



## MINUTE FOR MISSION

April 1, 2005

### The Spark that Has Taught Us

The first time Omar flashed his grin, I saw the spark. He was 10 years old, one of the younger members of the remote community in the lush, green mountains of northern Nicaragua where a group of 23 Presbyterians had come to participate in Hurricane Mitch reconstruction. The year was 2000, and Plan Grande 2 was one of myriad communities pummeled by “la tormenta.” As we worked alongside our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters, Omar was never far from members of our delegation. I imagined him wondering why it was that we had come such a long way to be a part of work in his community that, frankly, could better be done by the people living there. Whatever the reasons, Omar stuck close, and in spite of our language barrier, he found a niche in my heart. I pressed his parting gift, a dew-kissed hibiscus flower, in the pages of my Spanish-English dictionary, which still bears the stains of tears shed as we drove away.



The partnership with Plan Grande 2 has introduced new friends to Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery.

It was people like Omar who moved the Latin American Action Team of the Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery in St. Louis, Missouri, to pursue a long-term relationship with the community of Plan Grande 2—people who, in spite of (or perhaps precisely because of) living in one of the most impoverished countries in the hemisphere, possess a wealth of warmth, graciousness, and hospitality all too rare in our culture of economic wealth. Within our partnership we are learning that a “handout” isn’t what being partners in mission is about, but rather that mission lies in the outstretched hand grasping the hand of a brother or sister whose wealth



## MINUTE FOR MISSION

April 1, 2005

### The Spark that Has Taught Us

The first time Omar flashed his grin, I saw the spark. He was 10 years old, one of the younger members of the remote community in the lush, green mountains of northern Nicaragua where a group of 23 Presbyterians had come to participate in Hurricane Mitch reconstruction. The year was 2000, and Plan Grande 2 was one of myriad communities pummeled by “la tormenta.” As we worked alongside our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters, Omar was never far from members of our delegation. I imagined him wondering why it was that we had come such a long way to be a part of work in his community that, frankly, could better be done by the people living there. Whatever the reasons, Omar stuck close, and in spite of our language barrier, he found a niche in my heart. I pressed his parting gift, a dew-kissed hibiscus flower, in the pages of my Spanish-English dictionary, which still bears the stains of tears shed as we drove away.



The partnership with Plan Grande 2 has introduced new friends to Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery.

It was people like Omar who moved the Latin American Action Team of the Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery in St. Louis, Missouri, to pursue a long-term relationship with the community of Plan Grande 2—people who, in spite of (or perhaps precisely because of) living in one of the most impoverished countries in the hemisphere, possess a wealth of warmth, graciousness, and hospitality all too rare in our culture of economic wealth. Within our partnership we are learning that a “handout” isn’t what being partners in mission is about, but rather that mission lies in the outstretched hand grasping the hand of a brother or sister whose wealth

lies in what we lack. In this case, the outstretched hands are most often our own. Time and again, we receive far more than we give.

July 2005 will mark the tenth partnership visit between our communities. During our time together we play, we work, we sing—we learn through our shared experiences more about what it means to be partners in mission and about walking together in a relationship of solidarity, spirituality, friendship, and accompaniment. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that propels us toward this mission: the Good News that Christ came to make us one; that we are members of the same family and, as such, we have gifts to share with one another and things to learn from each other.

Omar, now age 15, shared with us one of his many gifts—a spark. From that spark we have learned of and experienced a wealth previously hidden to us. It is Omar’s wealth, and the wealth of people like Omar in the community of Plan Grande 2, that has enriched and nourished us as we continue to build bridges of reconciliation, to span the gulf between members of the family of God, and to bring us together in the spirit of unity and the bond of peace.

Thanks be to God,  
Kathie Sherman, chair  
Latin American Action Team  
Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery  
St. Louis, MO

Mission Coordinator  
Webster Groves Presbyterian Church  
45 W. Lockwood Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63119  
(314) 962-9210, ext. 3208  
nicabol@aol.com

*Do you have a mission story to tell? Would you like to read inspiring stories of Presbyterians in mission? Visit the Witness Season Web site: [www.pcusa.org/witness](http://www.pcusa.org/witness). New minutes for mission are posted on the 1st and 15th of each month.*

*For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-7228, ext. 5689, or [Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org).*

lies in what we lack. In this case, the outstretched hands are most often our own. Time and again, we receive far more than we give.

July 2005 will mark the tenth partnership visit between our communities. During our time together we play, we work, we sing—we learn through our shared experiences more about what it means to be partners in mission and about walking together in a relationship of solidarity, spirituality, friendship, and accompaniment. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that propels us toward this mission: the Good News that Christ came to make us one; that we are members of the same family and, as such, we have gifts to share with one another and things to learn from each other.

Omar, now age 15, shared with us one of his many gifts—a spark. From that spark we have learned of and experienced a wealth previously hidden to us. It is Omar’s wealth, and the wealth of people like Omar in the community of Plan Grande 2, that has enriched and nourished us as we continue to build bridges of reconciliation, to span the gulf between members of the family of God, and to bring us together in the spirit of unity and the bond of peace.

Thanks be to God,  
Kathie Sherman, chair  
Latin American Action Team  
Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery  
St. Louis, MO

Mission Coordinator  
Webster Groves Presbyterian Church  
45 W. Lockwood Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63119  
(314) 962-9210, ext. 3208  
nicabol@aol.com

*Do you have a mission story to tell? Would you like to read inspiring stories of Presbyterians in mission? Visit the Witness Season Web site: [www.pcusa.org/witness](http://www.pcusa.org/witness). New minutes for mission are posted on the 1st and 15th of each month.*

*For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-7228, ext. 5689, or [Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org).*