

# Mission UpReach Newsletter

## Culture change takes time *by Phil Waldron*

In some ways ten years have gone by quickly. That's how many years it has been since the paperwork that brought Mission UpReach into existence was first signed. The intervening span of years has seen some triumphs as well as some successes, but they have also presented some very difficult circumstances. Through it all we have learned some things that we believe are important to our long-term success in fulfilling the mission that God has placed us here to pursue. As we reflect on our triumphs and our set-backs it now seems as if we have been in one continuous learning mode. Over the course of the next year we would like to share these lessons or "points of learning" that have now become foundational values in the world view of Mission UpReach.

The first point of learning we would like to share is: **Cultural change takes time**. Change in organizational culture takes 10 years, say the experts, but a country's change in culture takes 20 years. In recent times, the nation of Colombia, that was decimated by the drug wars; Bosnia, that not too many years ago had a destroyed economy and ethnic strife; and Poland's recovery in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union, are all examples of how good leadership in a single generation can transform a society. Just like those countries were changed in a single generation, Mission UpReach (MUR) is seeking a systemic change in the society of Western Honduras, and the surrounding area, in a single generation spanning 20 years. Our vision and mission is to foment; significant, measurable, cultural change in the next 20 years. The change that we seek in Western Honduras and the surrounding region is one that is inspired and led by a



revival fueled by a church planting movement that sees 1010 new churches planted during the next two decades. We call our vision The John1010 Generation.

The John 1010 Generation, for us, represents the abundant life that Jesus came to give to all of those who make Him Lord. Of course, we know as Christians, that real, transformational change that moves a person from a self-seeking human, to an "others" focused person who "loves God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength and also loves his neighbor as himself" can only be brought about by the Holy Spirit. We believe that mature, dedicated Christians are the best citizens, the best business people, the best teachers, etc.

And we believe it is fairly intuitive that before a community or a nation can change there has to be change that first takes place in numbers of individuals within that community. This kind of change cannot be "driven" from outside. It has to originate via a grass roots movement. A grass roots

movement that is an "overnight success" is often years in the making before it has enough momentum to become a "movement." Our mission at MUR is to train and equip at least 4,000 to 5,000 people in the next 20 years. We often joke about someone in the future, after we spend the next twenty years training and discipling these 5,000 people, saying, "How did this overnight, grassroots revival come about?"

The most basic level of training we focus on is one that leads to someone becoming a Christian who truly has Jesus as Lord of his or her life. The successive levels of training that follow are ones that focus on developing or discipling a Christian to the point where he or she is capable of converting and training others to convert others. Sounds somewhat like what we can read about in the book of Acts, doesn't it?

Some people think we are dreamers...with our heads in the clouds. Some people think we are just impractical. **What do you think?**



One look at popular culture and it is blindingly clear that Summer Camp is an integral part of American society. The quintessential Summer Camp experience has been documented in books, movies, television shows and songs for years, and it is a result of the wide-scale participation in said summer camps. For many Christians, their childhood and young-adult memories are riddled with fond Bible Camp experiences. Like every Summer Camp, Bible Camps are also hugely popular, and have been for many years. However, unlike normal summer camps, Bible camps offer more than simply a retreat experience, they offer an opportunity for spiritual awakening and development. Christian camps represent an experience and environment where young Christians truly grow in their faith.

In his doctoral thesis, *A Theological Playground: Christian Summer Camp in Theological Perspective*, Jacob Sorenson states in summary of his research, “The data clearly show that camps should be taken seriously as places of Christian education” (pg. 184). The question then is, does the effectiveness of Christian Camp translate across cultures?

Here in Santa Rosa de Copán we have made outreach to children a priority. Our DESEO team has an incredible responsibility and opportunity in that they are a daily influence and example

## Kid’s Camp: A Honduran Christian camp experience

for young kids in the public school system. The DESEO program continues to grow because we can actively see the positive impact it is having in transforming a young generation.

To that same end, kid’s camp in Honduras was started. We just finished up the fourth year of kid’s camp, and its impact and effectiveness continue to encourage us. We know that kid’s camp here is just as effective and powerful as it is in the U.S. for two reasons. First, we can clearly see the fun the kids who participate have and the joy it brings them.

This is highlighted by the reaction Darwin, a young Honduran who came to camp for the first time, had on the last night of camp. After watching a slideshow of photos of the week Darwin exclaimed, “Can’t we just have one more day of camp”. His exclamation was quickly echoed and supported by those around him who felt the same way.

Secondly, the spiritual growth that the kids experience during their week at camp is undeniable. Based

on the example of Camp Deer Run in Winnsboro, TX, our kid’s camp staff are primarily young adults. This is based on the ideology that the people in front of and teaching the kids should be individuals whom they can feel connected to and who they will want to be like. Over the course of the week the kids receive lessons and examples from young adults who they have come to admire and look-up to, which is extremely effective and powerful.

This year we expanded kid’s camp to two different sessions over the course of two weeks. In this way, we were able to offer camp to more kids and a broader age group. The future of kid’s camp in Honduras is bright, and its impact on the next generation will only grow and become more evident as time passes.

### Reference

*Sorenson, Jacob, “A Theological Playground: Christian Summer Camp in Theological Perspective” (2016). Doctor of Philosophy Theses. Paper 4.*

## ESPERO prepares for new school year

The academic year for public schools in Honduras is February till November. Our school year for ESPERO will kick off on February 5th with a new group of first graders as well as our graduated class of first graders. The graduated first graders will cover both the 2nd and 3rd grade curriculum this year. As we predicted, after a year of success with our deaf school, we are suddenly bombarded with deaf adults who are interested in coming to our school. Part of what we are doing this month is visiting those families and assessing the interest level of potential new students. We look forward to sharing with you next month pictures of our new students as well as our old ones as they begin their school year. Last year we began this school on faith,

with no funding. God proved himself faithful as He has many times and the school was funded by mid-year. This year is not different. Would you consider partnering with us so that we can continue to educate the deaf in western Honduras?





