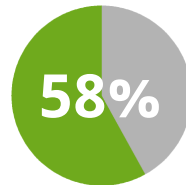


JOURNALS POSTED ON OCTOBER 16, 2017

When I think of Puerto Rico...



STAN SLADE



SUPPORT PLEDGED



GLOBAL

There is a lot of beauty in Puerto Rico. The colonial fortress, El Morro, at the mouth of San Juan Bay provides so many fascinating views.



But when I think of Puerto Rico today, I think not so much of the lovely vistas, but of a different and very special dimension of her beauty: her people. In particular, I think of dear friends. Inspiring co-workers in the work of mission.

It was God who led Cathy and me to become missionaries of American Baptist International Ministries. But God did not work in splendid isolation. That is simply not the divine way. God's preferred strategy for accomplishing most things in the world is teamwork. And that was certainly true in our case. God relied on a dear Puerto Rican brother, **Victor Mercado**, to be a key player on the team that brought us to IM.



Victor Mercado, seen here with his wife **Iris** in their home in Puerto Rico, in 2002, was IM's Area Director for Latin America and the Caribbean from the 1970s to the 1990s.



While we were serving in El Salvador in the 1980s, God deepened our relationship with Puerto Rico by sending fellow missionary **Ingrid Roldán-Román**, one of the many ordained women from the Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico



When I came to the staff of IM in 1992, I began what has become a very important friendship with **José Norat Rodríguez**, who served as IM's Area Director for Iberoamerica and the Caribbean from 1992 to 2015 (and with his wonderful wife, **Irma Ivelisse Rodríguez Quiñones**).

Over the years since 1992, the number has grown and grown: fellow missionaries, board members, denominational leaders, region leaders, pastors and members of the churches that make up Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico—and Puerto Rican brothers and sisters who are enriching the lives of congregations all across the U.S., starting with José and Haydee Ortiz, dynamic members of Royersford Baptist Church, where the Slade family has been engaged for over 25 years now.

There are far too many to name or share in photos. But, to represent this great cloud of **testigos**, I will include photos of just the sisters and brothers from Puerto Rico who are currently serving as missionaries with IM:



[Mayra Giovanetti & Carlos Bonilla](#)

The B-Gs have been doing discipleship education in Nicaragua, after previous assignments that had them training leaders in Chile and Spain

[Deliris Carrion-Joseph](#)



Deliris works to provide shelter and restoration for survivors of domestic abuse and their children in Tijuana, Mexico, after previous assignments in El Salvador and Haiti



Madeline Flores-Lopez

Madeline works to connect short term volunteer missionaries with service opportunities throughout the Caribbean



Mercy Gonzalez Barnes

Mercy works regionally throughout Iberoamerica and the Caribbean to train leaders for the churches, after a previous assignment in North Baja, Mexico

Ricardo Mayol Bracero

Ricardo works regionally throughout Iberoamerica and the Caribbean to promote peace through conflict transformation, after previous assignments in Costa Rica and Mexico.



Ketly & Vital Pierre

Ketly and Vital are engaged in planting churches and forming disciples in Dominican Republic, after previous assignments in

Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic



Ingrid Roldan-Roman

Ingrid works to bringing hope and help to some of the poorest children in Panama, after previous assignments in El Salvador and Costa Rica.

When I hear about “devastation in Puerto Rico,” then, these faces immediately come to mind, followed quickly by many, many other dedicated servants of Christ I have come to know and love in the Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico.

So, when it comes to responding to the needs in Puerto Rico, then, “it’s personal.” Teammates in God’s mission, friends and coworkers across the island... the faith communities from which they spring... and the larger communities they serve in the name of Christ. Churches have been destroyed, as well as the homes and vehicles of their pastors and members. They are working hard to rebuild their lives—but not just their own lives. In

the midst of their own loss, churches are reaching out to meet the needs of their neighbors, all across the island.

As I write, both Ingrid Roldán-Román and Madeline Flores-López are on the ground in Puerto Rico, throwing their energies into the relief and recovery effort. For me and for most of us, however, this is not yet the time for direct, hands-on engagement in the effort. So, we pray. We give. We are working with colleagues to support the relief efforts of the Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico and the denomination-wide American Baptist response led by [**American Baptist Home Mission Societies**](#).

Twenty-six days and counting... without power, without running water, with all kinds of shortages and long lines... with very, very spotty communication of any kind. And the list goes on. The needs are massive, and will continue to be massive for a long, long time.

In the face of these needs, the display of typical Puerto Rican resiliency, hustle, creativity, hard work, faith and good humor has been amazing. But, make no mistake about it. Our friends need our help. It is that simple. For many of us, an important part of responding is to give to the relief efforts of the churches through the [One Great Hour of Sharing](#).

Whether or not you have been blessed, as I have, with many Puerto Rican friends, I invite you to follow the news—and follow developments long after the media have moved elsewhere! And pray. And give.