



Get ready to hear some amazing stories from twelve women who answered God's "call" to "GO!". This year's Bible study resource explores the theme "Send Me" based on the call of Isaiah in chapter 6 –

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" (6:8)

From that point on, Isaiah was an outspoken messenger for God. Sometimes his message was received with an open, receptive heart. More times than not, though, it was met with resistance, obstinacy, and anger. Even though God called him in the midst of worship, the task was not an easy one.

That is what we will discover in these 12 call stories. You will get to know these women in ways that you've never known them before. You will hear of their struggles, doubts, fears, concerns and reluctance. You will also hear their heartfelt response to God, "Here am I, send me."

Thank you to those women who shared their stories with us this year:

- **Martha Chambers** – Hands of Harvest Region, Arkansas Presbytery
- **Luz Dary Guerrero** – former missionary to Mexico, member of Andes Presbytery
- **Kay Jang** – missionary to the Philippines with her husband, Daniel
- **Nadara Jones** – Murfreesboro Region/Presbytery
- **Sarah Lee** – missionary to Southeast Asia with her husband, David, member of Tennessee/Georgia Presbytery
- **Anay Ortega** – former missionary to Guatemala, Andes Presbytery
- **Socorro Pejendino** – missionary to Guatemala with her husband Phanor, member of Cauca Valley Presbytery
- **Pat Pickett** – pastor of Mt. Denson CPC, Nashville Presbytery
- **Lindsey Sims** – missionary to Salvador with her husband, Jacob, Brazil, Grace Presbytery
- **Beth Wallace** – former missionary to Colombia, who served alongside her husband for over 50 years. She continues to live and work in Cali, Colombia.
- **Jessica Wilkerson** – missionary to Colombia (Emaus Presbytery) with her husband, Patrick, Presbytery of East Tennessee
- **"Sue"** – missionary to an undisclosed country in Central Asia where she serves with her husband. They serve God in creative ways because the country is closed to Christian missionaries and the gospel.

A great **BIG "Thank You"** to **Pat White**, who served as editor of this year's study. Her work serves to lift all of these stories from printed words to living testimonies. By utilizing her reflection questions and action steps, readers will be able to explore their own call stories as disciples of Jesus Christ. Pat lives in Fairfield, IL and is a member of North Central Region and is active in her church, region and community.



Send Me to Bake Bread Martha Chambers

“Sir, they said, “from now on give us this bread.” Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.” He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” John 6: 34-35 NIV

This scripture was the basis for the beginning of a scholarship fund in memory of my dad, Rev. Leo E. Smith, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister who answered the call to ministry on Mother’s Day 1950. Upon his death in 2006, I had a strong desire to do something that would carry on his ministry in Arkansas Presbytery. Dad was very fond of the sour dough bread that I had made for about 20 years. He often joked about building me a bread shop on a corner by the road in front of his house. Since I had always given the bread away, the thought of selling it didn’t feel right to me. But when God placed the idea in my heart to sell the bread in my dad’s memory, it felt like the right thing to do.

There are many scripture passages that talk about bread. It seems that the simplest of things are sometimes those that make the most difference. What little boy would have ever dreamed that his lunch would feed five thousand people? Think about his mother as she prepared that lunch for him. Was she just thinking about her son, or was there another voice that she was hearing? These are questions to which we will never know the answers.

Matthew 4 talks about the temptation of Jesus when Satan told him to turn the stones into bread. Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” We look at The Lord’s Prayer and find that Jesus was concerned about our daily needs. We need daily bread, both physical and spiritual. We continue to celebrate the Lord’s supper with the breaking of bread as Jesus did with the disciples when he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” In looking at these scriptures it seemed appropriate to set up a scholarship in Dad’s honor to expand his legacy as a testimony to his love for the Lord, for the life he lived, and for his ministry.

This will be the 11th year “Martha Bread,” as it is affectionately called, will provide \$500.00 for a ministerial candidate toward their cost for the Program of Alternate Studies or seminary. The challenge went out at General Assembly a few years ago for churches, groups, or individuals to raise \$2000 for the Stott-Wallace Missionary Offering for missionaries’ salaries and benefits. When I heard the challenge, that still small voice came to me saying, “Martha, you can do that selling bread.” There was no question in my mind that the message was from God. I also knew that I could do it. Once again, the challenge went out during a retreat I attend, and for the second time I answered the call to raise \$2000 for missionaries.

