

# Mission UpReach Newsletter

## Why we do medical mission brigades

Over the years those of us here at Mission UpReach have read many articles, blogs and posts that present arguments both for and against short-term missions. Sometimes, from our perspective, it is surprising how many people in the US, who have little to no short-term missions experience, begin to write scathing criticisms of the very idea that a short term mission can be effective in helping both the missionaries on the ground and the many people that a mission brigade might serve during their time in-country.

We couldn't disagree more with those who suggest that short-term missions are a waste of resources. Obviously one must be a good steward with time, talent, money and other resources, but just because some short-term missions are not done well doesn't mean that all short-term missions are a waste of resources. Our purpose here is not to give a definitive word on the debate that is raging in the press and social media on this topic. What we would like to do is present why we here at Mission UpReach believe that short term medical missions are one good example of how things can be done in a way that God is honored, people are healed, and the church becomes the hands and feet of Christ in an area filled with the poor and oppressed.

When the community begins to see the Church in their neighborhood as being instrumental in bettering the community, it is then that their eyes are opened to who Jesus really is. Ask yourself this question about your own church; would the community around your church building mourn the loss if you had to shut your doors? A more appropriate question in some cases might be the following:



would they even notice?

Our perspective on short term missions and medical missions has been forged over many years of service through short term missions as well as from reading books and articles online like those published by the Christian Medical and Dental Associations ([cmda.org/missions](http://cmda.org/missions)). First and foremost, our methodology is grounded in good theology. Secondly, we approach things in a business-like manner believing that that is what the principles of good stewardship demand given that there are a lot of resources invested in realizing a one-week short-term mission.

If you will indulge us, we would like to share with you, here in this month's newsletter, a brief overview of our

theology that leads us to the conviction that we must be about short-term missions, especially medical short-term missions.

Somewhere over the past few years we read a quote that looked like the following: "Jesus of Nazareth was the Ultimate Healer because He had compassion equal to His power." Shortly after recruiting Peter, Jesus entered his home and encountered his mother-in-law sick with a fever and he healed her on the spot. Matthew, who was an eyewitness to these events, records that this was in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy where he said, "he himself took our infirmities, and bore our sickness". (Matt. 8:17) Later, Matthew records that

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## Word of the Month —HEAL

Dictionary.com states that one of the definitions of "heal" is "to free from evil; cleanse; purify; to heal the soul". We believe that this is a perfect definition of healing, especially the way Jesus practiced it. "His healing people's broken bodies was a visible and tangible down payment on what He will do at the Resurrection when time will end and Eternity will begin".



## ...why medical brigades? *CONTINUED*



a worldview that says, “you are not a biological accident but rather a cherished creation of the Heavenly Father”. This attitude cannot be swept under the rug. It “bubbles over” in various ways such as the touch and smile that a patient receives from the initial assessment to post surgery. It is evident from the prayers that are offered up on behalf of patients before, during and after the time that

Jesus, while seeking to mourn the loss of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:14), saw a huge crowd following him and instead of evading them to get some much-needed rest, “he was moved with compassion” and healed the sick among them.

Think of the many times that you have read the Gospels and encountered Jesus healing someone while preaching the Good News. Often, He touched them, probably to communicate His acceptance of them when those around them, even their families, wouldn’t touch them. He wasn’t afraid to take the risk when compassion demanded it and thus offended the religious teachers of His day. He even told a story about a man from the despised half-breed race of Samaritans making the Samaritan the “hero” of the story in place of a priest and a Levite. No doubt he was treading on the toes of some of his listeners in the moment. When a Christian works in medical missions, sharing the Gospel and practicing medicine, he or she is both participating in and reflecting this divine nature of our Lord much like Peter talks about in II Peter 1:4 (NIV).

When a team of short-term missionaries comes to western Honduras to work with Mission UpReach we see several things taking place: 1) The people that receive medical attention experience the care and attention of a physician and his or her assistants that reflects

they are in the clinic. It is especially evident in cases such as the one of a young man, Allan, who recently was told that he had testicular cancer. He was visibly comforted with the prayers that our team of evangelists offered up on his behalf while he was in the clinic. 2) Christian medical missions project a different view of time to those who are served. A Christian believes that life is not just for a few good years, and then is

over. Christians know that life is everlasting and that come what may in this life, God is with us; He will never abandon us. A Christian also believes that if a body is broken permanently, it will be made new in the day of the Second Coming, like John speaks about in I John 3:2 when he says, “we don’t yet know what we will be like but we do know that we will be like Him”.

Working in Latin America, especially Honduras, has been a joy for us here at Team Mission UpReach. One of the beautiful things about Hondurans is that almost everybody believes in Jesus. Believing in Him is not the struggle here. Obeying Him as Lord so that He transforms your life is the issue. It reminds us of the cultural context in which Jesus ministered during His time on this earth. Everyone knew the Lord but “their hearts were far from Him”. Based on our experience, medical missions are one of the most effective ways to break through this cloud of misunderstanding. What better way to preach the Gospel than to preach the Word while healing the bodies of the hearers.

## The concert heard “Around the World”

Last month, our Children’s Choir, led by Dakota Nowell and Brittany White, had their second musical performance. The concert, titled “Around the World”, showcased nine songs in six different languages. The kids had been preparing for months for this one night and all their hard work shined through. While it’s impressive enough that they memorized each song, the fact that the majority of the songs were sung in two-part harmony is an even bigger accomplishment. In Western Honduras, there isn’t a culture of singing, especially singing in parts. Immediately after the concert, the Children’s Choir began rehearsing for the Holiday

Musical that will take place in early December. We are excited for these children and proud to be able to give them the opportunity to develop their love for music.







