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Faith Story Delivered at Worship
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dayton
On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Colombia Partnership



Good morning.

Today I want to thank God for the partnership between the Presbytery of the North Coast and the Presbytery of Miami Valley.

For me, this is not only the story of two presbyteries. It is part of my own story. It is part of how God changed my life.

I grew up in a home with three generations of women: my grandmother, my mother, and me. We did not have many resources, but we had faith, love, and the desire to move forward.

The church gave me a scholarship that allowed me to study at the Colegio Americano, a Presbyterian school. That opportunity opened a door for me. It gave me an education, but it also gave me a community, values, and a place where I began to discover that God had a purpose for my life.

Because of the church, I met people who believed in me. And because of this partnership, my world became much bigger.

I was still very young when I began participating in visits, activities, and camps. At that time, I did not understand how important those experiences would become. I was simply happy to meet new people, share with others, and be part of something special.

I remember a youth camp in Colombia where we welcomed a group of young people from the United States. We spent time together, talking, serving, praying, laughing, and learning from one another.

We spoke different languages and came from different cultures. Sometimes it was difficult to understand each other. But we learned that we did not need to be the same in order to belong to one another. Our faith in Christ brought us together.

That experience helped me understand that the church is much bigger than my own city or my own country. It also helped me see how the Reformed faith is lived in other parts of our great continent, America.

I learned that we may worship in different ways and speak different languages, but we share the same faith, the same hope, and the same calling to serve.

There were people who became very important in my life. People who saw something in me before I could see it in myself. I remember with deep gratitude many leaders who welcomed me, encouraged me, and believed in me.

Their confidence helped me believe in myself. Their example helped me understand that leadership begins with service, and that faith must be lived through love, justice, peace, and care for others.

Twenty-two years ago, this partnership brought me here, to Westminster Presbyterian Church in Dayton. Being here again today is very emotional for me. It reminds me of God's faithfulness and of how the seeds planted many years ago continue to grow.

God's gifts are not meant to remain in one person, one church, one country, or one culture. They are meant to be shared.

That is what this partnership has done in my life. It shared faith, friendship, opportunities, and hope with me. And now, I try to share those same gifts with others.

Today I continue serving through the Colegio Americano, the same church school that once gave me an opportunity. Now I have the privilege of helping form new generations of children and young people.

When I think about my grandmother, my mother, and the little girl I once was, I can only thank God. I am grateful for the church that opened a door for me, for the leaders who believed in me, and for this partnership that helped me grow in faith and leadership.

My prayer is that this partnership will continue for many more years, and that new generations will also find a place in this story.

May they receive the same faith, love, and opportunities that I received. And may they also learn that the Spirit of God always moves outward, creating community, crossing borders, and bringing us together in Christ.

Thank you very much