

Honduras 2017

Elmira College Christian Fellowship and Border Buddies Ministries Team #42



Around midnight of April 13th, Elmira College's fourth missions team to Honduras through Border Buddies Ministries departed campus to begin our 10-day journey to Tegucigalpa. This year's team consisted of ten members; six who had never been to Honduras before, as well as four who were returning for either a second or third time. Everyone on the team, as well as those who supported us while remaining on campus or in their respective hometowns, were all excited to see what God had in store for this year's team. Throughout our week and a half in Honduras, we were able to make lifelong memories and form new friendships as well as grow in our faith. Five members of our team accepted Christ on the trip, and two of them were able to be baptized the last day before we left!

On the worksite, our team sanded, primed, and painted a newly constructed building in the junior-senior high school complex that Border Buddies has been working in for the last two years. In addition, we were able to visit a squatters' community outside of the city of Comayagua and ministered to the people there who had recently lost their homes, guide activities and play with the kids at the Saturday youth group program, play soccer with Mike's youth group boys, attend a church service in the barrio (village), visit some local shops in the Valley of the Angels, and enjoy a meal at an authentic Honduran restaurant. In this newsletter, some of the team members talked about their favorite parts of the trip and shared their testimonies about what they experienced while we were there. Thank you everyone for your prayers and support of Border Buddies Ministries Team #42!



In the time leading up to and during the trip, God constantly reminded me of what it means to surrender my all to Him, and to trust the promise that He does all things well. In the weeks prior to the trip, God placed a song on my heart, Do It Again by Elevation Worship. The chorus and bridge lyrics are: "*Your promise still stands. Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness. I'm still in Your hands. This is my confidence. You never failed me yet. I've seen You move. You move the mountains, and I believe I'll see You do it again. You made a way where there was no way, and I believe, I'll see You do it again.*" This was a constant testament to God's love and faithfulness and knowing that the plan He has for my life far surpasses anything that I could ever plan or anticipate. During the trip, I spent a great deal of time seeking God in the stillness of each moment, resting in the peace that I can walk in on a daily basis. However, this was easier said than done because I had to give my everything to the Lord in order for Him to renew my thinking, increase my compassion towards humanity, and restore my joy. The weak was a process of taking captive every thought that did not glorify God, and also of trusting in His plan for my future, all for His glory. Jeremiah 31:4 says "*I will build you up again, and you Virgin Israel will be rebuilt. Again you will take up your timbrels and go out to dance with the joyful.*" I could see God restoring my joy each day as I saw the beauty in the sunrise and sunset each day, the smiles and laughter of the children and construction team at the work site, and an overwhelming sense of peace of mind and heart. During this trip, God gave me clarity on the path that He has for my life. I am excited for the adventure ahead of me. Even though there is still much uncertainty and things still unknown, one thing I know for sure is that the journey will be great because God will be the center of it all.



This trip was fantastic!!! God opened this wonderful opportunity for me to unblock myself. During this trip I learned so many things that I did not know that were there. I felt the presence and the flow of peace the minute I stepped into Mike's and Glenda's house. All of my life I have always been a very closed person and never really trusted people due to the circumstances of life. It is amazing how I began to speak to Glenda about my personal life and I know that this was the Lord speaking through me. During this trip, Romanos 12:11 "En lo que requiere diligencia, no perezosos; fervientes en espíritu, sirviendo al Señor" gave me strength to allow myself to live in peace by serving the Lord. This trip also reminded me that in life people come and go and that they are placed in your life for a specific reason. Not everyone in our life is meant to stay in our life forever. When we went to Comayagua, I had an amazing experience because I just felt the move of God. As I heard all the testimonies of all the people and to see the hope that they had was stunning because they are fighting with the government due to land claims. The light in these lives remind of S. Juan 16:33 which says "estas cosas os he hablado para que en mi tengáis Paz. En el mundo tendréis aflicción; pero confiad, yo he vencido al mundo". This verse is very inspiring God is telling us that he has taken care of everything and that we can live in peace. I thank the Lord for all that he has given to me!!

