

WALKING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF GUATEMALA

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2.2010

First Year of Service: told in brief

The New Year has come and gone, as well as the resolutions. As the Lenten season comes upon us, I realize that I need to ask for forgiveness and try to keep up with my resolutions.

One resolution is to renew my commitment to sharing my experiences in Guatemala with those in the Presbyterian Church (USA). This past year was a whirlwind of transitions, and my commitment to sharing the story got lost in the process. As I become more comfortable with my new roles, mission co-worker and mother, the fogginess subsides and my excitement to involve others in this journey grows. And clarity always seems easier on a beautiful, clear, sunny day in Guatemala.

So how do I briefly wrap up an entire year in Guatemala? What comes to mind is motherhood. Women in Guatemala are extremely proud of their role as mother. They take the responsibility of caring for the next generation with great sincerity and compassion. It often defines the woman in Guatemalan society.

Becoming a mother myself introduced me into their world in a way I never thought possible. I was accepted into their lives as a fellow mother, one who now had the responsibility of raising a child. It was also clear that they felt it was part of their duty as community to help raise my son as well. There were countless times when childrearing advice was given without question. It was evident that I had much to learn and they were more than willing to help out. That even meant rocking a crying baby to sleep.



Ethan Alejandro with women of the Union Sinódica, the national Presbyterian Women's group of Guatemala.

After conquering the overwhelming sense of how I lacked the proper skills to raise children, I came to understand the women's intentions. They for the most part are the ones who make sure children's daily needs are met. They are the ones who ensure the cultural and religious traditions continue in the next generation. They have enormous pressure placed on their shoulders as they care for their children.

In short, they are answering God's call. This is their special ministry, their gift to the community.

It is in these crossroads where our journeys intersect that I come to understand what it means to be part of the Christian family. Here are sisters in Christ taking intentional care of me and my son sharing God's grace and compassion. And as I struggle with this new call, they walk alongside me as my companions, which is ironic. When people in the United States ask me to explain my job I often say that I accompany the women in their ministry. However, the truth is that they are the ones accompanying me on this faithful and spiritual journey as we strive to share our faith with the next generation.

God calls each of us in unique ways and the beauty of answering the call is the people that you meet along the way. God's family is rich and wise and this is evident in the women of Guatemala. I look forward to this next year as we accompany each other mutually.

How can you accompany the women of Guatemala?

They invite you to participate in the World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 5th. You can find more information about the day at <http://www.worlddayofprayer.net/>

As this letter arrives, I know many thoughts and prayers will be with the people of Haiti. If you are interested in helping, please visit Presbyterian Disaster Assistance at <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/>.

Thank you for supporting me, my family and my ministry in Guatemala. The women and I are grateful for your spiritual and financial support.

Blessings of Christ's peace,

Amanda

To support the ministries of the Presbyterian Women of Guatemala visit:

- a. With the Women of Guatemala –
www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=E051618
- b. Theological Scholarship Aid for Guatemalan Women –
www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=E051830

To support Amanda's ministry visit www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=E200334
