



Send Me to Preach

Rev. María Del Socorro Pejendino

On December 24, 1982 I had a personal experience with Jesus Christ, and he became my Lord and Savior. Three years later, I married Fhanor Pejendino. We moved to Medellín while he was studying theology at the seminary and I was working at a company as assistant sales manager. During my husband's three years at the seminary, I accompanied him on weekends for his fieldwork where I was a children's teacher and worked with the women's ministry. When my husband graduated, we went to pastor the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Armenia, Colombia. Until that time, I had not felt a personal call to serve the Lord full time, but rather I did it because I was a pastor's wife and felt it was my duty to serve in the church and because I was a believer.

One February morning in 1991, I was going to work as an accounting assistant. On my way, I found a child who was consuming a psychoactive substance that would drug him to satisfy his hunger. That sight impacted me so deeply that I started crying, but there was nothing I could do for that young child because I had to get to my office. When I arrived, I couldn't concentrate on my work because God was speaking to me. I understood that I had to leave my office job to work on what was more important than anything else.

That afternoon when I got home, I told my husband about this experience. I was not able to continue locked in an office when there were so many people who needed to hear the message of salvation; then I made the decision to leave my job to dedicate my life to preach the Gospel. While in Armenia, I began to study at the Latin America Faculty of Theology. More and more I became interested in learning all I could to grow in the knowledge of God, and to make disciples.

After three years of pastoral work in Armenia, we were sent to Tuluá, a city in Cauca Valley, Colombia, to plant a new church. It was a very enriching experience to begin from zero and then see how the church was growing and training new leaders to become pastors. After ten years, there were two churches, then three, and the field continues to grow in this area.

The Central Church in Tuluá extended me a call to begin the process to the ministry—a process that took several years during which time I was studying at the Baptist Seminary and working with my husband and other church leaders planting new mission fields. During the presbytery meeting in November 2012, my licensing and ordination were approved. The ordination ceremony took place December 2012.

After 22 years of service in Tuluá, my husband and I were called by the Missions Ministry Team to become missionaries in Guatemala. God has blessed our ministry and now I can say I made the right decision to leave my job to accept God's call to serve in His kingdom. I give thanks to God for having called me to the ministry.

Reflections

Read Romans 10:14-15, verses that changed Socorro's life. "As it was written," is referring to Isaiah 52:7. Compare the two scriptures and discuss what is meant by "beautiful are the feet of a messenger." The late Rev. Dr. J. David Hester wrote a sermon on these two scriptures emphasizing that we do not usually think of feet as beautiful, but neither do we mind so much how our shoes look so long as they are comfortable. He then says, "To a person who's hungry, a morsel of garbage is beautiful. To a person who is dying of thirst, muddy water is beautiful. To the person in need of salvation, the person who brings the gospel has beautiful feet." Where are the beautiful feet in your community today?

Call to Action

As Cumberland Presbyterians, we believe in both a God-called ministry and a well-trained ministry. We see these in the life of Socorro. Also, as Cumberland Presbyterians, we believe in ministry by the entire Covenant Community, sometimes referred to as our belief in the Priesthood of Believers. "[Christian] Freedom, rooted in love, not fear, enables persons to become who God intends them to be, to bear witness to their Lord, and to serve God and neighbors in the vocations of their common life." (COF 6.01) "Christians owe ultimate allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and must never yield that ultimate allegiance to any government or nation, and should in Christian conscience oppose any form of injustice." (COF 6.09) The challenge here is to oppose injustice, stand up for the rights of all people, spread the good news and make disciples of all nations. How can we have beautiful feet unless we pray for awareness of the needs of those around us? Our call to action is to pray daily that we may see opportunities and serve the RISEN LORD and then put our beautiful feet into actions of service and ministry.

Prayer

Just as Socorro saw the child in need on her way to work and was so moved that it changed the course of her life, grant us, O Lord, eyes to see, ears to hear, and passion to respond. May we, like Socorro, fight against injustice and reach out to your children with compassion. Bless Socorro and thank you for her beautiful feet. May they always be welcomed by those to whom she ministers. Amen.