With references to bread running all through the scriptures, bread making seems appropriate for those who go about sharing the gospel. Whatever God calls us to do, He equips us for the task, even something as simple as making bread. God only asks for a willing heart to

do His will and share His love with those around us. So until God calls again, I will try to be faithful and listen for that still small voice. God continues to bless the bread.

Reflections

1. Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-2. This scripture refers to taking risks because life is short. “Be generous: Invest in acts of charity. Charity yields high returns. Don’t hoard your goods; spread them around. Be a blessing to others. This could be your last night.” Ecc. 11:1-2 The Message. Discuss how Martha took a risk in setting a goal of making bread to raise \$2,000.00 for our missionaries, not once, but twice.
2. Which of the scriptures about bread in Martha’s story speaks to you? Compare spiritual bread with physical bread. Why do you think Jesus called himself the bread of life?

Call to Action

1. List some ways your circle might use bread to minister to others or practice hospitality such as to keep a few loaves of home made bread in the freezer to give to visitors at worship or to persons who have not attended for some time.
2. Discuss how your group could bake bread to sell in order to raise funds for a mission project. Set your goal high and take the risk as Martha does.

Prayer

Merciful God, many of your children are in need of bread to fill their empty stomachs. Teach us to be compassionate. Stand with us as you stood with Jesus in his time of temptation, so that we will not be greedy, and will not put our wants above the needs of others. We pray for those who hunger in this land; whose only kitchen is a soup kitchen, and whose only food is what others don’t want. Lord, feed your people using our skills and conscience, and eradicate apathy to hunger from our politics and private lives. Bless Martha as she continues to bake bread for the building up of your kingdom. Fill our vacant hearts with spiritual bread, the bread of life. We pray this in the name of Jesus who gave His all because of His great love for us. Amen.



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



Send Me to Those Who Have Never Heard **Rev. Luz Dary Guerrero**

I was born and reared in a home where we genuinely loved and served God. My maternal grandparents knew the Gospel, and their lifestyle was truly evangelical. Confessing they were Christians brought discrimination, socially and religiously. Among other situations of discrimination and rejection, God literally saved them from being burned by a mob carrying an image of the Virgin Mary.

During my childhood and adolescence, I experienced my personal encounter with God, both at home and at church. When my grandparents were listening to programs on the radio, I heard true stories of men and women who lived amazing adventures because of their surrender and service to the Lord. They were missionaries of the last century—some of them were even martyrs.

When I was a teenager, a group of native missionaries associated with the New Tribes Mission (New Horizons) came to our church while touring local churches to speak about their outreach in the most remote places of southern Colombia, my country. They gave their testimonies and presented videos of their work in Bible training. Their visit impacted my life in a powerful way making the Bible come alive for me. Through them I understood what it meant to serve real people who had never heard the Gospel. Life went on, but in my heart, I felt the desire to surrender my life to serve people who did not know the love of Jesus. I wanted to be like those missionaries.

I truly believe there are many ways our Lord calls us, but when we are called to serve God, God works with individuals in an effective and timely manner. God knows “how” the person who will serve Him needs to be called. The scriptures include many amazing ways God called people from all walks of life to serve in a variety of ways: burning bushes, lightning, lights and voices, deportations, or brothers who betrayed brothers. In a nut shell, each story is extraordinary to the person God chooses to serve Him.

God called me from an environment full of the knowledge of the Lord and his work. God used my experiences with my grandparents and my mother, along with teachers, pastors, and missionaries who showed me that it was possible. Although I was a young woman with various options, I decided to dedicate my life to minister to others who do not know God and have not been able to experience what I have in my relationship with my Lord. My call was neither an extraordinary nor spectacular event like that of the Apostle Paul, but I am totally convinced that the Lord had chosen me from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace when he revealed Christ to me. He, who began a good work in me, will carry it on to completion until the last day when he calls me to his presence or he returns for the second

time. I pray that I continue to be faithful to his call, pleasing God by living his Gospel, and making efforts to delight Him, because only then am I a servant of Christ.

Reflections

1. Read Ps. 139:13-19. How did Luz' training as a child prepare her for God's call? How might we prepare our children, grandchildren, and the children of our congregation to hear God's call to them? Discuss Luz' belief that God set her apart in her mother's womb for the call God had for her. Look back over your life and share a time that now you can see God was preparing you for something God wanted you to experience.
2. Read and discuss how these verses, Romans 1:16-17 (CEB), relate to Luz Guerrero: "I'm not ashamed of the gospel: it is God's own power for salvation to all who have faith in God [...]. God's righteousness is being revealed in the Gospel, from faithfulness for faith; as it is written: 'The righteous person will live by faith.'"

