Presence Matters

On more than one occasion, a former pastor and mentor asked me, “Julia how is your soul?” Whenever he asked me this I was taken aback.

In April I visited partners in the Congo, in the city of Goma. Goma is located in a war zone in eastern Congo, separated by challenging terrain from the Capital of Kinshasa making it difficult to govern. The Congo's valuable resources make it a battleground for those who want to profit while the civilian population is susceptible to violent conflicts.

In Goma we were accompanied by a colonel during our entire visit, urgently shuffled from one center to the next and one meeting to the next with no break for coffee, tea, or lunch. During one meeting, the president of the Women’s Association of the Church of Christ in Goma shared with us their reality and her words remain with me today. She said, “You didn’t come here because it was easy but because God is with you, even if on the road, there are problems, we know that God is with us.” She then said, “We are suffering. We do not know what to do. The world looks at us like we are not human beings. We must continue to have hope in spite of the difficulties.”

We saw signs of hope in young teachers committed to educating new generations. We met young doctors giving their lives every day to bind the wounds of women and children. Your gifts offer this hope and are sustaining longstanding partnerships with our Congolese brothers and sisters.

If my mentor asked me today “How is my soul?” I would say that my soul is wounded from what I have seen and heard but amazed and holding tightly onto hope. Join us on this journey of solidarity. Go to www.globalministries.org/congo-initiative.

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