

# Mission UpReach Newsletter

## History of the Barrio Belén Church of Christ

In June 2009, the Waldron family, consisting of Phil and Donna Waldron and their two youngest, teenage children, Harrison and Laura, moved to Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras and began Mission UpReach, which was a mission of the Campus View Church of Christ in Athens, Georgia. From the beginning the Waldron's were hosting visiting medical groups as well as other short-term mission groups while at the same time working with the local Church of Christ in Santa Rosa. This congregation had been established by two young men that were students at the Baxter Institute in Tegucigalpa some fifteen years before. Originally these two young men were sent to Santa Rosa by Harris Goodwin, the Founder of Baxter with instructions to evangelize the community. Because of those initial efforts a congregation was eventually established in Barrio Calvario very near the center of town.

Later a traveling missionary by the name of AJ Hendricks was sent by the Stark City, Missouri Church of Christ for numerous six-week trips to the western part of Honduras. Brother Hendricks was a large man with a tremendous sense of humor that captivated his audiences. His years of serving here left an indelible impression on the congregations that he helped establish and nurture. Another, itinerant missionary was James Mangrum from the Hermitage Church of Christ in Tennessee. While brother Hendricks was an old-time Gospel preacher brother Mangrum was a retired glass worker from the Ford plant in Nashville, TN. He was a humble man that never learned Spanish but loved Jesus and loved the Honduran people. Brother Mangrum traveled to Honduras some 65 times before he passed on. His work, as the representative of the Hermitage Church of Christ, among some 10 to 15 congregations, also left an indelible mark for good on the churches.

When the Waldron's arrived in Santa Rosa the little church in Barrio Calvario had an attendance of about 40 including

children. The main leader in that congregation over many years, despite the comings and goings of several preachers and evangelists, was a man by the name of Jorge Rosa. Jorge was a self-employed carpenter that also preached and evangelized almost as if he were a full time, paid evangelist. It was Jorge's service and leadership in the Calvario congregation that kept the work going. In the five years following the arrival of the Waldron family and the Mission UpReach team members that they recruited, the church grew to have more than 150 in attendance. The building where the little church was located was literally overflowing. Due to space concerns coupled with some other significant goals that Mission UpReach had, a team of 23 people came together in 2014 with the mission of planting a second congregation in the city of Santa Rosa.

That second congregation was established in September of 2014. To date the original congregation of Calvario, that has since been relocated to Colonia Mejia Garcia, has about 135 to 150 in attendance. The new congregation, since its inception, has enjoyed significant and rapid growth with an average attendance currently of 250 people. On some Sundays, there are as many as 300 in attendance with 100 of those being young, elementary school children. It has been an exciting and challenging time to manage such rapid growth. Most of the converts that have obeyed the Gospel in this new congregation are poor people, however several college graduates that would easily be recognized as "middle-class" have also been converted.

The rapid growth in the Barrio Belén



congregation seems to be due to several things that were done well from the outset. Some of those things are: 1) Good preaching and adult class teaching, 2) Excellent A Capella worship, 3) Excellent and well organized Sunday School ministry for children, 4) Quality youth ministry led by Jon and Stacy Stacy.

To date, the Barrio Belén congregation enjoys four elders, two deacons, and two full-time evangelists. The two evangelists are paid by the offering of the congregation and they do not receive any funds from the US to be able to work full time for the local church. We believe that this model of Biblical organization has contributed to the rapid growth in the Barrio Belén congregation.

The challenges ahead for this young congregation are numerous. The largest of which is the training and equipping of men and women, who are new Christians, to be the leaders and ministers that God wants them to be. This is where Mission UpReach partners so well with the Belén congregation. In fact, the entire mission and vision of Mission UpReach is to help every congregation to train its members to be vocational ministers as part of the priesthood of believers that the Bible talks about. More leaders trained equals more teams of people who can not only lead their local congregation but can also help establish new congregations as well.