Call to Action

1. Perhaps our fear of becoming annoying in our outreach to people who do not know that Jesus died for their sins keeps us from witnessing to them. What are some ways you can witness to the unsaved without becoming obnoxious and turning them away?
2. How do these words, "He, who began a good work in me, will carry it on to completion" give you encouragement to answer God's call to do something specific?

Prayer

We give thanks to you, O God, that we are wonderfully made and marvelously set apart to follow you. Prepare the way. Open the doors you would have us enter and close the ones where we should not go. We depend not on our own understanding but on our faith in you. We thank you and praise you for Luz Dary Guerrero. Walk with her in the sunshine and in the storms of life as she remains your faithful servant. Amen.



Send Me to Serve with My Husband Kay Jang

Whenever I read Isaiah's call in the Bible, I always felt that was God's call given to a person who had extraordinary faith. It was more so when I looked at Isaiah's life. I was not such a person, and I'd never thought about becoming a missionary until Daniel, my husband-to-be, was called by God. We'd been dating and wanted to get married in the near future when God called him. All my future plans seemed to go up the spout when he entered the seminary to be a pastor in obedience to God's call. Marrying him meant that I would be a missionary's wife in the future. I loved him, but I was not called by God to be a missionary, and I was not confident I could live a missionary's life without God's call. I began to pray and to seek God's leading for my own life.

One day while I was reading Genesis, my eyes were opened by Abraham's call in Genesis 12. God called Abraham to fulfill his redemption, and Abraham obeyed His call. While reading Abraham's call, the Holy Spirit told me that God called Sarai as well as Abraham though He did not appear to her. Later God confirmed it in Genesis 17:15 as He changed her name to Sarah. God called her to be the mother of nations too as He called Abraham to be the father of nations. I was convinced that God called me to mission through Daniel's call, and He wanted me to be with him. We got married in 1999 and were ready to be sent, but did not know where to go.

We had been to Vietnam for a short-term mission and had seen the needs of missionaries there, so we prayed that God would send us to Vietnam. But for a long time, God neither opened the door to Vietnam nor told us where He would send us. In the meantime, we participated in a missionary training program and came to the Philippines for a mission field training. While we stayed in the Philippines, we both felt that God was calling us there. God called us to a country that we had never thought about going to. It was a challenge for us to follow His call, but we were able to obey since we knew that His calling is irrevocable and irresistible. We had a two-year-old daughter at that time. To be honest, as a mother I could not stop worrying about her future and the safety of our family. Many bad things might occur in the mission field despite my decision to obey God's call. We came to the Philippines in September 2006. For the first six months I had to struggle with homesickness. The first house we rented here was near the airport. I often went out of the house in late afternoon to see airplanes landing and taking off, and I said to myself "If I boarded that plane, I would go to my country and meet my parents and friends." Looking back on those days, I realize that what enabled me to overcome fear, worries, and homesickness was God's call.

I do not forget the rainbow I saw out of the plane window as our plane was landing at Iloilo airport 11 years ago. It looked to me like God's welcome banner for me and a sign of His protection. God does not look for a person who has extraordinary faith, but who has a

willing heart. I believe that God will show us a sign of protection when we respond to His call, "Send me."

Reflections

1. Read Genesis 12:1-7. Discuss Abram's call at age 75 and notice that Sarai, who was not called, left her home and went with Abram. Look at verse 7. How do you think Abram and Sarai felt when God promised the land to their offspring when they had no children?
2. Read Genesis 17:15-16. Some 35 years after Sarai left her home to follow God's call to Abram, she is included in the promise. Discuss the idea Kay Jang introduced about being called through her husband's call. Describe how her faith may have been different if she had received God's call on her own.

Call to Action

1. List times and ways we are called through someone else's call. Who might God use to call you to serve? What positions may God be calling you to by laying it upon someone else's heart? Possibilities include Sunday school teacher, elder, youth leader, cook, etc. Name some reasons God uses others to call us to serve. Why do we sometimes need this affirmation?
2. Consider whether God may be using you to extend a call to someone to serve.

Prayer

O God, give us wisdom before we speak, that we may speak truth with love, that we may know your will and your way, that we may be used to hear your call to us and to extend your call through us. We pray for Kay as she serves you beside her husband. Free her from fears and homesickness. May we do our part to encourage her so that she may live out her calling to be your servant in the Philippines. Amen.



Send Me: I've Waited So Long

Nadara Jones

In my early years as a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, I had a pastor who was a great advocate for missions in our denomination. I grew up dreaming of serving in some area of missions in our church.