I went on this trip not really knowing what to expect, other than that everyone who had gone before told me it would be a life changing experience. They weren't wrong. Spending time in another part of the world and seeing how people outside of the United States, or other first world developed countries that I have traveled to, live really opened my eyes and put things in perspective. I learned that a lot of children in Honduras do not get educated because their families cannot afford school. Here in the US every child is granted a free public K-12 education, which many complain about. I think the right to an education is something taken for granted here, which is upsetting to see. Another trip that really made me think was our visit to Comayagua. All of the people we met were so kind and welcoming, despite living in extreme poverty. There are so many people who complain about so many things here and I did not hear a single complaint from the people of Comayagua. It amazed me how people with so little can be content while people who have so much do not take the time to appreciate what they have. All in all, it was a very rewarding experience. I thank all of those who supported us as well as God for the opportunity to go and do His work.



Leading up to the trip I was very apprehensive about what this trip would bring for me and I hate not knowing what is going to happen. But I quickly came to realize that I needed to let God guide me. I think one of my most beautiful memories is getting baptized, it was something that God put on my heart and I was finally able to go through with it. I also really loved the barrio, the children were so cute. This little boy Egan made a big impact on me, all he wanted was someone to play with. This day is something I will never forget. I am ready to go back!

I came into this trip knowing that I needed to have a significantly different mindset than I did last year. For several months leading up to the trip, I had told myself that I wanted all of us to make it to Honduras safely and successfully. Upon arrival to Mike and Glenda's house, I realized that I never really put any thought into what was going to happen once we actually got there, mostly because I did not want to limit God by trying to compare this experience with my experiences from last year. While we were there, the moments that had the most significant impact on me were the times that we were able to interact with the people of Honduras while they were going about their normal routines, especially in Comayagua. Seeing the resilience of the remaining people in that community despite the recent destruction of all of their homes was truly amazing. Even though I did not always know what the people were saying when we talked to them, it was apparent that God was working through Mike and Glenda and the youth group who goes up there to minister to the people. Being able to play a small role in offering hope and comfort to the people of Comayagua allowed me to realize how doing God's work in a foreign country is one of the most rewarding experiences I could possibly ask for, and I am looking forward to more opportunities to serve the people in Honduras or other parts of the world in the future.

As one of four team members to return to Honduras, I thought I'd be more prepared this time around. Well, as I found out, one can never truly be prepared for an adventure with God. When we left Elmira, I was expecting the same trip that I had last year, but some very simple differences made the entire trip a unique experience: I was with a new group of people; I was a year older; and my relationship with Christ was much deeper. Even the simplest changes can have a profound impact.

This year in Honduras, I learned a very simple rule: sometimes the Lord sends me an opportunity that is not for my development; rather He needs to use me for the development of others. This was a hard lesson to learn. Last year, I was saved and baptized in Honduras—I essentially spent a week on the mountain top. I was expecting the same experience, but as Ephesians 4 tells us, we only get one salvation and one baptism; therefore, I should have known that this year would be different.

So, when I got off the plane in Tegucigalpa, I was fully expecting a quick rise to the mountain top, or as we call it here in Elmira: “a Jesus high”: except it didn't come. In fact, it never came. At first, it was frustrating to me, but as the end of the week approached, I realized that I did not need a “Jesus high.” I needed to be in the valley in order to help others reach the mountain top, and with this realization, I did just that. This year in Honduras, five members of our team were born again and two of my best friends were baptized, including one of my roommates. Being a guiding hand for my teammates as they figured out what it meant to be saved was my purpose in Honduras this year. Watching them come to Christ was the best “Jesus high” I could ever ask for.



Perhaps my most impactful day of the trip was Easter. That was the day that we went to Comayagua, which was super emotional in itself. It was amazing to me to see how strong these people were to keep trying despite having lost everything, (I know that it was too much for most of the people who wound up leaving), and I was also surprised by their hospitality. But what was even more amazing about Comayagua was being able to hear The Holy Spirit speak to me at each household. He even translated some Spanish for me. All of His actions that day led to me getting anointed in The Holy Spirit that night.



The time that we spent at Comayagua was absolutely incredible. Everybody on the team has heard this story a thousand times so I'm sorry- One house that we stopped at was particularly touching for me. At this house a young woman brought her newborn baby to me and reached out for me to hold her. I held this precious baby girl (her name is Rebecca). It was very emotional because when I looked around me all that I saw were piles of rubble from what used to be houses, and then I looked at this beautiful baby who was so innocent and unaware. It reminded me of what a miracle life is and the beauty of God's creations. I will never forget that baby girl and her family.

P.S. I LOVED riding in the back of the truck!!!