

## Hope Along the Road

The old year has faded away. A year of starts and stops, hurry ups and goes, only to stop and wait and see. As the new year winter begins to fade into spring, in Texas, today, at least, so my time with PC(USA) World Mission will also fade into the past as my term comes to an end at the end of February.

It is with a very heavy heart that I write these words. It is hard to say good bye to “family” and friends and people I have come to love during my time with you. The tears haven’t fallen yet, I am sure they are yet to come as the hope that a new position with PC(USA) fades into reality that there just isn’t one right now, and we begin the transition process.



<sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.  
ROMANS 8:24-25

As I watch the events unfolding in South Sudan, my heart longs, it pleads and it begs to go back, jump right in and do what I can to help the people I left behind. That is the dreamer in me.

The realistic people that God has surrounded me with are working very hard to convince me that is not a good idea. I can’t be a help if I cause more harm by getting malaria and create a whole host of evacuation problems in a land that is already overwhelmed with problems. They work hard to convince me to sit back, be patient and to remember God is in control and He has a plan.

My head knows that, but my heart sometimes has a hard time accepting it. I *know* the time is not now but I am convinced the time will come when I can and once again I can take off and go. Perhaps the country will be better prepared to receive us. (That is the eternal optimist in me...)

“Patience, my child” is the thought that runs through my head as my fingers prowl the internet looking for ways to go back. Funny, doors are not opening there. Even in my stubbornness I have to accept that is usually a pretty good sign for me not to do something. And so, I sit in thought and prayer, waiting for a sign from God that this is the road I should travel next.

One road leads to being a “vagabond storyteller”, traveling the world where missionaries are working and tell the stories of God at work and how his work is impacting the individuals and communities we serve. Another road leads to working with refugees here at home, and another leads to staying here, doing what I

can to support myself, so that I can finish my education and in the process better prepare myself to serve God and you, in whatever way I am called next.

I don't know which road I will travel, but I am certain God does. Perhaps it is one I haven't even dreamed of yet. What I do know is that no road will ever be traveled alone again, because of each and every one of you. My dreams are inspired by God and you and will be shaped by God's hand. For all the dreams that have come true during my time of service with PC(USA), the ones I dreamed and the ones I never could have imagined, I will be eternally grateful for the role you have played in shaping my life to become more than I could have hoped for.

For the opportunities to go and grow, to see, feel, taste and experience things I never could have imagined. I have traveled as far north as Toronto, Canada and as far south as Betty's Bay, South Africa, and thousands of miles throughout the US as I have been honored and privileged to come and visit you, share our stories and learn from you. Most of all, I am grateful that you trusted me with your love, prayers and support of this mission that didn't quite work out the way any of us imagined.



I have always loved Robert Frost and particularly his words, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." They are words that have shaped my life, taking the less traveled roads, and it *has* made all the difference.

Yes, it is a wide open year, full of roads diverging in woods, unwritten days and dreams and dreams of days to come. And so, I sit and wait in patience for God's next call, his next plans for me. The days are a blank canvas full of possibilities and roads less traveled. They are days filled with hope.

May God be with you as you paint your blank canvasses in the year to come. May they be pictures full of lights and colors and endless possibilities, and may you stop for a moment and take the less traveled road.

God be with you until we meet again my friends. May the Lord bless you and keep you and may peace be with you.

Sharon

#### Prayer Request

I know our mission co-workers throughout the world can't do their work without support, so I pray that instead of supporting me you will find another who touches your heart and you will continue your support through PCUSA.