I went to college and started teaching school. I know that teaching is a calling, and I felt like it was what I was supposed to do. At that time it was, so I gave my energy and passion to those children. Over the years, my heart kept yearning and God's voice grew louder. Like Samuel, I lacked experience at listening to God, because I wondered why God would keep speaking to **me**. I kept following God in fun ways. I did mission work trips with Rev. John Lovelace, children's home time with Judy Keith and James Gilbert, church camps at Crystal Springs and Ferncliff, Sunday school classes, and Bible school. Was I like Samuel, "listening to the wrong voice," or was the time just not right? I had said "send me," but I was not sure to what or where I was being called.

Then a friend told me that there was a great need for volunteers at our Coalition for Appalachian Ministry (CAM) office and craft shop. The request was for a one-month commitment; I went to see if I could handle it. But then I went again because it was great to spend a month at the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains. Was I in for a surprise! It was probably the most enjoyable and spiritually fulfilling time of my life. I met crafters, some of the most spirit filled people I had ever met. I met staff members who guided me into the workings and history of the mission there in Townsend, Tennessee. I spent time tagging beautiful crafts, tending the shop, and meeting customers from all over the world. It was a beautiful experience. Seeing the great need there, I came home knowing that my calling was to this beautiful ministry that the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination sponsored with four other Presbyterian denominations.

As soon as there was a place on the CAM Board, I was asked to serve representing my Presbytery and Murfreesboro Regional CPWM. It has been a wonderful and God-filled experience. I heard God's call and was given the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of some of God's children, citizens of the USA, and devout Christians who live in the Appalachian Region of the U.S.

I had, like Isaiah, found that the call to God's work can be messy, confusing, and sometimes frustrating, and above all, it requires patience. Just to find the "call" that was mine and to understand just what I was to do was a difficult task that took me many years in many places serving in many ways. Now I know that I have a ministry to these people in the Appalachian Region. When this call came along, I listened and said, "Here am I, send me," and I am thankful for the opportunity to serve in this way.

Reflections

1. Read I Samuel 3:4-10. Describe an experience when you were not sure who was speaking to you, but you wondered if it were God. How did you determine whose voice it was?
2. Even though Samuel was called as a child, God's promise did not come true until he was an adult. Discuss how God sometimes needs to prepare us, prune us so to speak, for the task God is calling us to do.
3. Consider the story of Jonah. When have you run from God's call? Share with the group if you feel led to.

Call to Action

1. How might God have actually been preparing Nadara to work in the Appalachian region to help people there? How may God be preparing you even now for a call to ministry you have yet to determine?
2. What events in your life can be used to minister to others? The divorced can minister to someone going through divorce. Those who have grieved can minister to someone who is grieving. Share with the group what you have to offer and pray for opportunities to use painful experiences for good to help others.

Prayer

You see our lives in the context of eternity, O God. Your ways are not our ways. Your time does not coincide with ours. You prune us and prepare us. You allow us to experience life and you call us to use those experiences in ministry. We pray for Nadara and for the people of Appalachia. We pray for people who need us in our communities. We pray to be able to discern your call, and we pray for courage to answer, "Send me." Amen.



Send Me and Give Me Beautiful Dreams to Share Rev. Sarah Lee

I could not dream a beautiful dream before I believed in Jesus; I dreamed only sad dreams. I grew up as the youngest child with two older brothers in a family which did not believe in God. My parents were separated, and my mom was a shaman so I grew up under my mom's shaman influence. When I was around 16 years old, I became ill with no specific diagnosis and no explainable cause. My mom's friends told me I was possessed by shaman because my sickness came from the worldly gods. I persevered and determined that as long as I lived, I would not be a shaman because I knew how difficult my mom's life was.

I won the chance to study abroad in Japan when I was a college student. There I was led to church by my acquaintance, and I opened my heart and believed in Jesus. I began my faith life with joyfulness and passion because Jesus became a TRUE LIGHT to my hopeless life. I also led many other pupils to Jesus. Meanwhile, I recovered my health, and made a vow that I would devote my life to God. After graduation, I returned to South Korea to work, but I was called by God, so I also studied theology.

While I was studying, I questioned, "Can I be used well enough as the servant of God with the background of a shaman's daughter?" Whenever this thought occurred, I could not focus on my studies. I prayed about this matter every morning and one day I received God's words which changed my life: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:4-5) I now was set free from the matter of my birth which had tormented me. God opened to me that I was to be a missionary, the prophet over all the nations.

