

Mission UpReach Newsletter

Another humanitarian immigrant crisis on the southern border

By Phil Waldron

As of this writing, more than 9,000 immigrants have just forced their way through the southern border of Guatemala headed towards the US southern border. They are making comments on camera to Newscasters that, “they have heard that President Joe Biden will put them on a 100-day path towards citizenship.” They are also vocalizing, in their own words, “that he should fulfill his campaign promise and let them in the country so that they can have a better life than the one that they have at home in Honduras.”

These are just the first of many, many more that will be coming in the near future due to their understanding of the rhetoric they have heard throughout the latest Presidential campaign. Clearly, our newly elected President did not intend to stimulate a tidal-wave of illegal immigration of Hondurans headed for the US. However, it is a natural outcome of the austere economic conditions that the average Honduran faces combined with a Biden-Harris campaign platform of being more accommodating towards immigration.

The prospect that one can leave his or her life in Honduras, with its ubiquitous lack of gainful employment, and come to the US where someone can earn \$15 per hour or more has an intoxicating effect on the Honduran population. The impact is similar to the effect that the discovery of gold in California had in 1848 in our own country. In January of that year gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill, California and in the following wave of migration more than 300,000 people came to look for gold. In 1848 the overall population of the United States was 17,000,000 which means, that about 1.8% of population uprooted itself and moved to California.



Today’s population of the United States is 328,000,000. Today, a 1.8% migration of the population moving to California would be equivalent to almost 6,000,000 people moving from the East to the Pacific Coast.

I mention these facts to impress upon you the power and attraction that a “gold rush” has on the human psyche. This dream of a better life compelling immigrants

to come to the US illegally is nothing new as is evidenced by the fact that there are more than 1,000,000 Hondurans already in the US. This is 12.5% of the entire population of Honduras. The allure of a better life free from the problems of hunger, poverty and deprivation are incredible motivators that compel people to take huge risks. Unfortunately, there is much misinformation that is being touted in the US news that does not take into account the panorama of causes and effects that surround this phenomenon. So many of the comments that I read are super reductionistic and miss the weightier concerns that lie underneath the surface. And then there are those, on both sides of the political aisle, who simply see this as a means to build power among their supporters.

If we ever hope to be able to support an immigration policy that truly helps our own population as well as those who deserve the opportunity to come and live here, we first have to seek to understand a wide variety of underlying causes that are driving this headlong and desperate attempt by people to immigrate. To some, the issue is one of the US being true to its values expressed in the poem memorialized

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MUR Employee Spotlight

For 2021, we have decided to spotlight a different Mission UpReach employee each month. Currently there are 125 employees, so unfortunately you will only get to meet 12 of them this year. Our goal is to give you a look at the various roles individuals play in the day-to-day operations of Mission UpReach.

This month's employee spotlight is on **Ever Alexander Sánchez Caballero**. Ever was born and raised in Santa Rosa de Copán. In High School he studied accounting. Ever has a wife, Clarissa, and a six year old son, Ever.



Ever came to work for Mission UpReach in 2014 and started as one of our guards. Ever says this opportunity came to him at just the right time because he was unemployed, and his son had just been born. Ever has proven to have a strong work ethic and is very talented. This has resulted in several upward moves within the Mission resulting in his current position as our mechanic shop supervisor. Ever keeps

all of our mission vehicles running safely, coordinates all mission-wide transportation, supervises security, and manages the very complicated coordination of our

short-term mission group transportation. Ever is known for his "get it done" attitude. No matter the challenge his answer is always, "of course, we will make that happen!" About his work with Mission UpReach Ever says, "I feel so fortunate and blessed to be a part of the great Mission UpReach family. I pray that God will continue to open doors of opportunity for MUR so that we can continue the good work of blessing many families, just as mine has been blessed." We at Mission UpReach know that our work cannot go on without dedicated, hard-working, God-passionate individuals like Ever.



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on the Statue of Liberty. You know the one that I mean, it is called the "New Colossus" and reads like this:

THE NEW COLOSSUS

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Emma Lazarus - November 2, 1883

The ideals expressed by Emma Lazarus in this poem are an expression of the American ideals that compelled our country into greatness. Although our country is not perfect and never has been, one of the reasons that she is the greatest nation in the history of mankind is that, albeit haltingly and imperfectly, she eventually championed these ideals in very real and practical ways.

In the next couple of months we will be exploring different facets of this humanitarian crisis in order to seek a better understanding of key drivers that compel people to risk everything in a gambit to have a better life. Secondly, we will look at what might address the issues that become drivers behind illegal immigration. Our worldview is Christ-centric, and we believe that ultimately a personal and saving relationship with Jesus of Nazareth as Lord is THE ANSWER. So, any suggestions that we have of what could be done to truly help Hondurans live better lives will always begin with that focus. Please be praying for Honduras. The COVID19 pandemic and two hurricanes back-to-back have only exacerbated an already difficult situation.

Why we contribute

By H Kendle Yates, MD

Take a look anywhere, everywhere. The world is filled with people in need. Thankfully, there are good-hearted people who respond with mercy and love. Many faith-based organizations have arisen with great intentions. However, unknowingly many of these organizations end up harming the very people they serve by creating dependency through quick handouts instead of making labor-intensive, long-term investments that are necessary for true long-term success. Despite nobly meeting many physical needs, humanitarian-only organizations neglect the core person – the spiritual self. People of faith know that when the soul is overlooked, poor life choices often ensue leading to a life filled with unhealthy results.