## One family's story of transformation

In 2015, Donna Waldron traveled to the Los Angeles elementary school for a routine meeting with the director. While conversing with parents and teachers of the school, 6-year-old Edith Fernanda approached Donna and struck up a conversation. Donna invited her to come to the new church that had just been planted right down the street. For weeks Fernanda begged her parents, Mirian and Wilman, to go to this new Church so she could see her new "gringa friend". Being catholic, Fernanda's parents were hesitant to attend a different church but were persuaded by their daughter's persistence. They were surprised by what they found.

"I really loved the doctrine they taught, the fellowship, and just the overall atmosphere we experienced" says Mirian, "it was unlike any other church I had been to." Mirian immediately invited her family to come the following Sunday. Her sister Estela and aunt Consuelo were the first to take her up on the invitation. A few months

later, Estela and Consuelo were both baptized followed by Mirian and Wilman on July 26th, 2015. Eventually Mirian's mother Rosa also started attending along with her niece and nephew, Luz and Mauricio. Mirian's other sister, (the mother of Luz and Mauricio) goes to an evangelical church but her kids prefer the Church of Christ. Luz, age 14, even said that when she decides to get baptized it will be at the Church of Christ. Mirian started to get involved with the deaf ministry because she wanted to learn sign language to be able to communicate with her sister-in-law. She started learning the signs by following along during the worship service and participated in the classes offered by Matt Bridges.

This year, Mirian was offered a job



as an interpreter for the Deaf school. Wilman was also offered a job as a security guard for Mission UpReach. The two continue to share the good news of Jesus with their neighbors and family members. As of today, because of Fernanda's persistence and Donna's invitation, fourteen members of one family are now disciples of Christ.

## Expansion benefits both church and MUR

Mission UpReach, Inc. has an 8,000-square foot warehouse and parking area rented that contains classrooms and a basketball court. This building is used every day and most nights during the week because it also

serves as a place where the Barrio Belén church meets. The church and MUR share the expenses with MUR paying two-thirds of the cost and the church paying one-third

On Sundays, church is from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM and then Sunday School follows from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM. On Monday through Thursday, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM, there are children's basketball leagues, homework tutoring and children's chorus for groups of children that participate in our DESEO public school

values education program. On Monday through Friday evenings, MUR has a school for deaf adults that meets from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The church also has a mid-week Bible study and on Saturday evenings there are youth group meetings. Saturday mornings and afternoons the CRESCO program, which is a two-year Bible certificate program, meets in the building. We are proud of the almost constant use of this resource.

Thanks to the generosity of an MUR donor we now have been able to construct three double wide trailers for additional classroom space. This new space which has a total of 3,360 square feet will be used for our adult deaf school, Sunday school for the deaf, a counseling center, a youth group meeting area, and adult classrooms. We are really excited about this new tool that God has gifted us with through the generosity of one of our donors. This new space is going to make our training and equipping efforts much more efficacious in the future.



*The expansion is now near completion. This photo from early on in the construction process gives a good idea of the size of the space that is being added to assist in the work of the church and of Mission UpReach.*



# Baxter Institute and MUR collaborate on training

Selvin Monterroso is a native Guatemalan who is married to his wife Duña who is Honduran. He has two bachelor's degrees in theology. One from the Baxter Institute and the other from the Catholic Seminary in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. He also spent three years in Abilene, Texas where he received an M.A. in theology from Abilene Christian University. He presently serves as the Dean of the Baxter Institute.

Selvin has a superb knowledge of scripture and is somewhat demanding of his students which seems to make him a very effective in his dual roles of professor of Bible and a Dean of the school. Thanks to the President of Baxter, Steve Teel, once or twice a year Selvin is able to come to Santa

a group of five men, four of whom work for Mission UpReach as teachers and trainers and the fifth is a local evangelist that is supported by the Holland Park Church of Christ in Greenville, SC. These men are usually "worn out" when they finish the course with Selvin. They must read some 1000 pages before the one week intensive takes place and then spend a minimum of 40 hours during the week with Selvin teaching them much like an old-school Rabbi taught his disciples. And to follow up they are required to submit papers covering the content to Selvin for his review and grading.