When God called my husband to go with me as a Laos missionary, I still dragged my feet. "Is it right that I reach out as a missionary to serve and save the neighboring people, even though I did not save my mom, who was a shaman?"

I went to God again and God responded, "Do you feel that much hurt that your mom worships idols? I feel hurt about the fact that my people worship idols. I want you to go to the people who are suffering due to idol worship and to evangelize them." Just like my earnest wish that my mom had accepted Jesus, God conveyed to me this wish for all God's people, therefore I obeyed God and have served God on the mission field for 20 years.

I was a girl who had dreamed only sad dreams, but on the mission field, God made me a person who dreams beautiful dreams. As a missionary who is dreaming of saving souls and spirits and is dreaming the revival of God's kingdom, I hold dear the verse, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved; you and your household" (Acts 16:31). I prayed and eventually the

dream came true. My mom ended her job of shamanism, was baptized, and became a Christian on her birthday, October 20th, 2009.

Jesus changed my tragic life into something beautiful. I am dreaming on the mission field today because I believe in Jesus who visits people in the ditches of hopeless despair and changes their lives into beautiful lives too. My dreams of the recovery of God's Kingdom are coming true here.

Reflections

Look up the word "shaman" and discuss the meaning. Also discuss how strong Sarah's faith has become because of her call to serve God. What experiences in your life have caused your faith to grow?

A Call to Action

1. Read Isaiah 61:1-3. Does "preach" always mean to speak from a pulpit or can our actions be a sermon? Discuss ways we can minister to the following in our community.
 - Poor
 - Brokenhearted
 - Prisoners
 - Those who grieve
2. Choose one group listed in Isaiah 61:1-3 that you will especially strive to minister to in the coming weeks. This can be an individual call or a call to your CPWM.

Prayer

God of glory, strength, and courage, we lift up your servant, Sarah Lee. Thank you for her life and ministry and for her faith that moved her to answer your call. May we listen for your still small voice and answer, "Send me," to heal the broken hearted and to be your hands and feet in a troubled world and a hurting community. Amen.



Send me out of My Comfort Zone

Anay Ortega-Monroy

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.



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.



Send Me to Make Purple Cows Rev. Pat Pickett

“But God can make a purple cow!” This was my defense of God which found me sitting in the corner, refusing to color my cow black with white spots. That was the beginning.

What do clay, glue, ink and Hebrew verbs have in common? In my first year of college we were asked to write down what we wanted to be when we grew up. My answer was, “an artist and a theologian.” My professor would not accept this answer. “Only ONE,” she said. Undaunted, I wrote “theoartist” and turned it in. How could I give up either one? I didn’t know how it would happen. I only knew that something deep inside answered for me.

In Divinity School, my focus was Hebrew Scripture. My mentor, and chair of my committee had the reputation for being the toughest professor on campus. It was time to write my dissertation and I approached him with my plans. “I am going to write a ballet for my dissertation.” He sat there in utter silence. Then, “You plan to do what?” “A ballet, sir.” What happened in the intervening months and years before my dissertation was finished is not suitable for print, but the Rochester Ballet performed my dissertation in Asbury First United Methodist church on the fourth Sunday of Lent, March 1993 with an orchestra and 75-member choir.

My most incredible challenge was as chaplain for the individuals at Clover Bottom Developmental Center. Here I was with Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and 80% of my parishioners *could not talk*. Color became the language of our prayer and it wasn’t long before I was carrying colored scarves to each visit asking, “What color is God for you today?” Thus began the most wonderful ministry of my life.

The Frist Center for The Visual Arts in Nashville announced an art contest for persons with disabilities. At the time I was also functioning as art therapist at Clover Bottom and had a studio where many of the individuals came at least once a week. We combined prayer and art in a delicious way. I told my supervisor that I wanted to enter some of the art that was done by our people. “You can’t be serious!” I was dead serious. I procured all the permissions and sent off slides from 15 persons. Little did I know that there would be over a 1,000 persons entering and only 50 accepted. It was to be juried, that meant no one knew where the entries originated. Then, the letter arrived. NINE from Clover Bottom out of fifty were chosen to be on display.

The closing of Clover Bottom was one of the darkest times of my life. What kept me alive during that time was my association with PAS (Program of Alternate Studies). This year will be my nineteenth year teaching Old Testament. Art and theology were a perfect marriage for this part of my journey. Always incorporating art in some way in every class gives students permission to think outside the box, to color outside the lines and to make purple cows if that is how they see God’s word working in the lives of the people they serve.

