

Mission UpReach Newsletter

Immigration crisis (Part Three)

By: Phil Waldron

Kay C James, founder and President of The Gloucester Institute, a leadership training center for young African Americans, wrote the following on March 17th, 2021:

“Recent open-borders immigration policy and talk of potential amnesty has predictably resulted in a dramatic rise in unaccompanied children risking their lives to enter the United States across our southern border. Parents are paying murderous drug cartels thousands of dollars to smuggle their children across the border. We’ve also seen children being ‘rented’ and ‘recycled’ across the border several times to help adult males gain easier entry into the U.S. by claiming that the children are their own.”

In our previous two articles on this theme, we cited other experts and sources that corroborate what Ms. James says here. In fact, at the end of Part Two we asked you to be thinking about two questions, “1) Why do you think that the 545 children that President Joe Biden talked about during the final Presidential debate were not reunited with their parents at the border? And 2) Is the illegal immigrant’s desire for a ‘better life’ enough of a reason to justify that the US open its borders to any and all comers?”

Question number 1 is less of a qualitative question than a straight-forward question of logic. The question begs... if your child was on the border in a detention center, wouldn’t you do everything in your power to find them and recover them? And another question along the same line is... if there were 545 children belonging to US parents that were being held in detention centers on the border of Guatemala and Honduras, wouldn’t the US Government do everything in their power to get those children home? Where are their parents? Where is the Honduran government or the government of El Salvador? Why aren’t they clamoring for those children to be returned to them? I am sure that the

answer is not simple, but one likely reason could be that those children were used as “passports” to gain entrance into the country by someone who is not their parent.

Our second question was, “Is it worth it to have a better life?” This can best be answered by the following “real-life” story. A beautiful young woman that we know is presently in the States illegally. Back during the days of “catch and release,” she heard that all one had to do was show up at

the border with a minor child and they could gain entrance into the country. She quit her job, borrowed \$7,500 USD from her in-laws and paid a coyote to drive her to the Texas border. In less than one week’s time, she was in Atlanta, Georgia. It has now been a couple of years since she left. She told her parents the other day on the phone that everything that everyone says about a “better life” in the US is a lie. She said she is currently working 60 hours per week and that she spends all of her money on food for herself and her little girl. “Food and rent costs are so high,” she said, “that there

is little to nothing left over.”

What do you think after hearing her story? Is it worth it to leave your family and your home and risk being raped or kidnapped along the way (which is a common occurrence for single women on the trek north) only to arrive in the US and have to live with the fear of deportation? And then on top of that having to work 60 hours per week just to provide food, clothing and shelter for you and your child? This young lady told her mom and dad that it isn’t worth it in the least.

At Mission UpReach we are striving to provide opportunities for employment as well as urging people to let go of the very tempting illusion of prosperity that leads to abandoning their families and instead cling to Jehovah God, their ultimate provider who honors those who put their families ahead of prosperity. It’s a challenging situation for us here and we appreciate your on-going support and prayers as we seek to make a difference where we are planted.



Photo cred- Daniel Berehulak
(The New York Times)

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.



Erik Fernando Estrada Zepeda was born in Tegucigalpa but raised in a small town known as Santa Cruz de Yojoa near Lake Yojoa. He lived there for 15 years. When he turned 16, he moved to Zamorano University Campus to acquire his bachelor's degree in

Food Science and Technology. Erik had the opportunity of doing his thesis in Italy with Università degli Studi di Udine in collaboration with Zamorano University. After graduating, he worked at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a Research Assistant focusing on bioengineering of yeast to produce human milk

oligosaccharides: the impact of *Listeria monocytogenes* on pregnant women. Erik has gained experience in labs, pilot scale plants, molecular engineering, bioreactors, and in the field. Currently he works as the Poultry Processing Plant and Certification Supervisor at Mission UpReach. Erik focuses on quality and food safety control, providing resources for the salesmen to enter the market with the goal of helping the economy of the communities. Erik is passionate about doing his part to make "Productos Moises" one of the leading brands nationwide. Erik says, "Mission UpReach has taught me a lot. The impact this organization has on society is incredible, and the stories and testimonies people give on how their lives have changed since they encountered the Mission is so fulfilling. The technology, equipment, human resources, and the excellent work environment with God's guidance makes Mission UpReach the perfect place to work and develop skills to become a better professional. I'm thankful with the trust and help Mission UpReach has given me, and I hope this project can continue for centuries."

ESPERO graduation

The ESPERO school year actually ended in October of 2020, but with the precautions as well as Phil and Donna's absence, it was decided to move the graduation and combine it with the opening ceremony for the 2021 school year. We are proud to announce that we had 4 graduates from the sixth grade. We praise God for this great accomplishment! These 4 students will continue to study and are now in the 7th grade. The other 15 students were able to also complete their respective years and are continuing to the next grade. Fortunately, we have found a way for them to have school in person this year, and so far all is well. Please continue to pray for these students and for their safety.