Rosa and work with a small group of full time ministers that have a deep desire for ongoing education. These are non-accredited, graduate level studies. For the last couple of years, we have had

We appreciate President Teel and the Baxter Institute for giving us access to Selvin. The good he is doing here by challenging, teaching and inspiring our trainers, preachers and teachers is invaluable.



# Barrio Belén Church releases acapella music CD

The local Church in Barrio Belén has experienced tremendous growth over the last few years. An emphasis of that church has always been quality, acapella singing. While God doesn't call us to be perfect singers, nor is that a requirement for true worship of him, he does call us to give him our very best, which includes how we worship him in song.

To that end, the Church of Christ in Barrio Belén formed a praise team that helps guide the church in their singing. This month the first ever CD was released by that very same praise

team. In the US people grow up singing four-part harmony, but that is certainly not the case in Honduras.

Our hope is that this CD will help inspire a culture of four-part acapella singing, and be a dynamic contributor to the John 1010 generation. These CD's will be given out to our Boot Camp participants as well as members of the local church.



The CD is available for download at: <https://vocesdebelenv1.wixsite.com/vocesdebelenvolumen1>



## A note from Donna



It is always a pleasure to host each visiting mission team and this month we hosted a team from VCOM (Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine) in

Spartanburg, SC, a medical school that brings students and preceptors who serve and learn at the same time. This time they spent one day serving some of the members of the Barrio Belén church and the other days they served some villages located in Corquin, where the Bridges family is located.

This month I also had the privilege of speaking at the Snellville Church of Christ' annual ladies' retreat in North Georgia. It was a time of renewal and focus on God's unfailing love. I always enjoy being able to share from God's word and remind others that He will not abandon us or fail us, even during life's greatest challenges. Our family has certainly learned that this past year and 8 months and continue to



experience God's hand of mercy. The retreat trip allowed me to spend a few days in Brentwood, TN with Harrison and Hayley. He continues to show improvement as Hayley continues to be the ideal caregiver and support. Harrison's lack of complaining, his obvious determination and his constant pointing to hope in God bring me great joy, although the difficulty of his journey is still very painful for all of us.



## 2017 Brigades/Visiting Teams

February 11-18 .....	Tusculum CofC .....	Medical and Construction
February 25-March 4 ....	LA Tech Student Ministry...	Construction
March 11-18 .....	Southside CofC.....	Medical/VBS/Construction
April 8-15 .....	VCOM.....	Medical
May 27-June 3.....	North Atlanta CofC.....	Marriage Seminar/ Preacher Training
June 17-24 .....	Pinetree CofC.....	Medical/VBS/Construction
June 24-July 1.....	Burnt Hickory CofC.....	Medical/Construction
July 1-8 .....	Lexington CofC .....	Medical
July 8-15 .....	Disciple Trips .....	VBS/Construction
July 15-22 .....	Sunset CofC - Miami.....	VBS
July 15-22 .....	University CofC Youth .....	VBS
July 29-August 5.....	Belton CofC .....	Construction
<b>August 12-19th .....</b>	<b>Open Group .....</b>	<b>Construction</b>
<b>September 16-24th ....</b>	<b>Open Group .....</b>	<b>Construction</b>

## Mission UpReach Board Members

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## Other Giving

*Mission UpReach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We can assist you to designate MUR in a corporations' matching gifts program, or giving through a United Way campaign, or as you prepare wills for your estate.*

## Please contact us:

*Our mailing address is as follows:*

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**Longview, TX 75604**

*Please send all checks, donations and correspondence to this address.*

*You can correspond directly with Phil and Donna at:*

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