Mission UpReach's philosophy is different. Its primary goal is to profoundly and permanently change lives through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It does this by developing long-term relationships while addressing the physical and spiritual needs of the people it serves. Rather than having Americans lead and locals follow, Mission UpReach is all about providing education and vocational training to the people it serves. Consequently, local Hondurans have become their own leaders in education, agriculture, and business. This is especially true in spiritual matters which has resulted in many self-led, self-sustaining, self-replicating churches.

This empowerment of local people should sound familiar as it is what Jesus modeled during his ministry. Jesus educated and prepared his disciples to be effective even after his departure (with the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit). Mission UpReach similarly prepares local Hondurans to be effective in their communities even after (and especially after) their training with Mission UpReach is completed. With the continued Spirit's guidance, these "graduates" have gone on to improve their communities and further God's kingdom.

Why do we contribute to Mission UpReach? The answer is simple. We believe Mission UpReach approaches ministry

the same way Jesus did. Its emphasis on local empowerment instead of dependency, its

patience for time consuming education instead of quick fixes, its wide breadth of ministries rather than narrowly focused works are reflections of Jesus' own ministry. Additionally, well before it became politically correct, Jesus' ministry was inclusive. Whether it is a ministry outreach to women, to children, to the abused, to the deaf, to the sick, to the poor... Mission UpReach is inclusive and places value on the "least of these" ...just like Jesus did.

Contributions to Mission UpReach are not limited to finances. Giving of one's time and effort are also important ways to help. For the past few years (except for the pandemic year of 2020), I have recruited surgical mission teams for Mission UpReach. A surgical trip is a great way to give and share the love that Christ has for all of us. Most of the busy surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and techs that have come on these trips are new to medical mission work. Nevertheless, many of them have come back for repeat surgical mission trips. It is truly wonderful to see the hand of God through the hands of medical volunteers.

I hope these words help you understand the truly effective nature of Mission UpReach's work. With that in mind, allow me to encourage you to give generously and not just out of your pocket but also out of your calendar. I encourage you to join one of the many mission teams that come down throughout the year to see firsthand the numerous lives that are being touched, the local skills that are being improved, and the priceless souls that are being saved. On a personal note, if you have surgical skills, I invite you to join us on one of our surgical missions. Whatever your contribution may be, know that it will grow the potential of individuals, the welfare of communities, and the outreach of the God's Kingdom in western Honduras.



Dedicate your birthday!

This year of 2021, MUR wants to equip, motivate and empower our supporters to further the mission of MUR through fundraising on our behalf. If you have ever felt like you wanted to DO more, but didn't have the financial means to GIVE more, Facebook Birthday Fundraisers are a great opportunity!

Just follow these easy steps:

- 1 - **On your Facebook** account homepage, Click "Fundraisers" in the column to the left. (You may have to click the "See More" option.)
- 2 - **Search Mission UpReach** as the nonprofit you want to support.
- 3 - **Set your fundraising goal** and time-frame. We've seen many successful fundraisers at \$200 or even \$500 or more! Set something that

you feel good about and see where it goes! You can always raise the amount if you particularly like to challenge your friends.

- 4 - **Invite people on your friends' list** and engage with them! This is key. Invite, invite, invite! Share often on your timeline: remember that not everyone will see something when you post just once. While some people may be hesitant to invite people on their friends list, remember you're giving them an opportunity to participate in something large and global. No problem if they are unable or unwilling to participate at this time - you've at least extended an invitation.
- 5 - **Thank people as they donate** and watch numbers go up! These people are donating to MUR because of YOU - because they love you, and they appreciate you (and we do, too)!



A note from Donna



As soon as we sent our last newsletter sharing that we would return to Honduras on February 5th, we got a fortunate call from one of our partners (Dean Sutphin with the Edward Via School of Osteopathic Medicine-VCOM) offering Phil and I the Covid vaccine. We had resolved that we would not have that opportunity until later

in the year, so we would just return to Honduras without it. However, when then this door opened, and we gladly accepted. Since we were given the Moderna vaccine, it was necessary to wait 28 days for the second dose. Unless things change between the writing of this article and your receipt of it, our new departure date is February 18th. We are happy to be returning with some level of protection and are grateful to VCOM for their kind consideration.

In my personal devotional time today, I spent my focus on thanking God for giving me the opportunity to serve in His Kingdom on a daily basis through immediate and long-term assistance to those in need. Our team fights daily to move us toward a level of sustainability while giving opportunities for growth and livelihood to those who live in a country with so little hope. With this in mind, I would like to add a personal note to Phil's article regarding immigration. I am personally frustrated at how illegal immigrants have been and continue to be exploited by both sides of the political spectrum in the U.S. While the solutions are complicated and would require tremendous investment and collaboration from all parties, there are solutions. But there are so many false narratives that are simply accepted because they are presented by the specific political party one follows. We are surely able, as Christians, to educate ourselves to the reality of the situation and stop participating in the exploitation of vulnerable people. I suspect illegal immigration will continue to be exploited for years to come, for at least as long as it serves political purposes. I would invite you to join us in doing our part in Honduras to create opportunities for employment while sharing the hope of the Good News of Jesus.

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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.



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Please contact us:

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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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