# First Surgical Brigade a huge success

During the first week of October, Mission UpReach hosted its first ever surgical brigade in a small hospital in Gracias, Lempira, about 60 minutes outside of Santa Rosa de Copán. 14 medical professionals traveled from the US to Honduras to assist us in making our dreams and plans of the past four years come to fruition. This team completed 55 surgeries in just four and a half days. The hospital where the team worked normally completes about 20 surgeries per week and were grateful and amazed at our accomplishments. Without the hospital's collaboration and openness, as well as support staff, the week could not have been so successful. Mission UpReach seeks these types of partnerships as we reach out into our community to bring healing and help in the name of Jesus.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Kendle Yates (Brentwood, TN) who led the group and agreed to assist us as we reach for our dream of having numerous surgical teams per year. Most of his team are professionals from the Williamson County Hospital in Franklin, TN. We are grateful for the hospital's cooperation in allowing so many of their staff to be absent for an entire week to serve the poor and needy in Honduras. We are also grateful

to Rick Harper, CEO of Health Talents, Inc. for his assistance in helping us accurately assess our ability to proceed with our dreams and for introducing us to Dr. Yates. We look forward to continuing positive outcomes in the future.

As the surgical team focused on attending the medical needs of patients, Mission UpReach's team was praying with the patients before and after surgery, as well as praying with and being available to family members as they waited. Our team has since visited 45 of the 55 patients in their homes, some of them living 2-3 hours from Santa Rosa. Our desire is to communicate to the recipients that we care about both their physical and spiritual well-being. Some of the patients have been connected to a church in their community through our efforts. Others have a desire to study the Bible with someone, and we are joyfully fulfilling their requests. This is just another example of how as Christians we must respond to the physical needs of those around us in order to have an influence on their spiritual well-being.

Interested in knowing more about future surgical brigades? Contact Donna Waldron at [donna.w@missionupreach.org](mailto:donna.w@missionupreach.org).

## 55 lives impacted by Surgical Brigade

**While interviewing a few of the patients about their overall experience, each person highlighted the same thing: the excellent patient care they received. Even with the language barrier, the North American surgical team was able to make each patient feel valued and safe. Many lives were impacted for the better by the work of the surgical brigade; below are the stories of a select few.**



Maicol is 13 and lives with his older sister and three brothers in a crowded apartment complex in Gracias, Lempira. Weaving through a maze of clothes hung out to dry, we were invited into the one bedroom apartment. Like any average teenage boy, Maicol was sitting at the table playing a game on his sister's phone when we met him. Just three weeks earlier, Maicol had gotten his tonsils removed by our team. What is usually a minor surgery in the US, is much more complicated here, and the cost would be unaffordable for his family.

Thanks to the surgical brigade, Maicol can now continue life as a teenager without the constant fear of infection.

Fabiola, 12, who also had her tonsils removed, was worried when she found out she needed surgery. However, once she met with the doctors, she felt safe and could calm her nerves. Fabiola's mother told us how appreciative she was with the fact that we are a Christian Organization. She explained that there is a notable difference in the attention given by believers versus non-religious



organizations. Five days after the surgery, Fabiola vomited and re-opened the site where they had operated. They went to the hospital where the local doctors immediately treated her, and she is now doing great. In Honduras, surgeries such as Fabiola's go to the bottom of the list due to lack of resources and doctors. Fabiola had been waiting five months and had our team not come, she would have waited longer.

24-year-old Daily works in the administration for one of the health centers in Gracias, Lempira. She was going to the ER every 2-3 days due to the pain she experienced. Even though she was diagnosed with gallstones, she was put on the waiting list for non-life-threatening surgeries. Daily was told that she would have to wait at least four months until a spot opened. In constant pain and unable to eat, Daily was nervous about the future. When she got the call about a North American surgical brigade willing to perform her surgery, she was overjoyed with the thought of being able to return to her normal life. Daily repeated how impressed she was with the care she received from our team, stating, "Thank-you so much! It was a blessing to be operated on by North American hands. Here the surgery would have cost a lot of money that we did not have, but they did it without cost and with a lot of love"

We hope that alongside doctors and surgeons from the US, Mission UpReach can continue to impact the lives of Hondurans, not only healing their physical ailments, but also showing them the love that Jesus showed to everyone he touched.





## A note from Donna



Dreams and vision for the future are so important for our personal lives as well as our mission. The fulfillment of the vision to have surgical teams is another good example of how dreaming about something, accompanied by persistent hard work and investigation often leads to something great. Without dreams and visions, our lives are not being maximized to the fullest.

When we think about the many ways God has grown

this mission, we recognize that without vision, we would not be where we are. This does not mean that everything we have dreamed about or envisioned for Mission UpReach over the years has come to fruition. Some things have yet to come about and that's where we trust God and His great wisdom to guide us. Sometimes God, with great mercy and understanding, redirects our vision and efforts.

Phil and I often pray that God will not allow us to outrun His plans for the mission. What I mean by that is that we often step out on faith, without full funding or all the necessary resources, and then we trust God to give the increase. To date, God has always come through, but knowing our humanness and our ability to pursue what may be a good thing, but not in God's timing, we always wait and wonder and pray.

We invite you to pray for us and with us as we seek to know what He has in store for us. And, we would be honored if you would continue to partner with us financially as we faithfully march forth doing what we believe He has directed us to do.

## 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 .....	University CofC Youth .....	VBS
July 22-29 .....	University CofC Youth .....	Medical
July 29-August 5 .....	Belton CofC .....	Construction
<b>Sept. 30-Oct. 7th .....</b>	<b>Open Group .....</b>	<b>Surgical Brigade</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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*Please send all checks, donations and correspondence to this address.*

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

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