

Mission UpReach Newsletter

Reflecting on 2017 from MUR's perspective

In Donna's column, "A Note from Donna" she refers to the unrest that is presently taking place. The nuances of this situation are complex and multilayered. However, the source of contention between the National Party and the Alliance Party is that the incumbent president has traditionally been limited to one term of four years by the Honduran Constitution. Our current president, Juan Orlando Hernández, early in his term astutely appointed Supreme Court justices that favored eliminating the one term limit. Subsequently during his administration, a new law was passed and approved by the Supreme Court allowing him to run for a second term.

The election ballots have taken a very long time to count reminiscent of the 2004 election contest between George W. Bush and Al Gore. If you remember everything hung on the recount in Florida and at the end Bush was declared the winner with something like only 500 votes more than Gore. Mr. Gore did not concede until it was absolutely clear that he had lost. To his credit

Mr. Gore did concede thus allowing a peaceful transition of power from one administration to another which has been our tradition since the "Revolution of 1800", as Jefferson called it, when it occurred for the first time in our nation's history.

The situation here in Honduras is that the margin by which the incumbent has won is only 50,000 votes out of 3,000,000 votes that were cast. The losing candidate refuses to concede and sites the Honduran constitution that states that the president is limited to one term and that the only way that provision can be changed is by a public referendum. Hence, the unrest and dissention.

The current situation serves to telegraph to the rest of the world a modicum of truth about what life is like for the average Honduran. It is in most cases a hard life without many of the opportunities and resources that we in the United States often take for granted. The average wage earned in our region of western Honduras is less than \$2.00 USD per day. And it is not really that

much cheaper to live here than in the United States. For instance, we pay more for gasoline, more for electricity, more for car parts, more for many imported food items. Cement cost more per bag here than in the US and rebar (the steel that goes into concrete when you are building structures out of brick, block and concrete) costs more because it is all imported. About the only thing that is really cheaper here than in the US economy is labor which when adjusted for lack of mechanization is about 30% to 50% of what it is in the US. These two realities help to create a hardworking, very poor class of people which the majority of Hondurans fall into.

These realities are some of things that we contend with while laboring alongside of our Honduran team mates. The people we minister too are poor as well. In spite of these and other challenges though this year has been an unqualified success in our minds.

This year, for instance, we opened a school for the deaf. When we began the year we didn't even have one cent of financial support but by the end of July the year was fully funded. I wish you could have been there at the graduation of 9 adults who had successfully completed the first grade. Before they began the first grade with us they could not read or write and didn't know how to add or subtract. Many of them didn't even know sign language having only communicated with their family members and friends via signs that resembled a game of charades more than sign language.

We saw other areas of success as well. This year we opened two satellite schools for our two year Bible training program which we call CRESCO. One of those

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Abbie Wilson works with our school for the deaf, opened this year.





2017 in Review... *CONTINUED*



MUR's CREO program continues to provide strong leaders for our church plants.

was a school in El Salvador meaning that we have extended our program internationally in addition to expanding in our theatre of operations in western Honduras. It appears that next year, 2018, we will have two satellite schools in EL Salvador and one in Guatemala in addition to the main campus in Santa Rosa de Copán and another in the Department of La Paz, Honduras. This program is the main "vehicle" whereby we plan to train new teams of church leaders that can plant new churches that are self-directed, self-replicating and self-sustaining. To achieve our dream of planting 1010 churches in the next twenty years we need to graduate something like 4,000 to 5,000 men and women from this program. To date we have helped plant 23 self-directed, self-replicating, self-sustaining churches. In 2018 we believe we will see at least one more of these churches planted in the town of Corquin which is about an hour away from Santa Rosa where Mission UpReach is located.

This year too, after working and dreaming for 8 years, we were successful in getting our water well drilling rig and the accompanying equipment here

from the US. We were also successful in recruiting Jason Simpson, who in my opinion is a mechanical genius, to bring his family to live and work in Santa Rosa so that we could get our water well drilling ministry up and running. As of the writing of this newsletter Jason is drilling our first water well out at our Moses Project. Having the equipment and qualified personnel like Jason to run it and train our Honduran employees in how to drill water wells is an incredible

accomplishment.

I could go on and on about the many things that we have seen God bless our ministry with during 2017 but the space here just won't allow it. I do however want to tell you about the incredible strides in progress that our Moses Project has made. If you will remember the Moses Project is a residential program for young men from 12 to 19 years old. These young men come from poor families in the region that do not have the resources to allow their sons to continue their education beyond the 6th grade. We presently have 46 boys in the program. This year we made a change in Directors of the project. Jon Stacy, a fellow missionary who has been with us since 2011, accepted the position of Director of the Moses Project. We also moved one of our evangelist and his wife in to an apartment that we have in the dormitory. The combination of Jon's leadership and Juan Carlos de los Santos spiritual mentoring for the boys has been

impressive. Almost immediately we saw 7 boys make Jesus their Lord and were baptized. These boys are future church planters in our vision because when they go back to their villages with a formal education and Biblical and spiritual training they will be equipped to start a house church in their home towns.

The Moses Project to date is developing 66 acres of coffee along with 8 growing ponds filled with Tilapia. In addition, this year we received a grant that has allowed us to begin construction on a 60,000 broiler chicken operation. All of these agri-businesses serve to train our young men in the latest agricultural business opportunities. In addition, by 2020 we believe that these businesses will supply enough income to support the full cost of the running the Moses Project. It is not often that we as missionaries can start a program and see it become self-funding but in this case the Moses Project is well on its way to becoming a sustainable ministry from the sale of coffee, chickens and Tilapia.