## Moses Project finishes 3rd recruiting week

The Moses Project is a 120-acre farm where we are developing future leaders of Honduras. We believe that what leaves here will transform the world. For 32 boys, 2018 will be the continuation of that dream and vision. For 15 new boys, 2018 will be the beginning of a life-changing journey. We have just finished up our 3rd recruiting week since taking ownership of the Project in January of 2016. This week we hosted 29 young boys from ages 11 to 15 who represent more than 12 communities in western Honduras.

The boys participated in daily devotionals and Bible studies, workshops presented by specialists in coffee, honey bees, and tilapia, as well as working in the coffee fields and different areas of the farm. They were evaluated on their attitude, aptitude, work ethic, interest in learning, and their ability to get along with their other classmates. On Thursday night we spent over 2 hours deliberating, analyzing, and most importantly, praying about who would be accepted into the program. Ninrod, Lester, Gerson, Milton, Carlos, Elvin, Olvin, Gerardo, Marlon, Antony, Cristian, Francisco, Maynor, Darwin, and David are the 15 new members of the Moses Project. These boys represent 12 different communities

and 12 potential new churches that have yet to be planted. The goal of the Moses Project is multifaceted. One part of the program is providing vocational training that will allow the boys to develop skills to obtain gainful employment. A second part is facilitating the boys' completion of their formal secondary education and high school education. Another part is to "...train them up in the instruction and discipline of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4b). These three parts come together to form a young man equipped to confront what life has to throw at him.

That is why we believe that what leaves here will transform the world. The boys that enter the program leave as men, ready to be leaders that this society so desperately needs and cries out for: civilly, economically and more importantly, spiritually. The boys come from families that do not have the economic resources needed to maintain their sons in school. The future that awaits many of them is life of physical labor and under-employment that leads to a repetition of the same viscous cycle. Darwin is one such boy. Darwin's dad was murdered this past year, which obviously left his mother to bear the burden of not only raising him but also being thrust into the role as the sole



bread winner in the house. The tears that welled up in Darwin's eyes as his name was called spoke volumes to me (to all of us in the room that night) about the hope that this Project gives to families like Darwin's.

The need is great, and it seems like we are emptying the ocean with an eyedropper, but every drop is worth it. A million times over, worth it. We ask that you continue to keep us in your prayers as we disciple and help shape these young boys into men.

## 2 Church planters head to Baxter Institute

Members of the Mission UpReach Team leaving isn't normally cause for celebration, but in the case of Jormar Ramos and Richar Garcia, it is just that: a celebration. Obviously, it is bittersweet that we are losing two exceptional members of the Church Planting Team, but it is where they are headed that makes this situation positive. Both young men are headed to Tegucigalpa to study in the four-year theology school, The Baxter Institute.

The journeys of both Jormar and Richar are amazing and are a testament to the success of the leadership training efforts that MUR is undertaking. Both men began studying in the CREO

program, Mission UpReach's boot camp leadership training program, and later joined the very same team that taught them. Both men have been a part of the Church Planting team for around two and a half years. Jormar spent much of his time teaching in the CREO program, while Richar divided his time between teaching in CREO and CRESO, the advanced two-year Bible program. Both Jormar and Richar have made incredible growth in their own spiritual walks, and in the process have had an impact on the faith of countless. Both men are about to undertake another huge step in their own spiritual development.

Our hope is that Jormar and Richar

will return to Santa Rosa after graduating from Baxter to use their furthered education to help us in our work. However, wherever Richar and Jormar end up, we are confident they will be serving God and striving to grow the kingdom, as they have done tirelessly in their time with us. Join us in celebrating the accomplishments and future of both Richar and Jormar, and please lift them up in your prayers. We dream of a future when there will be countless numbers of men and women just like Jormar and Richar who take personal the responsibility for teaching and spreading the love of Christ.



## A note from Donna



As of this writing, things continue to be peaceful here in Honduras. We are just days away from the inauguration

of the incumbent President. There have been many rumors of potential unrest and based on the chaos we experienced in December, we are all a bit wary. The civil unrest has been concentrated in the two of the large cities, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, both several hours from Santa Rosa de Copán. Other than the tension of the unknown, we have pretty much continued our daily lives as normal. Many of you have expressed your

concerns and offered prayers for us, our team, and this country.

We are grateful to you and ask that you continue to pray. I would like to share some thoughts from Phil that he recently shared with a friend and supporter:

*Honduras needs prayer warriors that are laboring in prayer for her to come out of a system of darkness, oppression and poverty that began years ago. The current situation is just one more in a decades long struggle of political demagogues who use national emotions for their own egotistical purposes. Honduras' problems did not begin with this current struggle. Our mission is to raise up a generation of young leaders who have been transformed by having come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as their teacher and master. If we do not succeed in lighting the fire of a spiritual revival in this next generation my fear is that the darkness, oppression and poverty that currently afflicts the more than eight million people of Honduras will continue or worsen.*

Please labor with us in prayer as we continue to work towards our goal of raising up a transformed generation.

## 2018 Brigades/Visiting Teams

TBD .....	Tusculum C of C .....	Medical
March 10-17.....	Southside C of C.....	Medical
March 10-17.....	Pine Tree C of C youth.....	VBS/Construction
April 7-14 .....	Surgical Team .....	Surgery
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

## 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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