"It is a dream," said Antonia, "to be a comadrona. But the word dream in Spanish doesn't really translate from Kaqchikel. It isn't a desire either. It is something that invades your heart and mind and will not let you go." Antonia was the first to respond to my question, "Why do you do this?"

"God calls me to do this; it is not really my choice," said Gregoria.

"I do it for love," said Adalia.

With Adalia's statement, every woman at the table spontaneously responded. "Yes, yes, that's it. We do it for love."

These women were attending Faith In Practice's Traditional Birth Attendant Course held in Sololá this past week. The course is designed to educate and train comadronas to identify, prevent, and manage maternal and infant complications during pregnancy and delivery. As I listened to Felicity Thompson, CNW, Patty Baiza, MD, Ana Garcia, EA, and their instructors teach the course to 30 comadronas, questions flooded my mind.
“Where do most of the births take place?” In a dark room, where often there is an open fire in the corner and a dirt floor. “Where do they get water to clean and prevent infection?” Oftentimes the water must be carried a distance. “What do the comadronas receive for their services?” Whatever the family has to spare - corn, fruit, gratitude. And the hardest questions. “What happens when the mother starts bleeding and it won't stop? What happens when the baby is not breathing? What then?” Too often the answer to these questions is the mother dies, the baby dies, we are with them. We do it for love.

Each answer varied, but the theme was the same. These women felt called, designated, to this work. And they did it out of love. They were hungry for the knowledge to better serve their mothers, their babies.

As I listened to the comadronas, observing their passion and commitment, and as I watched them practice what they had learned on specialized training equipment and dolls, I watched Felicity, Patty, Ana, and the instructors who were teaching. It was clear they were teaching out of love. I then thought of our Guatemalan volunteers who work in the village medical clinics and sacrifice much to accompany patients to Antigua or San Felipe, week after week, so that their neighbors might receive a surgery. How often they have told me, “God was calling me, but I had no way to serve. Thank you for giving me the way to answer God's call.” How often have I watched them and said to myself, “They do this for love.”

On this Valentine's Day, I want to thank you for the many ways that you support this mission so generously out of love. But I also want you to know that you are making it possible for those in Guatemala to answer God's personal call to them to a service born of love. And I want you to know how grateful they are to you for that precious gift.

Happy Valentine's Day.

Linda

Rev. Linda McCarty
President & CEO

*Comadronas are traditional "midwives" - those who assist mothers during pregnancy, labor, and delivery. Kaqchikel is one of 23 indigenous Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala. Through the Traditional Birth Attendant program, in the past three years we have trained over 400 of these extraordinary women. Click here to see more photos from the recent training and to learn more about the TBA program.

This year, Faith In Practice is hosting two women's luncheons - our annual luncheon in Houston and our first event in Dallas/Fort Worth.

Save the date for our tenth annual Houston women's luncheon, I Call Upon You, on May 4!

Register now for the Dallas/Fort Worth women's luncheon on March 9.

Join Us in 2017

We are seeking volunteers to fill key spots on upcoming trips this season. Do you know someone who might be interested in the life-changing experience of serving in Guatemala? Would you be up for that opportunity?

Learn more!

Leave a Legacy

Ensure that the work you have done so faithfully will continue into the future.

Consider a planned gift.