Rosa Maria Izaguirre, Ed.D.

Testimony

I was born in a small town in Mexico to a family of eight children. I am fourth in order, and the oldest of the girls. I attended school in Mexico until the equivalent of seventh grade, after which my family emigrated to the United States. My father worked as an oil drill floor hand and my mother worked as a sewing machine operator in a Levi's factory in McAllen, Texas. During my high school years, I was involved in athletics, which helped me to improve my English-speaking skills in addition to motivating me to be persistent and goal driven. When we arrived in McAllen my mother, two sisters and I began attending a small Baptist church.

Because my mother worked all through the summer, a young lady from Mexico would come and watch over us during that time. The summer between my Sophomore and Junior year of high school, 1982, she shared the gospel with me and I received Christ as my Savior and was baptized a few months later. During the summer of 1985 my mother, sisters and I began attending a different church which ran discipleship groups on Sunday evening. I first participated in a Master Life small group and continued to grow spiritually. My early twenties was a season of much growth and eagerness to pursue a deeper relationship with my Savior and to serve him more consistently.

I married Omar Izaguirre, my pastor's oldest son, on December 21, 1991. In the summer of 1994, we left behind our teaching careers to attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. I graduated May 1997 with a Master of Arts in Marriage of Family Counseling and a Master of Art in Religious Education. We returned to McAllen in 1999 and I obtained my Counseling License in February of 2000. Upon returning to the Rio Grande Valley I

was able to establish a private Christian Counseling practice and conducted counseling with many individuals, mostly women, and marriages. Over the last twenty-five years I have been privileged to serve as Children's Director on two occasions and, together with my husband, as Youth Director on several occasions. I have enjoyed teaching Sunday School classes and Awana for various age groups, leading Women's Ministry groups and seminars, and participating in several mission trips.

While we have been blessed to have served God since the beginning of our lives together, the early years of married life were marked by devastating losses as our firsts four pregnancies ended in miscarriages. It was a season of deep sorrow and serving while navigating personal grief. The Lord patiently and mercifully taught me to rest my heart in His love for me and showed me how to move forward with unanswered questions. Eventually we were blessed with four children, who are now young adults. Our parenting journey included thirteen years of homeschooling before transitioning three of the four to public high schools. Our oldest daughter was homeschooled through high school, graduated from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, and now serves as a missionary in South Korea. Oldest son attended South Texas College and now works in South Texas, third daughter is a theater student at The University of Texas in Austin, and youngest son will be attending Oklahoma Baptist University pursuing a Theology degree.

For several years the Lord had been prompting me to consider returning to school for a terminal degree. Since many years were invested in raising family, I had decided that it was probably too late to return to school. The Lord, however, did not agree, so in 2021, in the middle of a world-wide pandemic and at the age of fifty-five, I began a fast-paced Doctor of Education degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I graduated December of 2023 and was

blessed to conduct a research study titled “Prevalence of Secondary Trauma Among South Texas Pastors: A Mixed Method Study”

My heart’s desire is to continue to serve my precious Lord. Counseling, teaching, and ministering to women are my passions. As a woman in her late fifties, I feel that I am old enough to have journeyed through many life seasons and reaped some wisdom, but I am also young enough to be able to invest in the next generation of counselors, teachers, and ministers. I am praying and waiting with alert ears for God’s guidance for the next season.