

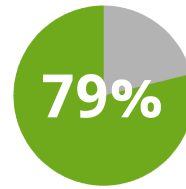
JOURNALS POSTED ON AUGUST 27, 2018

RISE UP ROOTED





DAVID & JOYCE REED



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IBEROAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Life Shifts

When it's time to return for a U.S./Puerto Rico Assignment, missionaries navigate a transitional maze. Whether it's for three months or one year, missionaries are saying goodbye to friends and wrapping up ministry objectives in their host country, while at the same time figuring out living arrangements, speaking engagements, and family visits in their passbook country. Add in medical check-ups, a debriefing at mission headquarters, and immersion in a culture they've lost touch with, a missionary can feel overwhelmed and untethered. What keeps one rooted in the midst of these types of life shifts?

CFM

One way International Ministries provides soul care for its missionaries is through the annual summer Conference for Overseas Missionaries (CFM). Missionaries who are back for their US-Puerto Rico Assignment are the ones who attend. It is a time for fellowship, rest, personal engagement with various staff, and sharing stories. For the second consecutive year, we were invited to attend in order to offer spiritual renewal through worship, prayer, community building, and spiritual direction. It is a significant time of settling the inner turmoil and listening for God's voice.



Kristy Engel, Anita & Rick Gutierrez

Soul Play

When our kids were growing up in Mexico, they spent countless hours playing with Legos. Now that they're grown and out of the house, we still have bins of Legos stored in our garage. As we brainstormed an opening activity for CFM, we decided to invite our colleagues to play with Legos! The invitation was to move into a non-linear, creative space and build around a theme unique to each table. Before starting they were asked to consider questions like: I wonder what my 5-year-old self would build? I wonder what would happen if I didn't worry about impressing others? I wonder if I can stop worrying about everything else in my life for the next 30 minutes so I can laugh and relax with friends? The goal was to be fully present with the people at your table. After 15 minutes at one table, each group then rotated to another table, and now had to continue building on what was before them, with no idea of the original vision. We used the activity to talk about renewal in personal mission, as well as "What does it mean to be a 200-year-old mission organization?"—one that is continually building on the vision of saints who have gone before us.





Words of Affirmation

The rhythm of the week built in intentional time for worship, for learning, for personal engagement, for rest, and for the missionaries to share a focused slice of his/her journey each evening. The hope for the week was to allow each of us to remember what keeps us connected to God's calling. Where have we lost sight of who we are, and to whom we belong? After the sharing each evening, we invited each missionary to sit in the middle of the circle and asked those who had listened: What did you see? What did you hear? These are some the words of affirmation that poured out: courage, compassion, joy, purpose, creativity, the face of God, love, commitment, humility, walking in partnership, a willingness to suffer, God's heart, steadfast love. Ephesians 4:29 encourages us to gift words to each other so that we build each other up. It was a life-giving outpouring of authentic community. (This week, we encourage you to send an encouraging word to the missionaries in your life!)

Spiritual Companionship

We also were honored to spend one-on-one time with some of our colleagues as we listened to their hearts. As Spiritual Directors we companion with others to listen to the Holy Spirit in order to discern the movements of God in each other's lives. Deep, authentic listening is what all of us crave at some time or another. And it takes courage to share intimately with a spiritual friend. Author and therapist Morton Kelsey expressed it like this: "Allowing another person into this deepest level of our human experience makes any of us ultimately vulnerable, for it allows the other person to discover where our deepest values are and where we can be touched. We are exposing to another human being the center from which we move or wish to move."^[1] We are grateful and humble that we are invited to walk beside our colleagues along these sacred, vulnerable paths.



Barbara Bolick and Joyce Reed

Rooted in Christ

Our key verse of the week came from Colossians 2:6-7. “Rooted and built up in Christ” is a phrase imbedded in those two verses. At the end of the week, we wanted to illustrate this in a tangible way. So, as CFM’s class of 2018, we purchased a sapling to plant on the grounds of the Green Lake Conference Center where we were meeting. It was a vivid reminder that we are rooted in Christ, rooted in community, and rooted in partnerships around the world. Our intent was to close worship by planting the tree in the ground. But a thunderstorm rolled in, and the planting was deferred to the next afternoon. It felt like what we all experience each day on the field. Plans go awry. Unexpected events and people interrupt our agendas. Storms can catch us off guard. But when we allow ourselves to fall into the mystery of the Living God, to let grace-rain soak all the way to our roots, then we rise up strong, we rise up brave, we rise up resilient.



CFM Class of 2018

You Keep Us Grounded

You might be surprised to learn how many times the hearts of our donors come up in conversations at CFM. The missionary community realizes that we are not sent from a vacuum. A main reason we stay rooted is because your prayers, your financial gifts, your words of encouragement, your dedication to mission, your desire to see others fall in love with God keep us grounded. Thank you for being our extended family. Thank you for choosing to know us, to know our hearts. We pray that the Lord, who gives peace, blesses each of you with peace so that we all may be peace in our world.

David and Joyce

P.S. Our next journal article will share about David’s recent trip to Brazil, and an exciting learning opportunity for Joyce.

[1] Kelsey, Morton. “Prayer: Intimacy, Art, and Meditation.”
<https://thevalueofsparrows.com/2012/11/10/saturday-reading-intimacy-art-and-meditation-by-morton-t-kelsey/>