

Mission UpReach Newsletter

– What if? –

By: Phil Waldron, CEO

I just re-read Timothy Keller's book entitled, ***Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God***. In the book he tells a story that illustrates how much we should feel the need to be in prayerful conversation with God throughout the day.

He says, "Imagine that you go to the doctor and the doctor says, 'you have an incurable disease. Nothing that we can do will cure you of this terminal illness. However, there is a pill that you can take on a daily basis that will give you a normal life. The one thing that you have to remember is to take this pill every day because if you don't you will die immediately. If you miss taking this pill even for one day you will die immediately, and nothing can be done about it.'" Keller then posits the question, "How desperate would you feel about taking this pill?" He then says, "What if this is how we felt about our prayerful communion with God?" How would this type of intense desire for prayerful communion with God look in our everyday lives? What if you and I began this year to seek God in prayer with this same kind of intensity? How would it change who we are and what we do as a result?

As we look back over our

experiences these past 15 years here at Mission UpReach and as we look forward to our future, I cannot help but recall many of the scriptures that admonish us to pray with both the faith and trust of a child combined with the desperation of a drowning man. Matthew 7:7-11 comes to



mind often. It both encourages and challenges me to seek God in prayer. If you will remember, Jesus says: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to

give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

We have often seen God provide in fantastic ways, even in the midst of our struggles. Sometimes at the darkest times in our history, we

have seen God provide and bless. This following example that I am about to recount to you really seems to be a very "little" example of what we have seen time and time again with His providence:

Years ago, we were helping a young girl, Cindy Mendez, who has spina bifida and at the time she had two clubbed feet as well. The Shriner's hospital in Tampa, Florida had agreed to help her, but when we got the confirmed appointment, after almost two full years of work to get her accepted somewhere for treatment, we did not have any money to purchase plane tickets. We had less than two thousand dollars in the Mission UpReach checking account and almost nothing in our personal account. We needed to buy three plane tickets, one for me since at that time I was her legal and medical guardian, one for Donna because I didn't want to travel alone with

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Christmas comes to remote village

In addition to the Christmas cheer mentioned on page 3, our DESEO team challenged our Mission employees to do something similar in a remote village. Our team members gave generously and with that money our DESEO team purchased small gifts, goodies, cake, pinatas, and the traditional tamales. They selected a village that is only accessible by foot or beast. Most of the families there do not have electricity and therefore have no access to television or the internet. The concept of Santa Claus or a Christmas celebration was foreign to them until this past December. The entire village came out for the festivities and everyone, young to old, participated in the games and laughter. We are proud of our team for giving out of their abundance to others who have less than them.



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Cindy, and one for Cindy.

When we finally got the call with the good news of Cindy's acceptance into the Shriner's program, Donna checked the airline ticket price, and they were \$800 each. This was a devastating blow after all of the work that had gone into getting Cindy accepted. Emotionally, we "dropped into the sub-basement level." Donna, Harrison and Laura and I were all together at the time while visiting the Oklahoma Christian University campus, so in a foyer of one of their buildings, we stopped and prayed together as a family. Donna out of curiosity checked the airline ticket price again and they had dropped to \$171 each. She immediately bought them. We were ecstatic. We prayed again and thanked God for His provision. After praying a prayer of thanksgiving, out of curiosity, Donna checked the price of airline tickets again and they had gone back up to \$800. This was in the space of minutes that all of this transpired. We did not doubt for one second that God had done something wonderful.

This year, we are starting the year with an uphill battle. We did not make our year end campaign goal as we had hoped. And we have been challenged on a number of fronts in our agricultural operation as we renovate our chicken processing plant from manual processing to a more

automated, mechanized processing.

Please keep us in your prayers. God truly is the perfect Father who knows how to give good gifts to His children. We pray that this year, 2024, will be a year filled with His presence in our ministries and activities. We pray that His will be done and not our own. We pray that He will send workers to harvest the many, many souls that He has prepared to receive the implanted Word that transforms lives. And we pray that He will imbue us with wisdom and skill in stewarding these valuable resources that He has placed in our hands as leaders of Mission UpReach.



DESEO Project Christmas

Just before Christmas, our DESEO team was able to take Christmas to several of the schools in which we work as well as into the homes of families in our DESEO Project. The DESEO Project is our child sponsorship program where we connect families or individuals to children who attend school where our DESEO program visits. Being sponsored means school uniforms, shoes, socks, backpack, and school supplies, not to mention the knowledge that a family or individual in the U.S. is praying for them and participating in their continued education. The sponsors can send extra money at Christmas for a special gift for their sponsored child as well as a basket of household goods for the family. Our team goes to the individual homes and delivers the Christmas cheer. Additionally, money that we are able to raise in our Christmas campaign is used to take Christmas cheer to certain schools where we have pinatas, cupcakes, and small gifts. For most of the children, these are the only gifts they will receive for Christmas.

The tradition of “Santa Claus” does not exist here in Honduras, although access to movies certainly causes children to hope he’s real. Families don’t generally emphasis gift giving

at Christmas, and for most children, a new outfit to wear on the 24th is the ideal gift. So, when we can have a little Christmas party and give out even very small, inexpensive gifts, it feels big to the recipients. It is unclear as to who enjoys this most; the children or the DESEO team. Having the privilege of purchasing, planning, and delivering the Christmas joy in turn brings great joy to our team.

We want to thank each of our DESEO Project sponsors and those who participated in our annual Christmas campaign. If you are not a sponsor, would you consider becoming one? **Visit www.deseoproject.org**





A note from Donna

I hope this month's newsletter finds you enjoying the new year and looking forward in anticipation for the things to come. Phil and I

were able to host our youngest, Laura for about 10 days during the holidays. We loved every minute of her time with us. We were also able to host a lot of others in our home during these last 2 weeks of the year due to our operations being mostly shut down for the holiday. Normally, we work long days and have little energy for entertaining, although we truly love to entertain in our home. Having those we love in our home reminds us that despite being far from "home" and family, we

have been given family in abundance here in Honduras.

As the new year kicks off, we are thankful for a few restful days since our first medical team arrived on January 1st. Also, camp kicks off on January 5th. While activity is exciting, exhausting, and fulfilling, it is my personal desire to be more intentional about spending time with God. I desire to feel His presence in all my day to day activities. When I have been able to do that, the peace that passes all understanding is evident and I think I end up being much more productive. I can also feel a difference in how I respond to change and disappointment, which seem to be consistent companions. I would like to ask for your prayers for a special need we have as a family. It is a struggle that is not mine to share, but God knows, even better than us what the real battle is. We thank God for each of you and for your ongoing support.

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
Ryan Duncan Team.....	May 19-26	Surgical
Southside CoFC, KY	June 22-29	Medical
Pine Tree CoC, TX.....	July 20-27.....	Medical

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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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