

# Mission UpReach Newsletter

## Looking to find yourself?

By: Phil Waldron, CEO  
Mission UpReach, Inc.

Recently, I was encouraged by a friend to go back and listen to C.S. Lewis' book, "Mere Christianity," on audio, read by Geoffery Howard. He said, "Besides the Bible, this book has been the most influential book that I have ever read." He also said that during his travels he had listened to it some 35 or 40 times.

Mr. Howard has a pronounced British accent that helps one imagine that it might be the author himself that is reading to you. It certainly is thought provoking. One of the most often quoted lines is; "Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."

While not inspired like Scripture, Mr. Lewis has an inspiring way of saying things that resonate with your soul. He was very clever in presenting word pictures that really make truths of Scripture come alive. The one quote cited above, once I heard it, immediately reminded me of our Lord's very own words found in Matthew 10:39, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Or perhaps another version of this same truth that Jesus spoke as we find in Matthew 16:25, "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."

Lewis really puts a practical edge on the surgeon's scalpel that Jesus "made" with his declaration of this fact. Haven't we all experienced the emptiness and futility of seeking recognition, praise,

wealth, power, etc.?

Seeking Christ, simply for having him in our lives as Savior, Lord, and friend, is the ultimate pursuit that will never fail to deliver a meaningful and rich life. It's because He is the source of light and life. Any other basis on which we invest our time, energy and life is "sinking sand." I love the words of the hymn that we sang when I was a child, "On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand. When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; In every high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the Veil."

Our work here in Western Honduras is all about helping people know the solid Rock upon which they can stand when the storms of life assail them. It is an integrated approach that begins with the fundamental teachings of knowing Jesus for who he is and how to respond to his invitation to become his disciple. We minister to and with a demographic that is populated by people who will

never have all the creature comforts that one often expects as a normal part of life while living in the United States. Here in Honduras a lack of access to economic opportunity creates a life that is much different than one these same people could have if they go to the States illegally. We have been here fifteen years come June 5th of this year. And we have only just now begun to see the first fruits of many, many years of "ploughing, planting and watering." When we look forward to what we believe God is doing, we are excited and filled with joy because of all that He has done in these past years. He has produced a crop of young leaders, who are exceptional people, to lead both the local church and our MUR ministry programs. Please keep us in your prayers.

➔  
**Camp was amazing!  
Read about it and see  
more pictures on page 3.**





# New director for Moses Project

We are thrilled to announce that Tyler Harbison has accepted the role of director of the boys' program of the Moses Project. Tyler and his wife Elsie have been living in Honduras for 7 years and have served with another non-profit for most of those years. Elsie began working as Phil's executive assistant four years ago. Tyler began doing some part time marketing for Subida Coffee one year ago. As the need for a new director became apparent, Tyler was on the top of the list of potential candidates. Tyler has a passion for forming and shaping young men and we consider it a blessing from God that he has accepted the position. Tyler and Elsie have four children, Fabricio, Paola, Eli, and Felicity. We are excited to see the many ways God will use Tyler's skills and leadership to enhance the experience of the 18 young men who have been entrusted to us for the 2024 year.



# Brigades: VCOM medical team



We had the honor of hosting the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) the very first week of the year. They brought medical students from both their Louisiana and Auburn campuses. The students, along with their teachers (doctors) were able to serve approximately 100 people in each of the 4 different locations they visited. The personal attention they provide to the people they serve is so impactful, not just

medically but also emotionally. Most of the people they served are accustomed to being treated quickly and often without any explanation of their diagnosis. They are always amazed at the kindness and the amount of time dedicated to understanding their health situation. VCOM will return in March with a different group of students to serve even more people. We are thankful for our collaborative relationship with VCOM.



