

ACTS IN ACTION

An Update from your BGs Et Al

ABFMS Missionaries & MKs
Colombia

October 2018

To Win or not to Wean



October: How many parents / aunts and uncles / grandparents out there agree with us that weaning sucks? How many parents out there agree with us, on the other hand, that weaning is winning? Isn't that what we've known all along, since we conceived, waited 40 weeks, gave birth, and saw them grow before our very own eyes? Isn't that what God Himself experiences with us? Indeed, by weaning, we win!

At the time of this writing, we are traveling through Hurricane Florence from Pennsylvania (PA) to Florida (FL) by land so we can catch our planes to Colombia. We delayed our exit from PA due to the hurricane. What a blessing to spend a couple of more days with Carolina and even make one more church visit! God is good. Yes, Carolina stayed in PA (yes, stayed is not the same as we left Carolina in PA, though they're two sides of the same coin...). And, yes, Alberto stayed in Kentucky (KY). See where we're going?

When children grow and wean, we win to see them mature and be responsible adults. We enjoy seeing them take charge of their education and their own contributions to life through the intelligence and the gifts God has granted them along with the wisdom to be good stewards of their lives. Being in different places is H.A.R.D. but this is part of their (and our!) growth. Just as we weaned them naturally as children, they have weaned themselves naturally as young adults. By weaning we all win. The ultimate goal of every parent / grandparent / relative is to see their child healthily weaned. What a blessing to see that before our eyes!!!

As we embark upon this new adventurous assignment to Colombia, we are looking forward to accompanying many closer to Jesus in their discipleship journey. Just like many accompanied us (and still do) we also look forward to seeing many eventually wean naturally (as we have seen so many in Chile, Spain, and Nicaragua who are now nurturing new disciples of their own).

As the Apostle Paul encourages us in Ephesians 4.11-16 (in ESV): *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to **equip** the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body*

*of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to **mature** manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up** in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it **builds itself up in love.**"* Let's call this passage Discipleship 101, for all of us to carry out. Right?

And then, as fruit of this, John tells us in chapter 13 verse 35 that: *"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* Therefore, as a result of this discipleship journey, we also love abundantly each other and those that surround us. Hence, our excitement to finally get to meet those whom God has been preparing us to accompany and love in Colombia. How many? No idea. For how long? Lord willing, for four years. Where? In Cartagena where we plan to reside, in Bogota and Medellín where part of our extended family and friends live (including our dearest fellow Puerto Rican Walla Febres and her Colombian husband Leonardo Florez), in Cali where UNIBAUTISTA and the SEPАЗ Foundation are located, in The Guajira where we are looking forward to meeting our Wayuu siblings, and anywhere else in the country that God leads us. Wouldn't you also be excited? Aren't you? We most definitely are!!!

Thanks so much for your ongoing prayers throughout this transition from Nicaragua to our extensive Puerto Rico and USA 22 months long assignment and onto C.O.L.O.M.B.I.A. So much happened in this transition... As our adult children enjoy this semester in seminary and college, respectively, we anticipate a busy schedule ourselves with our youngest daughter starting her homeschooling high school experience as an only child in our almost empty nested home with her Güeli (gradma) and these two unworthy servants who only seek to do what is our duty (Luke 17.10) with tons of love and enthusiasm, because we do it onto the One who calls us each day to follow Him and be salt to the earth.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers with all these adjustments, with winning by weaning, with meetings in different places with our host partners, and getting our bearings with life in Colombia 30 years and 2 months since we met. Be sure to send us your own update so we can also continue to pray for you, your family, and your congregation. It makes our day each time we get a note from you or a FB post at BGs Et Al. Remember to invite your friends and contacts to also join us at BGs Et Al. May God bless you this beautiful Autumn Season!

PS. **We have arrived to C.O.L.O.M.B.I.A.!** Yes, we flew from Florida to Paraguay arriving in Bogotá on Thursday, September 27th. This will remain an historical date for our mission society since we are the first missionary unit to live and serve in this beautiful country. Glory be to God for such a privilege and blessing. In Bogotá we ran a few necessary and important errands.

On Monday, October 1st we flew to Cartagena. New fiscal year, new residence. We have already started the process for our permanent residents' IDs for Mayra and her mom Hilda. They'll be ready in a week. What a difference from all previous countries! Another prayer answered... We also processed our new local cell phone numbers and we'll have them within the next three days. We are coordinating with our partners to meet by the end of the month to revisit and re-evaluate where we will plug in and serve in the efforts of partnership and expansion of the Kingdom for which the Lord calls us each day and has brought us to this country. At first glance, there is a lot to do and we are grateful for not being lone rangers but rather partners with locals and in partnership with you and so many churches in Puerto Rico and the USA that are part of our support network.

This is the second and last month of promotion of the 2018 World Mission Offering. Every cent makes it possible for the work of the Lord through the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society to continue. Each opportunity we have to expand the Kingdom of God is a blessing. We are counting on your prayers, your physical and electronic notes, and your ongoing financial support. Remember to send your correspondence to us to ABFMS-BGs Et Al / 1003 W 9th Ave, Ste A / King of Prussia, PA 19406-1210. Your financial gifts can also be sent there or through your church and region. Our 610 cell phone continues to receive text/WhatsApp and FB including Messenger. It does not receive phone calls. If you'd like us to call you by Skype, send us a text message identifying your number and we'll be happy to call you back as soon as we're able.

Are you getting ready to serve with us in Colombia? We pray that you are... We must warn you that the risk is that you'll want to stay here...

Stretching further toward the goal "*winning by weaning*",
your BGs Et Al (www.facebook.com/BGsEtAl)

You are invited to join **Acts In Action Team & Network** of individuals and churches who support the ministry of the Bonilla-Giovanetti family (your BGs Et Al) through prayer, encouragement, or financial support. To learn more or join their Missionary Partnership Network (MPN), email Mark Sorrels (IN/KY) marksorrels@gmail.com or call Cori Catellier (GI) at 317-881-3457 / 317-626-6169.

To read more about their ministry and of other American Baptist missionaries, global consultants, and development workers, visit www.internationalministries.org, click on *Who we are* and then *Global Servants*. To commit your support, visit <https://portal.internationalministries.org/give>.

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September 2018

A.D.U.L.T.S.



September: In most countries, when a person reaches age 18, they are considered A.D.U.L.T.S. If that is true, then we are to be considered as adults for reaching 18 years of service. That is a scary thought! What happens when you are an adult?

Most of us prefer not to grow up: we don't want to have responsibilities. We don't want to lose the freedom of being young and having someone else take care of you (buy your clothes, decide what you'll eat, where you'll go, who you'll meet...). Why not stay young forever? Like Peter Pan, right?

But then, there is the other side of the coin: like the Christopher Robin's of the world (in the new movie) who rush into being adults to enjoy the benefits of adulthood. But then, they forget the fun of being young at heart. They become so focus on productivity that they lose touch with the little things that count. They are so concentrated on adulthood, that they forget that we need to be children at heart to inherit the kingdom of God!

As we prepare to depart at the end of the month from the USA and Puerto Rico to start our new journey in COLOMBIA, we pray that we can be balanced adults: that we can be responsible about our decisions and can be focused in our tasks while being young at heart, playful, and free to enjoy God's care for us and those around us. After all, isn't He the One who called us and continues to send us out of ourselves and into the world?

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