Currently, I am blessed to pastor a church that allows for coloring cows whatever color I think they need to be. We have an art outreach program, ART FROM THE MOUNT, for children who are unable to attend tuition based programs. Beginning with fifteen children two

years ago, we registered 43 children this fall. I smiled when one of the children made a purple donkey for the Nativity Scene. You know that donkey had a place of honor.

Reflections

1. God's invitation to share in creativity is sprinkled throughout Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Read Psalm 19:2, Gen. 2:7, Isaiah 40:28 and Job 12:10. You may wish to share other examples.
2. Being "in" the act of creation, the Holy Spirit is moving then, now, and in the future. God is doing something and each of us is there in this moment. Living that creativity in our time is risking a new idea, a new song, a new movement toward justice – peace – ego appraisal without fear of failure. While the heavens reveal the glory of God and the sky tells of the work of God's hands, where do you see the work of God's hands in your life? How does creativity help you listen rather than talk?

Call to Action

1. Creativity is freedom to risk failure. By discussing the following questions, what changes may occur in your lives? What kinds of dreams might be realized in my prayer life if I'm free from fear? Am I afraid to suggest new ways of doing things because I fear non-acceptance? Am I hampered by the fear of ridicule? Can I allow myself to fail so that I can reach new growth? What might this mean in my faith community? What would it cost me to challenge a way "we've always done things," for the good of the church?
2. List changes that might be made in your congregation although you have never done it that way before.

Prayer

Try prayer without words. *Pour paint (yellow, blue, red) on a blank surface letting them merge. Within those three colors are all the colors. The PROCESS of allowing patterns to emerge that might offer insights is where conversation happens. Listen to God and your own heart as yellow and red become orange, red and blue become purple, yellow and blue become green. Relax and be still. You are now in a mysterious and wonderful space, which sometimes is a struggle and other times is a celebration of your shared creativity with God. Are you willing to make mud pies with God?*

(NOTE TO LEADER: the prayer experience will work beautifully as a Guided Meditation. Prepare the space and materials. When everyone is settled, invite them to take a couple of deep breaths and slowly exhale. Then say the above words – take pauses and allow for God's Holy Spirit to work.)



Send Me to the Wilderness

Lindsey Sims

Have you ever felt called to something? Has the voice of God spoken to you clearly about a specific call to do or say something in your neighborhood or to minister to someone?

Whether you are a young college student feeling called to minister to sick people and studying to be a physician, a soccer mom bringing snacks to her son/daughter's teammates and praying for families involved, or a Cumberland Presbyterian woman dedicating her life to leading women in a closer walk with the Lord, we all have a call.

The word "wilderness" is mentioned over 300 times in the Bible. It is evident that big things, good or bad, happen in the wilderness. Jesus was tempted but overcame it in the wilderness. The Israelites were sent to live in the wilderness to learn what it meant to be devoted to God alone. And in a time of bewilderment, Isaiah received a call when he heard a voice from the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send (Isaiah 6:8, ESV)?"

My call to mission work started in August of 2003 with a church group sent to the village of San Jose, in the wilderness of Belize to provide Bible studies for women and VBS for the kids. At first, I struggled with many emotions, seeing hungry children who suffered from malnutrition and had no shoes to hurting women. Then God showed me more than suffering as we played with children and lived with the people—they were filled with joy.

Close to the end of our time there, I went alone to a hillside to talk with God and I heard a voice from the Lord in that wilderness. Children sat down beside me and as we sang "Jesus Loves Me" together, the Lord spoke to my heart, "Daughter, I love you and I love these children just as much." I heard God speak to me that I was going to be sent to love people such as these.

I am here in Brazil, because 15 years ago I said "yes" to that call. Since that trip, I have taken numerous mission trips to Africa in search for that calling to be fulfilled. The thing about a calling is that everyone has a different and unique purpose that is ordained by God and prepared in God's own timing. It is woven into the very fabric of our unique lives. Isaiah said "yes" to the call completely ignorant of the nature of his commission, yet he freely accepted it.

Don't believe the lie that you alone can do nothing big to change things in your area, or that it is up to a larger church to do something about it. God desires to use you and God's design is always connected to a beautiful tapestry you may never see clearly. Close your eyes. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the call placed upon your life. Do you see it? It is vital to the Kingdom! Look again, hold onto it, see it.