# Campamento La Cruz

Just as we have for the past 10 years, we hosted Bible Camp for children the first 3 weeks of January. We break the weeks into age groups: 8-11 year olds, 12-14 year olds, and 15-18 year olds. Our camp is youth directed, meaning young men and women ages 18-26. We have some assistants ages 15-17 that work during the weeks of the younger children. After 10 years of camp, we are finally seeing life-long campers who are living out their dreams of being camp counselors. Many campers experience life-changing encounters with camp counselors who direct them towards a personal relationship with Jesus. They dream about being like their counselors, including being a counselor themselves one day. It is wonderful to see that coming to fruition these past years. We were able to serve over 200 children and teens in the 3 weeks of camp. This year's theme was "Metamorphosis" with an emphasis on being transformed by God into the image of His Son. Our theme verse was Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." We were able to witness 6 young people put on Christ in baptism, making the effort and energy expended even more rewarding. Our DESEO team is always a part of our camp staff, but the rest of the counselors and assistants are volunteers. Once a child has participated for several years in camp, we don't have to recruit them as volunteers, they wait with great anticipation for the invitation to join our staff. The rewards of joy and happiness are not only a part of each participant, but the staff as well. Rejoice with us over another successful year of changing young lives for Christ.





## A note from Donna

As I reflect on the three weeks I had the privilege of spending at our annual Bible Camp, I find myself very emotional. While providing fun, recreation, Biblical teaching, emotional support, physical security, and lots of good food, we

provide something even more important. We have the honor and opportunity to share the true message of the gospel. The staff provides healthy boundaries in a loving way. Grace and forgiveness are at the forefront of every encounter. Confrontation of sinful behavior is implemented when necessary. The children open up to their counselors and share the burdens of their heart without fear of judgement. And everyone is pointed to the importance of a relationship with Jesus and God, the Father. The responsibility is overwhelming at times, but what an honor and privilege it is to be entrusted with these precious souls. I am always moved as I listen to their prayers before meals or in devotionals. The children always thank God for the kitchen staff and ask for God's protection for the women that cook. I am not sure that children in the U.S. think so deeply about the importance of food. The children we serve often come from homes where there isn't always food, or at least not in abundance. Their appreciation for the 3 solid meals plus snacks we can provide is evident. They also pray for the children

around the world who are sick. It isn't just a rote request. Here in Honduras the health care system is less than adequate. An illness in childhood can lead to death or at least a heavy financial burden to the family. And of course, they always ask for God's protection on their families while they are away. What we pray for often reflects our values. For most Honduran children, food, health, and family are highly valued, which leads to another observation from my time at camp: the epidemic of mothers abandoning their children to go to the U.S. So many young girls at camp were struggling with sadness and feelings of abandonment. Some expressed that the few material things their mothers were able to send to them from the U.S. meant nothing to them considering having to live without their mothers. Most of these same girls have never known their fathers and are accustomed to not having a male figure in the household, but their mothers are their foundation of security. The only words of comfort I have for these girls is to direct them to a relationship with Jesus. This is the best advice even for children with mothers in the household but becomes especially applicable to the abandoned ones. My heart ached as I watched them flounder about in their undeserved insecurity. At the same time, I felt the overwhelming privilege of being able to provide them with a week of security and love, and a safe place to express their pain. I probably say this every year after camp, but I truly believe that Bible Camp is one of the best investments Mission UpReach makes towards changing lives.

## 2024 Brigade Season

VCOM.....	January 1-7.....	Medical
Redtail Community Foundation....	February 4-11 .....	Construction
Brad Russell Medical Team .....	February 24-March 2 .....	Medical
Country View Family Farms .....	March 16-23 .....	Construction
VCOM.....	March 23-30 .....	Medical
Ryan Duncan Team.....	May 19-26 .....	Surgical
Southside CofC, TX .....	June 8-15 .....	Medical
Southside CofC, KY .....	June 22-29 .....	Medical
Pine Tree CoC, TX.....	July 20-27.....	Medical

## Mission UpReach Board

Scott Bedichek, Ft. Worth, TX	Jeff Simpson, White Oak, TX
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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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