



Advance # 14287-Z
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The United Methodist Church in Honduras



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Greetings to All from Honduras!

We finally made it to our new home country of service, Honduras! This move has been a long anticipated wait and much work in the process. Living out of suitcases since April has been quite a challenge as we still have to do so. Our shipment of personal effects has not even shipped as we speak and the anticipated arrival will be very much like Christmas.

First impressions

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Romans 10:15 (KJV)

We were received by one of the other missionaries here in Honduras and taken to the central office in Tegucigalpa to meet the support staff. Our reception

was well received and as we were quickly briefed on local customs, traits, and practices. Within the same day we drove to our new home town of Danli residing about 98 km. from the capital. The drive was wonderful as we peered out of the car window of our host. For a moment I thought we were in Ruidoso, New Mexico as we glanced out the countryside of mountains, pine trees, and beautiful foliage. It was truly an amazing sight. What was equally amazing was the driving skills or lack of them of everyone else on the road. This highway drive was every bit of a free for all "that's my space" mentality. Horns sounding off every few seconds were common as everyone fights for their little space on the highway. Circuitous curves and turns were no place for amateurs which Cindy and I certainly are in this context.

As we finally made it to Danli we noticed that this little town is peppered with bicycles, motorcycles, and a lot of pedestrians. Along the side of the road we noticed the cigar rolling factories with hundreds of bicycles parked along the side of the road. When I

inquired about this, I was told that the majority of those in town worked in the Honduran cigar factories (or should I say, "Sheds") for about \$2.00 a day. I also learned that half of my congregation work there.

Our home is located along one of the major roads which we were told would offer us safety. As we drove up to the house, I noticed the eight foot cement wall circumventing the house with rolled up razor barbed wire. "Oh my . . .!" I said to myself. "I'm in Beirut!" Our host assured us that this was standard practice and not to be concerned. I found this to be true, the hospitality of the people here is amazingly friendly and as time has gone by, we have felt very safe and secure indeed.

We thanked our host and talked as long as we could trying to prevent his departure leaving us to ourselves in Danli. Yep, he left and we were left to ourselves.

"Now what?" I asked my wife.

"Now what?" she replied! "You tell me!" This deep feeling of unidentifiable feelings sank deep into our guts. We went to sleep early that night and not sure if we wanted to wake up. Early that morning I found my wife up about 5 a.m. straining her first cup of coffee with what appeared to be one of our son's sport tube socks. I noticed she wasn't moving and wondered why. Upon my slow approach I noticed that she was busy having a stand-off in the living room with one of our local friends, a gecko.

There they were, eye to eye, neither of them moving. It was eye to eye and neck to neck. Neither had seen each other before and both were afraid to move. Cindy had never seen a gecko except on that insurance commercial and this gecko didn't talk and



didn't look like that one. I walked around her and grabbed my own cup of coffee to watch the entertainment. She yelled, "Do something!" So I did, I sat down to watch the show. Since then, we have purchased a coffee maker and don't have to strain our coffee. The gecko stand-offs still happen occasionally.

The Lasting Impression

The more time we spend here the more our hearts melt with confirmation that we are where God



has sent us. The initial "cultural shock" has gradually slipped away (but it's still there) and we slowly find ourselves melting in the landscape, well

. . . sort of. Walking down the road with the American blond is not an everyday sight for local Hondurans, Especially for the children. They automatically flock to Cindy wanting to touch her blonde hair and look into her blue eyes. It is a sea of children that just gravitate to her. It is very overwhelming to say the least.

We both hit the road running. I met my churches. One which is Danli Central, is a major church in Honduras which has produced five of the existing pastors for the country. It is a very mission oriented church. From this church I found out that two additional mission initiatives have begun in the nearby mountains. So, as their new pastor, I trekked to the mountains early Saturday to have two back to back services in different locations. Pescadero is a community located on the edge of a mountain where we meet to worship in a one room thatched room. This place reminded me of what Mary's house might have been like when she broke the expensive spice jar to wipe Jesus' feet with. It was probably a poor humble thrown together mud wall house with branches propping up the make-shift roof with a hole in the wall serving as a window.

There in the middle of this efficiency home was a table set for me to preach from. The little piglet that was running around was chased out of the house as we began our worship service. Along the room I noticed a bed, a chair, a bucket which was where dishes were washed, and the table before us was their

dining table. I was in someone's home no bigger than 10' X 15'. I was humbled by their faith and their love for Christ. They literally had nothing and were filled with joy that they had a pastor to lead their worship. What a contrast for me from previous experiences with churches that have everything (and more than enough) who can't find the joy of the Lord in the midst of plenty.

My third church is Quisqualagua, also located in a small village in the mountains. Here we have no building; we meet in the middle of a field, open air at night by the corn fields with 85-90 people. Talk about awesome and liberating! Folks come from all over to worship – on Saturday night! They were equally thrilled that a missionary pastor has come to their midst.

We have worked with several mission teams that have come from the states to minister to churches in Honduras. A drama team made up of youth (high school) came from Christ of the Resurrection in Kansas City to perform drama in Danli in the public square and for some of our area churches. Several construction teams have come to help continue to build churches and parsonages. Cindy has begun coordinating medical



teams for the country of Honduras. She spent a week in Siguatepeque, a small mountain village on the other side of the country treating villagers for general wellness. Most were treated for headaches, vision, worms/parasites, and colds. Several teams from North Carolina, Christ of the Resurrection, and others from Texas have donated their time and skills.

Our Prayer Needs

We need prayer for our continued adjustment but there is no doubt of our place here. The need is incredible but the response is equally incredible. Our prayer requests are continued response of the churches as we work towards building a building in two of the places we are working at. Pray for the arrival of our shipment. We also ask for prayer for the work here and the sensitivity of churches stateside to respond in love to considering forming VIM teams to help. Pray for our continued health as this is rainy malaria/dengue season. As always, pray for our safety and the medical and leadership work that we are trying to provide.

Grace and Peace always - **David & Cindy Ceballos**

Prayerfully consider partnering with us in our mission by covenanting financial support through our Advance numbers shown above.

