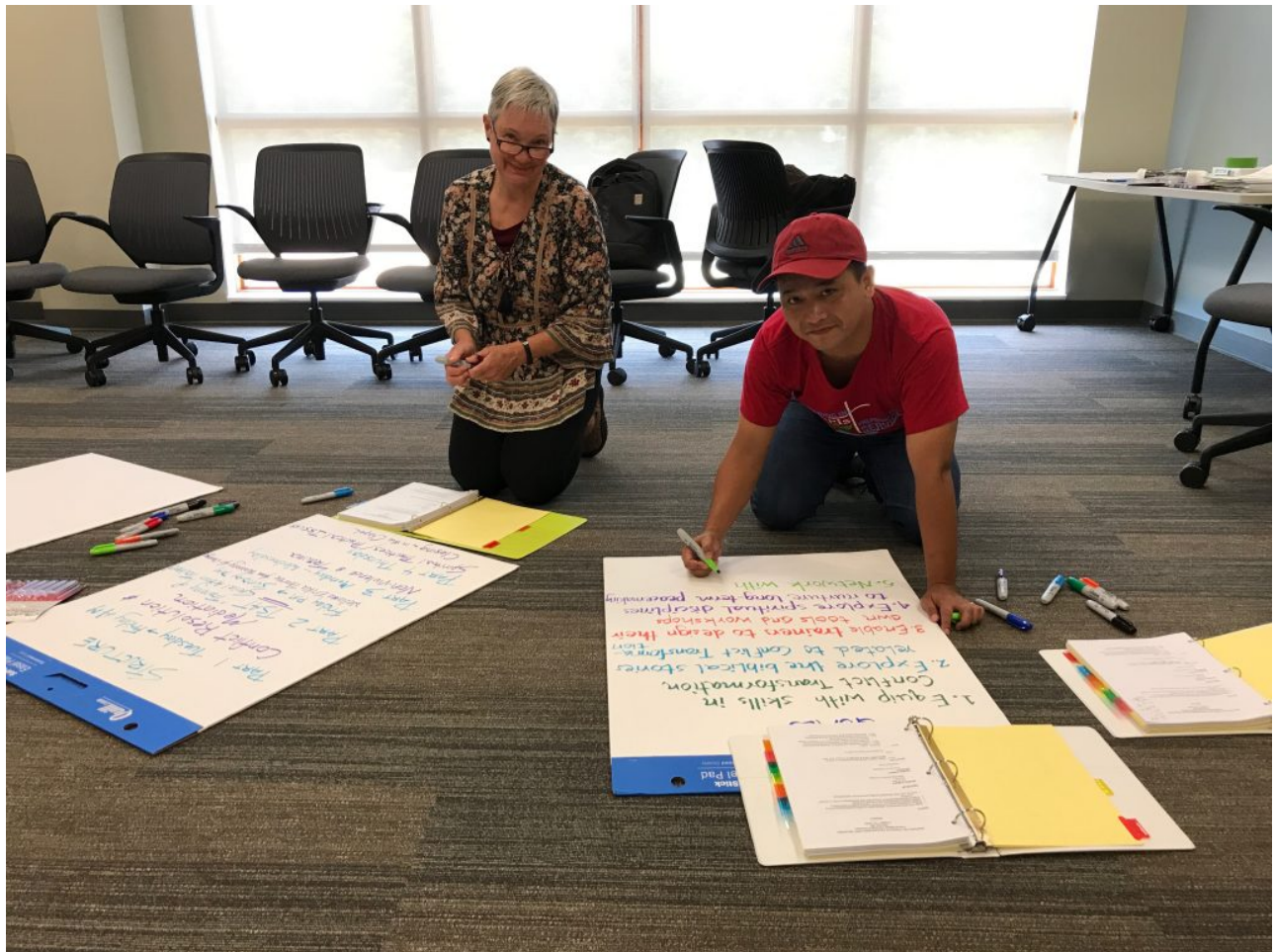


**JOURNALS** POSTED ON AUGUST 8, 2018

## Walking Together



DAN AND SHARON  
BUTTRY



SUPPORT PLEDGED



## Accompaniment Ministry

To walk alongside another person in the ministry of accompaniment means I choose to walk with an open heart, expectant that we are learning together from each other. We are sharing our joys and sorrows with the same feeling for each other. We are working together, shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand, walking in the same direction with the same purpose. In this way, we are demonstrating the life and love of Christ with one another, giving the best of ourselves to each other in the hope that together, we are better than we could possibly be if we were walking alone. We accompany one another and become the body of Christ. We glorify God in the working out of our faith, walking together.

My mentor, Helen DeLano practiced the art of accompaniment. She was a missionary along with her husband Bob in Nagaland (NE part of India). I met her after she retired, and in her 70's she was accompanying people from El Salvador back to their villages and homeland after the war in Central America. Many peasants and villagers fled the war. They were safer and had more freedom to return if accompanied by people of faith like Helen who could witness any injustice related to the return home. She literally walked with people across borders to share the work of repair and restoration, coming home. Not her home, but she acted as if it was her journey, her loss, her need to return home, the same as those she accompanied.

I learned so much from Helen. She had an amazing capacity to enlarge the rooms and chambers of her heart to take in one more person, to carry the joys and sorrows of yet one more stranger along the way. She never thought in terms of limits — her love was limitless and without borders, unconditional. She was possessed by a joy and freedom that was the work of the Holy Spirit, enlivening her when most people at her age would be thinking about how to put up their feet and rest. Instead, Helen marched to the beat of the Holy Spirit and literally put her feet to the ground to walk with the dispossessed. She walked with Salvadorans trapped in Honduras by the war. She carried bedding and pots and pans, laughing and watching with the women, ready to give an answer to the press and the media if there should be any attempt to block the path back to El Salvador and home, for her friends.

This week we are in Kansas City, Kansas, conducting a 10 Day Conflict of Transformation Trainers (TCTT) with 32 people from 8 countries — Canada, Japan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, United Kingdom, Thailand, Nicaragua and the U.S. We are hearing each other's stories in this first program of the new Buttry Center for Peace and Non-Violence at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Our co-facilitator is Benjamin Kam Sian Muang (in photo above) from Myanmar, a graduate of the 2016 Baguio, Philippines TCTT.

We have literally walked with some of these brothers and sisters during seasons of violence and conflict that has torn their countries apart. Tonight we laid hands on and prayed for a sister from Nicaragua, sharing tissues and tears, sharing sorrows about the political violence in her homeland. Dan has been in Nicaragua twice this year to do training and carry out the ministry of accompaniment.

Sometimes Dan especially will go to places where even the police will not go. We don't even bother to look at the State Department advisories about where we should travel or not — in that case we would never go anywhere accompaniment is required. When those who are "sworn to protect" will not go, that is where only God can bring help and hope. That is exactly where as peacemakers we are called to go — to MAKE peace, not keep peace. Peacemaking requires strategy, expense, moral conviction and a desire to walk alongside those most affected - to be present and affected with them, until together we experience the peace of Christ. Accompaniment — what God does for and with us, we do for others. This is part of peacemaking.