



## **Security for All: A Reflection on U.S. Border Policy**

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President Bush was in my neighborhood today checking on security at the US/Mexico border. He wants to make sure that the United States is safe. I also want my country to be safe. At the same time, I want safety for people that I have met on the other side of this border and the people that travel across it. Recently, I met two sojourners in Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico whose safety had been jeopardized.

### **The Dreamer**

Luis, a 20 something Guatemalan, left home with hopes of earning money in the North and returning to marry his girlfriend. Instead, Luis lost his legs when he fell (or was pushed) from a speeding train. Now he is confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Luis packages coffee at the Just Coffee Cooperative in Mexico. In his spare time, he reads books, plays cars with the son of a co-worker and keeps dreaming.

### **The Survivor**

German is another real live person in this saga. German left Honduras two years ago to join his brother in the U.S. and send money back to his wife and children. German also traveled by train. As he was hanging on the ladder of a train car, his exhaustion overcame him and he fell asleep. German's foot slipped and was caught in the hitch connecting the cars. The hitches remained connected for 30 minutes until he could break his foot free. German told me, "My friend said he would help me end the pain by pushing me off the train," but I was not ready to give up on life. In the ensuing days, German found a Honduran doctor in Mexico who was willing to treat the foot instead of amputating it. One year after the accident, German still waits for the foot to heal well enough to try again. He has a new plan for crossing this time.

President Bush has never met German or Luis. Instead, he is convinced that building a wall will help bring security to our nation. I question this vision of security. I hope we will learn to know the people whose lives are affected by our many policies: their motivations, struggles and dreams. If we do that, we will create a new paradigm for security, one that seeks the common good. In the meantime, German and Luis will continue to dream about a new life. They are survivors who have emerged despite economic disparity and insecurity in their homeland. They have experienced fear, trauma and loss and yet they, like many immigrants before them, radiate hope. As we come to know immigrants in our community, may we experience their hope and see the light of God in each individual.