Upon returning to Colombia in July, I was asked to begin working full-time with the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEDECOL) Peace Commission’s Prophetic Call human rights documentation program. Our goals continue to be to document the impact of the armed conflict on Protestant and evangelical churches in Colombia, to provide material, spiritual and legal support to the victims and to advocate for governmental policies - both in Colombia and from the US - that support victims and bring an end to the armed conflict. We recently published the Prophetic Call annual report with cases from 2010 and 2011 in both Spanish and English. These reports bear witness to the hundreds of human rights violations suffered by members of our churches as well as the positive responses to the conflict from our churches. We continue to accompany the farming communities of El Garzal, Las Pavas and a group of 12 farming communities in southern Córdoba Province all of whom face violence in their struggle to keep the land they depend on for survival. We celebrate with the communities of El Garzal and Las Pavas recent decisions from the Colombian Rural Development Institute (INCODER) in favor of the peasants’ ownership of the land.

The biggest new development in Colombia is the beginning of formal negotiations in Havana, between the FARC guerrilla and the Colombian government seeking to end their armed conflict. This new scenario for peace has invigorated peace building networks throughout Colombia.

God, we pray for the peoples of Colombia, especially those who are being terrorized and abused. We ask for a positive outcome to the negotiations to end the armed conflict, and we celebrate the support of the four official partnerships with US churches. We ask for continued strength and renewed hope for the staff of CEDECOL who so arduously work for peace.

Michael Joseph serves with the Restoration, Life and Peace Commission of the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEDECOL) in Colombia, South America. He provides a pastoral critical presence to church leaders and lay people who are living in life-threatening situations.

The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.

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