Reflections

1. Read Matthew 3: 1-6. Here we find John the Baptist fulfilling the prophesy of Isaiah preparing the way of the Lord. Like Lindsey, John the Baptist was sent to the wilderness. Discuss how it would be to spend 40 years in the wilderness like the Israelites spent when they left Egypt.
2. Sometimes we feel alone as if God has left us in a wilderness. Sometimes we feel as if God has asked too much of us or allowed us to have burdens too heavy to bear so that we feel we are wandering in a wilderness. Sometimes we welcome opportunities to spend time in the wilderness alone with God or to have opportunities to minister to others in a wilderness. Think of a time that you felt you were in the wilderness and share with the group what your wilderness was.

Call to Action

1. Some people in your congregation have probably answered the call to go to a wilderness such as Colombia, SA or Mexico, Guatemala, or Honduras, but not all of us are called to actually go. What actions can you take to minister in the wilderness? What has your CP Women's Ministry done to support ministry in the wilderness? Who are the children in your community to whom you can give love and meet physical needs?
2. As a group, select a project to support someone who has been called to serve in the wilderness whether abroad or in your community.

Prayer

God, we gather in solidarity with your children who struggle in the wilderness of life, voiceless and vulnerable. We pray for Lindsey and all your children who minister in the wilderness preparing the way and sharing the love of Christ. Show us your will and your way and give us wisdom and courage to serve in the wilderness you choose for us. Amen.



Send Us as “Lifetime Missionaries” to Colombia Beth Wallace

I was the first born of Troy and Emma Hickmon, October 9, 1935 in Bladenboro, NC. My father was the “fix it man” and my mother was the “listener, helping mend hurting hearts and bodies.” “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel” was the message of the Free Will Baptist and Southern Baptist Churches, which shaped our family life. We prayed, raised offerings, and sent missionaries. After high school I enrolled in Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee and this is where I met Boyce Wallace. To make a long and beautiful story short—we were married July 24, 1955.

We soon found our way to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and have been at home ever since. Boyce pastored several congregations in Middle Tennessee and I finished school, served alongside him, and cared for our children, Melody and Andrew.

It was during this time that we began to hear God’s call to missionary work. In the beginning of the discernment process, we thought that maybe God was calling us to Japan, because that was where the Cumberland Presbyterian Church needed a missionary couple. To be fully prepared to serve God as a missionary, Boyce enrolled in the Cumberland Presbyterian seminary. Upon graduation in 1962, there was no mission field open, but God called us to Marlow, Oklahoma to serve a church there. Six months later, we received the call to go to Colombia, South America. Were we interested? Yes! After a moving farewell to our beloved Marlow church family, we began our journey to language school in Costa Rica—by car with two children in the backseat with their games and toys. That 10-day car trip confirmed our call as we experienced community sharing in local and remote places with our minimal Spanish.

Our work in Colombia started in Armenia where Boyce served as pastor and I taught English in the private school that our two children attended. I served in various roles in that first church and truly felt welcomed and a part of the communities that surrounded us. We are proud to say we are Quindianos because we arrived in time to celebrate the birth of the Department! (State)

Our call to Colombia has spanned over 50 years. Together Boyce and I have served various churches meeting the different needs of many different people in Armenia, Cali, Buenaventura, places easily accessible, and places that can only be reached by boat. We have loved and served the Blacks of the Pacific coast, the Indigenous of Nariño, our nurturing Quiendian family, and the welcoming Caleños who opened the door and said. “Make yourself at home.” We have been blessed. We have seen lives transformed by the Good News of Jesus

Christ. We've seen churches start from tiny seeds, flourish into thriving, passionate churches such as the CP Church in Popayán, our largest church in Colombia. We've witnessed countless miracles of love and faith.

The Lord opened the door in Colombia over 50 years ago and said, "I send you." Wherever we have been our Lord has provided. Each member of my family has left part of our hearts in Colombia. Boyce died at our daughter's home in Florida in December 2016 while we were there for Christmas. I returned to Colombia and am "at home" in Cali. I want to be used in this season of my life because we were called to be Lifetime Missionaries. I covet your prayers and the welcome mat is out.

Reflections

Read John 20:19-22. After Jesus' resurrection, he went to his disciples and told them he was sending them as God had sent him. Note that he tells them they are to receive the Holy Spirit to go with them. When God called Boyce and Beth Wallace to go to Colombia, God equipped them by filling them with the Holy Spirit so that they could do great things in Christ's name. What does it mean to you to know that God sent a comforter, the Holy Spirit, to abide with you always? Name persons you know, or have known, who were filled with the Holy Spirit. How were they different?

Call to Action

How can you seek to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? Make a covenant to begin each day with prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide you so that you will see and meet the needs of someone today. Make it your goal to live a spirit filled life.

