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Back to Guatemala

Tom Roberts | Jun. 21, 2013 NCR Today

Guatemala has been a point of interest and fascination for me since I first traveled here in 1981 for a brief period during a particularly intense time of strife in the country?s 36-year civil war.

I?ve managed to return several times since and have maintained a long friendship with Dennis Smith, a lay Presbyterian missioner, who introduced me to the country nearly 32 years ago. Dennis lived here for 33 years before moving two years ago to Argentina. We?ll be traveling throughout Guatemala for the next week and a half, interviewing church officials, academics and pastoral workers and civic leaders among others, taking a look at a number of aspects of post-civil war Guatemala, including the Catholic church?s role in national reconciliation.

The trip began, however, with a lively discussion Thursday morning at the invitation of the Sociedad Evangelica de Estudios Socioreligiosos (Evangelical Society for Socio-Religious Research), a group of evangelical leaders and scholars. We met at the Seminario Teologico Centroamericano in Guatemala City to talk about the emerging Catholic church, Pope Francis and his challenge to the clerical and hierarchical culture.

More on all of this to come in articles that will appear later this summer. Hasta luego! (No I don?t have Spanish. Dennis, who has written in the past for *NCR* and who's been a valuable consultant on *NCR* projects in Central America, is a superb interpreter.)

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