



Send me out of My Comfort Zone

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Since I was twelve years old, people would ask me what I wanted to study once I finished my high school. I would always respond that I would go to a seminary to become a missionary. I went to college pursuing two careers. Apparently, I had forgotten about my call, but the

Lord never forgets!

One day at the university, I told the Lord that I would like to use all the knowledge I had acquired to serve Him. The Lord did not forget this either. He had allowed me to serve since a young age in the local Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Medellín, Colombia—the church where my grandmother was a founding member. I also served for many years on several committees in my presbytery. In a prophetic way, people would sometimes confirm my call to missions, but as far as I was concerned that seemed distant in the future, even almost impossible to reach.

God had prospered me: I owned my own company therefore my financial situation was very good. I needed nothing according to my own viewpoint. In addition, I was always involved in the local ministries, so I was in good shape! However, the Lord moves us from our comfort zones, and I did not feel entirely satisfied nor happy.

In 1998, I spoke with the Director of Global Missions of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and shared with him my sense of calling. Then I sent him two resumes: one including my experience in the secular work, and another with the church experience. I told him to keep them in case an opportunity to serve should arise, and things remained as they had been.

Approximately ten years later, when everything was moving along fine for me, I began to realize that my life was not complete. I wrote again to the Missions Director because we kept in communication about the subject. I told him I felt out of place; I did not feel satisfied. I asked him if there was anything I could do for missions. He responded that not at that moment, but he would be praying for me. One month later he wrote back to say there was the possibility of a project. Once translated, he would send it to me.

Three months later, I received the project document. I almost fainted when I read all the requirements, although I felt relieved because my existential crisis was gone. I replied thanking him and explaining that I was not qualified for the projects giving him ten reasons for this, but he did not give up and he gave me ten other reasons why I was qualified. At that moment things became a serious matter and I began to pray specifically for this. Two dear sisters and friends supported me with their prayers. I prayed for almost one year before giving a positive answer. The call was to move to Guatemala to set in motion a medical clinic that would function along with an orphanage, a project with another fraternal denomination. At the same time, the Lord allowed me to make contacts with three churches that had begun the assimilation process within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

I encourage those who feel God's call to step out in faith, regardless of how gigantic the project seems. When God calls, God will knock the giants down and fulfill the purpose He created you for.

Reflections

1. Discuss the story found in Exodus, chapters 3-4, where God spoke to Moses at the Burning Bush. Consider the five excuses Moses gave to God: (1) Moses feels inadequate for the mission. (2) Moses wants to know who is giving him this call. (3) Moses is concerned no one will believe him. (4) Moses argues that he is slow of speech and thus lacks the ability to be a speaker. (5) In desperation, Moses asks that God send someone else. How many times have you used some of these excuses when you felt God calling you out of your comfort zone?
2. What other excuses have you given God? How has God knocked down the giants and given you strength to fulfill you calling?

Call to Action

1. Consider how you spend your time. How much of it is spent in your comfort zone? Look at the needs in your congregation and community and select one need that you can meet, even if it is outside your comfort zone. Perhaps you can work in twos or in a group sharing someone else's comfort zone until you feel more secure.
2. Could you write notes to persons who have not attended worship recently? How about keeping the nursery sometimes or serving as a greeter? Not everyone is called to go to Guatemala to organize and direct a medical clinic and an orphanage, but we are all called to serve God with the gifts God has given us.

Prayer

God of love, continue to give Anay Ortega-Monroy wisdom as she ministers to those whom God places in her care. Open our hearts to seek compassion for all your children and the courage to stop making excuses so that we too, will fulfill the purposes you created us to do. Amen.