Prayer

Spirit of the living God, you broke down barriers and showed us there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither male nor female. You opened our eyes to see that we all are your children: red, yellow, black, brown, and white. Now we see how the hands of the rich were empty and the hearts of the poor were full. All are one in Jesus Christ and for this we praise you. Thanks be to God for the lives and ministry of Beth and Boyce Wallace. Continue to pour out your blessings on Beth and grant her opportunities to continue to serve you at this season of her life. May we, like Beth, hear your calling, "Follow me," and answer, "Here am I." Amen.



Send Me and Provide a Place for Me to Minister **Jessica Wilkerson**

Like most call stories, mine is a complicated tapestry. I started my college career convinced I was going into ministry. I did an internship at a church, I joined a college Christian group and became part of the leadership team and went on summer-long mission trips across the United States. However, at the end of my senior year at Bethel University, I felt burned out on church and did not see myself in the ministry any longer. Most of this stemmed from fear of raising financial support (I wanted to work for the Christian college organization Campus Crusade for Christ), feelings of inadequacy, and being impatient with God. Not really knowing what to do next, I moved to Nashville and earned my Master of Science Degree in social work.

After several years of not understanding my call or direction in life, I reunited with a college sweetheart. Patrick and I married in 2013. Shortly after we married, Patrick was scheduled to go on a young adult mission trip to Colombia to help lead the young adult conference Connectados. I was able to join the mission team and go on this trip. This experience was a pivotal moment for our family. It was here I fell in love with Colombia, the people, and the churches of Medellín. After returning home, Patrick and I were both very excited about our trip and I learned for the first time of Patrick's deep desire to do missions, specifically in Colombia. Patrick went annually to El Corro near Cali, Colombia with a work crew. As soon as he heard my excitement about missions, he really got excited. For many months, we were not sure if this calling was from God or if it was just a romanticized dream of ours. However, it continued to draw our attention like a dripping faucet.

In the fall of 2014, we had our first child, Bella Grace. About one week after she was born, Patrick received a call from Lynn Thomas, Director of Global Missions. Lynn wanted to meet with us to discuss our interest in missions. That meeting, and the ones that followed, helped us affirm our calling as a family to go to the mission field. What a wild and exciting time it has been in this process of becoming missionaries! In October 2016, we went on our preview trip to Colombia to meet with pastors and to research housing. I was feeling a little discouraged because I was still struggling with my personal calling on the mission field. I knew what Patrick would be doing; he even had a job description. I'm not an ordained minister; I'm a social worker. What was God's plan for me?

It was then we visited a mission point in a small city in the mountains, about an hour outside of the big city of Medellín. We were meeting with the pastor and church leaders to discuss their needs and to get an idea of how we could be helpful. The problems and needs the pastor listed were all social or mental health needs. My ears perked up and I felt passion. Almost everything the pastor had mentioned I had direct clinical experience with in my career. I shared this with the pastor, and he told Patrick, "Sorry pastor, we don't need you! We need Jessica!" Of course, we all laughed, but I felt reassurance and relief because my calling continues to be re-

affirmed. I'm slowly learning to be patient, and to know that God reveals His plans and His callings in His perfect time.

Reflections

1. Read Exodus 3:10, 4:1-17. When Moses heard God's call, he did not believe he had the resources or the gifts needed to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. When Jessica heard God's call to go to Colombia, she was not sure she had the qualifications because she was a social worker, not a minister. How did God convince Moses that God would provide all that Moses needed to lead his people? How did God convince Jessica that she already had the gifts needed because God had been preparing her for this call?
2. When has God called you to do something and you felt you were not the one for the task? Tell how looking in the rear-view mirror of your life, you realized God had prepared you and continued to meet your needs.

Call to Action

It is usually difficult for many of us to list our own gifts and talents. We see them in others but tend to see our own shortcomings better than our gifts. In twos, share with a partner a spiritual gift you see in each other. Then the two of you may discuss ways you both have, and can, share your gifts in your church and community. After a few minutes, each person may call out a gift her partner saw in her. Remember that if God calls you, God will provide, and you will be blessed.

Prayer

God of love and light, guide us on our path through life. We thank you for Jessica and her family who have answered your call to love and serve the people of Colombia. Continue to surround her with patience and wisdom. Keep her family safe and meet all their needs. Help us to recognize that you are omnipotent and omnipresent, that you call us to be your hands and feet, and you give us the tools we need to fulfill your call. Help us to be willing to say, "Here am I, send me." Amen.