



Send Me to Do Good Works “Sue”

I have had a hard time defining my call, I think because I have lived naturally into my calling all through my life. In many ways, I don't think what I do is unusual, special, or different from how most people live. Right now, my job is teaching secondary school geography and history at an International Christian school. I just happen to live in Central Asia. I feel comfortable and at home here, and I can't imagine living anywhere else. After 24 years in this country, it has become, by far, the place I have lived longer than anywhere else in my life, so being here and living my life as a Christian is my calling.

I mostly grew up outside the United States. My parents moved our family to Colombia when I was nine years old because of my Dad's job with a business. After three years, we moved to Spain where I graduated from high school. I grew up as a third culture kid which means I didn't feel at home in my "home" culture of the US or even really a complete part of Spanish culture because I wasn't born there. I was a third culture; a mix of both. My job as a teacher now brings me in daily contact with kids who are growing up as I did, and that also seems like a calling to me.

When I met my future husband, I made it clear that I didn't feel God wanted me to stay in the US, and he was fine with my plan to go somewhere. It made more sense to go to a new place where we could both start from scratch and learn a new culture and language, so "calling" became something that we answered together.

Step by step our calling narrowed. We had some Iranian friends whom we enjoyed, but going to Iran didn't seem feasible, so we thought about other Muslim countries. And just when we decided that, the next step became clear as the USSR collapsed, and the Muslim background Central Asian countries became independent. We made plans and moved to our country at last. I remember some of my first experiences here—like the first time I heard instruments from this country and tried some of the foods, I sensed I was exactly where I belonged. I thought it was so awesome that I would get to call this **my** country and **my** people. Of course, I didn't like everything, but mostly I was excited to be here and to be living in a pioneer area. Even the difficulties of practical life here at first were adventurous and made good stories to tell—like learning language and figuring out how to live without electricity for hours at a time.

Another aspect of my calling that also shows God's providence in my life are our children. Back in Colombia as a child, my Mom took in four different foster babies for short periods of time while they awaited adoption in the US. I decided at age ten that I wanted to adopt someday. God planted that seed so that twenty years later when we discovered we couldn't have children naturally, that is **most naturally** what we did. To be able to adopt from this country was truly God's gift to us.

Reflections

1. Read John 14:18-20. How could Sue's life as a third culture person finding a place to belong be compared to an orphan finding a family? In what ways, if any, have you been orphaned? Discuss how it makes you feel to know God will always be with you so that you will never be completely orphaned even when both parents are gone.
2. What encouragement do these verses give you to search and commit to God's call to you?

A Call to Action

Read from CONFESSION OF FAITH, Good Works, 6.07. Sue sees her life as normal and ordinary and her calling as natural. Describe people who have influenced your life as they responded to God's call and God's grace. Choose a way you can live your calling as an ordinary person who is imperfect but responding to God's grace.

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you that you never call us and then leave us to serve on our own, but that you go with us to help us fulfill your calling. Thank you for your servant Sue. May she always be aware of your presence as she seeks to serve you in Central Asia, and may she be aware of Cumberland Presbyterian women around the world praying for her. Help us to hear your voice and answer your call to follow you. Amen