Please keep Mission UpReach and our team members in your prayers. And pray for Honduras. Pray that their will be peace in the land and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will permeate the hearts of thousands who are living lives without hope of something better.



The Moses Project's growth in 2017 has been a real highlight of our year.

Spotlight on 2017 accomplishments

Brigades

This year, thanks to the 325 short term mission team participants we were able to touch more people than ever before. 6500 people in remote villages benefited from general medical consults and free medications, vision checks and dental care, thanks to medical brigades. 3000 school age children were taught about Jesus through our VBS brigades. Those same teams served over 600 bowls of hot homemade chicken soup at the local hospital. And, numerous teams helped us advance the construction of group cabins at the Moses Project, along with other important projects on our working farm.



A highlight for us this year was hosting our first ever surgical brigade where 55 surgeries were performed. We hope this is the beginning of a new outreach into our community, providing much need surgeries for people who might otherwise never receive what they desperately need. We already have 2 surgical brigades scheduled for 2018.

Celebrate with us these great works done in the name of Jesus, advancing the Kingdom here in a country that so desperately needs the hope that only God can bring.

Church Planting

How can an entire generation be transformed? In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul writes, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come". Here at Mission UpReach, we firmly believe that true transformation only comes through a decision to place Christ as Lord and Master in one's life. God's established tool for bringing others into a relationship with him is the Church: a body of believers united in their service to God. Everything that Mission UpReach does is focused on planting churches and training leaders.

Towards that goal, MUR is doing a wide range of activities. The DESEO program, Moses Project, and Summer Brigade program often get large amounts of attention from our

supporters in the States, while the Church Planting team is sometimes overlooked. However, the Church Planting team is at the center of the goals and vision of Mission UpReach. Each year, the team



tirelessly strives to spread the kingdom of God just as Christ.

In 2017, the Church Planting team accomplished some incredible things. Over the course of the year, the team hosted 8, one-week CREO bootcamps, totaling 217 participants, with 48 of those participating for the first time. At this year's graduation, 19 individuals were recognized and completed the program. The mini-bootcamps continue, and this year 7 people graduated. The CRESCO program continues to grow and expand, with 12 people completing the program this year and a satellite school opening in El Salvador.

Two of the Church Planting team members (both of whom are CREO and CRESCO graduates) will be going to Baxter Institute in Tegucigalpa to further their training. Their journey exemplifies what the Church Planting team, and MUR, values, and that is biblical knowledge with an end of teaching others about Christ. The full impact of the Church Planting team cannot be quantified, but a generation is being transformed and they are leading the way.

DESEO

2017 has been another successful year for DESEO. With over 2500 kids in 15 different schools, our DESEO team was able to teach lessons on morals and values from a faith-



based perspective. During our three after-school programs, we were able to reach almost 200 kids who were involved in either basketball, tutoring, or choir. This year was the first year that we implemented a children's choir into the DESEO outreach and it went better than we could have imagined. With the first two concerts under their belts, the kids were invited to participate in a holiday musical titled, "The Best Christmas Ever".

This was also the first year for ESPERO, our school for the Deaf. Deaf in Honduras do not have the same opportunities as they do in the US. Until now, there has been no way for a deaf Honduran to receive even an elementary education. However, this year with ESPERO, nine adult students graduated from the first grade. We are so blessed to have a talented group of people working together to change an entire generation. The plans for 2018 are to add another group of first graders and the graduated first graders will complete the second and third grade this next year.

DESEO was created because of the realization that we needed to start upstream in order to address the problems we see every day. What DESEO has since become makes us even more excited for the future of this program.



A note from Donna



As I write this note, we are experiencing unrest due to the strongly contested Presidential Election on November 26th. A clear winner has yet to be announced and there has been a great deal of frustration demonstrated by the Honduran people. Sadly, looting and destruction have taken place in both Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. We have been

under a curfew each evening that starts at 6 pm and end at 6 am. This has actually helped to ease some of the tensions.

All of us here at Mission UpReach are waiting, hoping and praying for a peaceful solution to the conflict. The real losers in times like these are the common folks, the ones who have to work for their daily bread. Our prayer is that the uncertainty and fear that many are experiencing will open doors to the only real source of security, Jesus Christ. Please pray for us as we stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Honduras that we may be instruments of peace in times of turmoil.

We hope this newsletter serves to remind you of how God has been working, answering your prayers and using your donations to further His Kingdom in Honduras. We thank you for being our partners and ask that you continue to give and pray so that the good works that have begun can continue.

2018 Brigades/Visiting Teams

Feb. 24 - March 3	Tusculum C of C	Medical
March 10-17	Southside C of C	Medical
March 10-17	Pine Tree C of C youth	VBS/Construction
March 10-17	Winnsboro C of C youth	VBS/Construction
April 7-14	Surgical Team	Surgery
June 2-9	N. Atlanta C of C	Training
June 9-16	Lexington C of C	Medical
June 23-30	Pine Tree C of C	Medical/VBS/Construction
June 30 - July 7	Snellville C of C	VBS
July 7-14	Burnt Hickory C of C	Medical//Construction
July 14-21	University C of C	Medical
September 1-8	Surgical Team	Surgery

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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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