

October 2020 — Doors to mission are all around us

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There are literal doors that we step through every day. Within our living quarters, our workplaces (if we still go to our physical workplaces), when we are running in and out of stores to buy last-minute items and, if we are lucky, when we visit friends or family.

Books are portals as well, transporting us from one place to another as we read via the road of our imagination. And, these days, Zoom links and other online communication tools are also portals, allowing us access to each other as we sit at screens on opposite sides of the city, the country or the globe.

Do we have the power to choose to step through these doors? Or are we shoved unwillingly through them? Do we take hold of our faith like a repel line, stepping out confidently to meet what is waiting to be noticed, however beautiful or disturbing? Or do we at times just fall blindly through into whatever space is on the other side?

I ask all these questions because there are so many challenges facing us these days. I say “us” as a gentle reminder that there is a massive collective of humanity out there, and we are all part of it, regardless of the divisions of our own construction that we have become so used to. Divisions that we wear like an old T-shirt, comfortable still, despite the fact that the form is washed out and worn to pieces. “Out there” refers to the whole world in its entirety. Sometimes stepping through doors brings us closer to the other, indeed to one another, and that is not always easy. So often we hold events and people at arm’s length so that we are not too disturbed by their experiences or perspectives.

How often do you read the news and say to yourself, that is happening *over there*, to *them*? I catch myself saying that as a dismissive at times, too. It’s a way of protecting myself from too much suffering, from too much information, from too much injustice.

As people of faith, we are invited to step through the door into what happens in the wider world. We can’t help but be changed by the experience and change is frightening at times. By stepping through such doors, you enter in part the world of the other, and let’s please not allow ourselves to forget that the “other” is simply another person. It could be you or me if the roles were reversed. Let’s remember that God already chose to step through the door to us when Jesus was born onto this planet and God forever bridged humans and God in that act. God was with

us then (*over there*, in Bethlehem) and God is with us still, everywhere and now. It seems, in following God's example, we are called to step through such doors, however uncomfortable at times, and meet what is there with love and empathy. That, to me, is mission.

Let us choose to see a door and step through it rather than skip past it. Some fear is acceptable, but apathy is no longer a choice. Remember, God is already there.

Alethia and Ryan's daughters happily climb through a beautiful door in Germany to discover what is beyond. (Photo by Alethia White)



[Alethia White and her husband, the Rev. Ryan White](#), have served as Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission co-workers in Berlin since 2013. They live in Berlin with their two daughters and work alongside the Iranian Presbyterian Church, collaborating with groups supporting migrants and refugees. Alethia and her family have had the opportunity to interact with people of many different cultures, stories and experiences. Through each of these people, there is the invitation to step through the door to meet God in the beautiful and in the disturbing chapters of each one's experience.

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