mind the traumas of such a trip, especially for a child of Carlos’s age.

Carlos and Maritza left Honduras and passed through Guatemala and Mexico. In Mexico, they hired a coyote (smuggler) to help them pass into the United States. As they crossed the desert, they encountered difficult situations that they had never experienced. The lack of water and food made the journey more and more difficult. Carlos and Maritza slowed down and delayed the group. After walking under the sun without water and food for several days, Maritza fainted near the border. Because Carlos was not able to carry her, he and Maritza were left on their own in the desert.

When Carlos’s mother got to this part of the story, Carlos suddenly looked at us, interrupting her and the interview. With a strong voice and much enthusiasm, he said: “Then I saw an angel who came to rescue us.” “An angel!” we replied in surprise. “Yes, an angel,” Carlos answered. “The angel brought us water and took care of me and my aunt and flew us to the hospital.”

That angel was an immigration officer who found them lying in the desert, treated them, and had them airlifted by helicopter to a hospital where they were further treated before being taken to a detention center. They were released into the custody of relatives with an order to appear in court a few months later.

God is on the move, indeed!

What is important is not
that we say we are following Jesus
but how we live out our Christian lives
in all aspects of our lives.
This is what gives us hope,
and we can offer this hope to others.



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John the Baptist's task required being courageous but at the same time being humble and recognizing that Christ was much greater than he. Our task as Christians is to announce his Word and let Christ reign in us. We can be a living testimony of his Word and bring hope to those in need and those who are hopeless. In this new year, in this world convulsed with injustice, evil, and selfishness everywhere, we can, just like the immigration officer, and bring hope into the lives of children (like Carlos), aunts (like Maritza), their mothers and relatives.

Happy New Year to you! May God bless all of you.

—Andrew Bodden, AndrewBodden@mcc.org

1. Names have been changed to protect their identities.



Andrew Bodden, a Honduran native, serves as a program director for Mennonite Central Committee East Coast, providing leadership to the programs in New York, Philadelphia, Florida, Puerto Rico, and to the Young Adult, and Peace and Justice programs. He also connects with Anabaptist pastors and churches on the East Coast and in Puerto Rico. Andrew has worked in multicultural settings in Central and South America, Mexico, Dominican Republic, and the United States. He is an ordained minister in the Atlantic Coast Conference and serves as vice-chair of the Mennonite Mission Network board.

Looking for participant guide page numbers in the leader guide? The page numbers in the leader guide work for both guides.

Resources for this session

- [Dramatic Reading, Luke 3:1-18 NRSV](#)