

Sunny Days and Rainy Days

Seeking Life in every day



Introduction & Background

Ministry work is hard, mission work is tough, and worldly work in itself is relentless, but “Life” is present throughout all of these things. The Lord encourages us to live one day at a time, and for good reason. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Does that mean all days are equal? Not at all. Some days can be sunny days, others can be rainy days, but “Life” is present throughout all of these things...

In August of 2024, we experienced a series of “sunny days” on our planning trip to Honduras. From the outset, we were welcomed with much delight from our friends... After all, there was a lot to celebrate. Not counting the sweet relief that comes with seeing friends whom you haven’t seen in half a year, we experienced plenty of joy with our graduating seniors, a new child born to a couple in our partner church, and lots of excitement for the upcoming trip. It was a time full of promises and hope. We even scouted a rural location known as “El Porvenir” which

translates to “that which is to come” or “the future.” Our visit to El Porvenir was, quite literally, a mountain-top experience that filled us with high hopes for the things to come.

However, as the time between the planning trip and our January mission trip turned from months, to weeks, into days, it became clear that things wouldn’t be as easy or the same as we had initially thought. There seemed to be a rain cloud looming overhead.

Sunny Days

During the planning for our January mission trip, there was a lot to look forward to that made us all feel very excited. Everyone on this team has a favorite activity/ministry that they either lead or participate in. For some it is the Copa Manos community event, for others it is Vacation Bible school. For all of us though, it is the time we get to finally spend with our Honduran friends. These anticipations gave us a positive outlook for this trip and although there had been some setbacks in the days leading up to the trip, everything seemed to be just fine.

On this trip were three newcomers, our Young Adult Travel Award recipients. These young women, who would later come to be known as the “Chicas Poderosas”, were ready to lend a hand and put their best foot forward. Additionally, our team was under new leadership, being led by Geoff Partain, one of our senior missionaries. Though he is a veteran on these trips to Honduras, leading one would be a new experience for him. Leadership can always be tricky, especially with established expectations, but we were confident in Geoff’s experience and skills and ready to root for him. This spirit of “newness” and “change” was refreshing and brought an enthusiastic vitality that had everyone feeling warm and energetic.

Thus, like stepping out into a sunny morning, the team was ready for their week-long adventure. An adventure that would leave an impact on the missionaries and locals as well as create memories that would last a lifetime. There were days spent under the sun during which the team played soccer with the locals, visited church-sponsored kindergarten projects, led vacation bible school, and enjoyed fellowship with our Honduran friends. These were the “sunny days”.

Rainy Days

Every journey has its fair share of roads that aren’t always paved and are often rocky. From airplane turbulence to congested bumpy highways and plenty of “rain”, this trip in particular was no exception. Looking back, there were aspects about this trip that no one could have anticipated and other things that only a select few were equipped to deal with.

As it turns out, prior to this trip the Manos de Dios church in Danlí, Honduras was experiencing some difficult moments with their leadership which led to an unexpected Bishop’s visit. Dealing with this situation was not expected or anticipated, and therefore didn’t really fit into

the tight schedule we had carefully created for this trip. However, our duty as fellow Christians is to always walk hand in hand with our brothers and sisters across the world and as such, we responded by lending a helping hand, even if some of us weren't privy to all the details.

As if that situation weren't enough, there were days when the rain started to really pour, quite literally. Although some of our activities were met with some of the minor setbacks that are typical on mission trips, there came a moment when our entire programming for the day had to be canceled. Our much anticipated visit to "El Porvenir" was put in jeopardy by an unforgiving rainstorm that affected the roads leading up to that rural mountain village. Months of planning had gone into the programming for our visit there, so we had an emergency meeting as a team to work things out. After much deliberation and consulting with locals, including our bus driver, it was decided that any travel up those roads would prove to be far too dangerous. Therefore, it was decided that we would not execute our VBS and Vision Clinic that we had planned for El Porvenir. This was hard to accept, to say the least.

Despite this outcome, our faithful team came up with some solutions to the situation. We donated our supplies for the visit to El Porvenir to our partners, trusting that they would put them to good use after we were gone. To make up for this loss, we dedicated that day to exploring other Honduran towns as a way to introduce the country and its culture to our newcomers. Afterwards, we proceeded with our schedule for the week as usual. Yet, that raincloud still loomed overhead...

On our last night in Danlí, we treated the Manos de Dios church's priest, Padre Victor, and his family to a fellowship dinner, as is tradition for us on our January visits. The evening started off jovially and full of laughs, but the moment was cut short when Padre Victor began to experience chest pains. Despite his initial claims that he just needed some fresh air, Padre Victor decided that he and his family needed to leave earlier than expected. This left the team in a state of confusion and nervousness for the rest of the night. We were given the "all clear" the next day, but we remained concerned for the future of Victor's health.

Our time in Honduras was coming to an end and upon our arrival in Comayagua (the town we fly out of), we learned that our great home state of Texas was experiencing heavy rains combined with an extreme cold front. As a result, our flights would experience some delay, with Geoff's flight even facing cancellation. It felt as if even in the final moments of this trip, we couldn't catch a break. These certainly were our "rainy days".



(Upon our arrival to Comayagua, we spotted a rainbow over the rainbow store)

Seeking Life In Every Day

By the end of this trip, it had become obvious that it wasn't our typical visit to Honduras. It proved to be challenging and confusing. Yet, after some spiritual reflection the team was beginning to see God present throughout, just as he was present in the storm with his disciples in the famous biblical account. (Matthew 8: 23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25)

Despite the obstacles, our team wanted to make a change. However, our focus was in the wrong place. It turns out that the impact we were able to leave was evident in the smiles of our Honduran friends. When there were opportunities to discuss our moments of misfortune with our Catracho brothers and sisters, we were met with hopeful responses such as "God does things for a reason" or "All in God's perfect timing." They were able to see beyond the stormy clouds and see the rainbow that comes after the rain. Their faith was expressed in their ability to understand

and experience trust in God independently from the kind of day they were having. Their faith came from something internal and not external.

Looking back, the words “Oh ye of little faith” come to mind. This isn’t a blanket statement to cover the several circumstances we faced as a team, but rather a reminder of the posture we should take when confronting the problems that each day can bring. In exemplary fashion, our Honduran friends whom some might consider less than fortunate, demonstrated what it means to live in faith. They did not lose sight of God’s plans when our plans may have failed. Instead, they focused on his promise, his rainbow, to carry them throughout the rainstorm and that fact reminded me of where my faith should be.

When I returned home, I took some time to further reflect on our days in Honduras. I kept realizing the same thing I learn on every mission trip I’ve taken. Whenever you set out to serve the Lord and His people, you are met with the love and service of the same people you sought out to serve. This reciprocation, which almost feels like a reversal, was very humbling. When we felt like drowning, our Honduran friends were there to remind us what “Life” is truly about. The love, wisdom, and service that they were ready to share with us is a testament that God will be with us to the very end of the age, no matter the kind of day.