Double the donation as you "Pay It Forward"

We have established a "Pay It Forward" campaign where you can donate some or all of your stimulus check or tax return before May 15th, and thanks to a generous donor, it will be matched up to \$40,000! Your abundance can be used to bless others in great need.

DESEO is overcoming

By Donna Waldron

As this new school year started, there was great uncertainty about whether there would be in-person classes or “online.” I put that in quotes because that means something totally different here in Honduras. There are very few children who have access to internet, let alone devices to connect to the internet. The decision was made to continue online, which is very unfortunate for thousands and thousands of children who have no connectivity and almost no support at home. In response, DESEO has had to “reinvent” itself. There are some schools who are meeting in person (regardless of what the government says), and we are able to continue our Bible and values lessons with them.

Our main focus this year has become our tutoring services. Many children are behind because of little to no connectivity, so we are offering them a safe environment to connect and work on their homework and offer assistance as needed. We are not able to provide transportation due to country-wide restrictions, so our outreach is to the children who live near our church building. We are having great success with the children arriving twice weekly for their

tutoring, and our hope and dream is that we make a difference in their lives and education.

DESEO is also working on a video series that we are piloting in two Kindergartens with the dream of eventually getting spots on local TV channels. This would give us the

capacity to reach more children. I heard about one boy who is being physically abused at home in an effort to “motivate” him to do his schoolwork. His desperate grandmother came to me looking for help. We signed him up for tutoring and are offering assistance to his mother. This boy is one of thousands experiencing this consequence of the pandemic.

Please, please pray for us as we seek to help in the most effective ways now and in the future.



Birthday Fundraisers! By Bobby McVey

Why would I do a birthday fundraiser for Mission UpReach? That was the gist of the question Donna asked me to address in this short article for the newsletter.

I could “preach to the choir” and tell you about all the good things that MUR does for the people of western Honduras, but you already know all of that if you are reading this. Or I could focus on the need for funds and the struggle that most non-profits are having during this pandemic. Those were part of my motivation, but not the main aspects of why I chose to participate in this way.

For me, in my volunteer role with MUR, I see on a regular basis the daily needs that the team faces, and I am also aware of the special needs that arise due to extreme circumstances such as the pandemic or natural disasters. From one perspective, it seems that there will never be enough money or resources to meet these needs. On the other hand, this means there are unlimited opportunities to share the blessings that God has given me and my family.

So as my birthday came around last month, it was an easy decision. Not only did it give me a great excuse to make another donation to MUR, but better than that, I knew it would give my



Facebook friends a taste of what it feels like to donate to such a worthy cause. And, sure enough, I had 19 donors, including myself. Some had never heard of Mission UpReach but gave just because I asked, and now they know about Mission UpReach. Some were regular donors but just wanted to honor me on my birthday by donating more. One special gift came from a friend who is not a church-goer, but through our relationship knew about my trips to Honduras and the work there.

It was easy to do. For me, it was just one more opportunity to spread the word and pass the collection plate for this great work.

Need help getting started like Bobby? Check out our toolkit at <https://missionupreach.org/fundraising-toolkit/>



A note from Donna

Wow, being back in country has been a very surreal experience for us. In one sense, it felt like we had never left, but then again, it all felt so foreign. Adapting again to power outages, scorpions in the kitchen, potholes, broken systems, and needs that feel overwhelming has been challenging. We are even more thankful, however, for these opportunities that God continues to give us as we live and work here in western Honduras. While our time in the U.S. was very productive for the Mission as well as our personal life, there is no substitute for being present amongst those with whom we serve. Our team has done an excellent job this past year in spite of the challenges. Many of our programs and efforts, including the local church, are having to reinvent themselves. While painful, we feel these are the moments when one is most likely to discover better and more effective ways to do what one has done repeatedly for years and years. Our DESEO efforts are the perfect example of such change (see article above).

The response from donors for hurricane relief was so positive. We were able to help with the most immediate needs for food and basic supplies. We have prayerfully considered the best way to administer the remaining

funds and will give a full report next month. But briefly I would like to share that we will be providing medications and supplies to several health clinics in hard hit regions, as well as setting up a fund to provide micro-loans to farmers who lost not only their crops but their topsoil in the recent hurricanes. We look forward to sharing more about these things in the next newsletter.

We can't thank you enough for your on-going support. Our continued efforts are even more needed today than ever before. Not only has our community been hit by the pandemic and back to back hurricanes, but a recent surge of arrests of men and women who have been laundering drug money has resulted in the shutdown of numerous businesses in Santa Rosa de Copán. Hundreds more families are now unemployed with little to no hope of employment. Please continue to pray for Honduras.



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Please contact us:

Our mailing address is as follows:

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3221 Dundee Road
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Please send all checks, donations and correspondence to this address.

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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