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Pray for Mercy Gonzalez-Barnes



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Pray for Mercy Gonzalez-Barnes helping respond to diverse educational needs of our partners in Cuba and Latin America.

Mercy has been serving as a missionary with International Ministries since she was commissioned in 2000. Fifteen years later, her ministry has entered an exciting period of transition as Mercy's role has evolved from one of local mission work in Mexico to one of regional work. She will now take the experiences and skills accrued through 13 years of teaching, mentoring and walking alongside men and women who have felt the call of God and apply them to a wider ministry of responding to diverse educational and theological needs in Latin America. In addition, Mercy will be part of a team walking alongside the ministry of Cuban Baptists. Mercy writes, "I am responding to this new call and emphasis in my ministry with fear and trembling, but also with excitement as I am also being stretched to continue to grow and to be aware of the many diverse needs of our Latin American partners. This is an exciting time of change in Cuba, and in that spirit I continue to ask for your continued support of this ministry and for your prayers as our family transitions to this new responsibility."

She writes: **Why I do what I do...**

I was about sixteen years old and was at a youth retreat in Puerto Rico. The speaker had finished and now there was an altar call. I started to pray for all of those "others" that needed to hear the call of God. I prayed for God to touch lives. I felt spiritually fine and was surprised when suddenly I felt a weight on my shoulders. I started to weep as I thought, but God, what do you want from me? I heard it clearly in my thoughts, "People need to know that I love them". I responded, "I know that God but what do you want from me?" The rest of the service went on and I refused to respond to God's voice. I thought to myself, "I'm just being emotional because of the service, this will go away".

Well, three days later I was at home and the feeling of weight, of a burden kept increasing. I didn't know what to do with that feeling. I spoke to my brother and he didn't take me seriously and I remember crying and saying that this was for real. That weekend, God had given me a gift, it was the burden of knowing God's love for each of us. How God yearns to fill our lives with purpose and love. As life has gone by, God has continued to show me his great love and faithfulness as he walks by my side but also as God works with each of the students that I have had the blessing of teaching.

Why do I teach?

I teach because of Israel and Gaby, because of Iliana and Eliza, because of Dahlita and Alonso and many others. Each of these names represent a story of redemption, of God's love and how these persons are being used to make a difference in their community.

I teach because of the Great Cloud of Witnesses of Hebrews 11 and 12. These flawed characters show us what it means to live by faith.

I teach because of the many nameless women and men that have changed the world throughout time. They lived in times of persecution and famine, they lived in times in which the church and government were intertwined and the roles confused. They lived in times in which they learned to be advocates for the indigenous people and during times of world wars. And they live in times like today.

I teach because I have no choice, because there is a burden, a weight that I carry, a voice that I hear that says, "People need to know that I love them".