



Combining Ministry with Sport Honduras 2008

April 2008

Wow – one word that continues to come out when one of us is asked about the trip or the effects of the trip! The only way for me to describe it: I have been blessed to lead 5 different mission trips for the volleyball team and all have been great experiences. Each time back I was amazed that it could get any better than the previous one, but each time it did. BUT – this trip, and our time since being back, has been indescribable!

The team was young, with a lot of new faces in the mix. In the fall of 2007, we had 6 new players join our squad of twelve. As with any team, it is a challenge to bring in new members, but 50% was a big challenge!! We learned a lot, but frustration continued to build and remained throughout the season. As preparations began for this trip, we split the team into three small groups. The purpose – to allow team members to get to know each other on a deeper level and to create a “safe, small venue” for more intimate relationships to develop. The small groups were also able to lead different fundraising events during January and February.

Needless to say, I was a little nervous about taking this new of a group out of the country for 10 days! All I can say now is “Why did I doubt?” God brought this team together in a way that I have never experienced before! From the first day to now, the Lord’s love and presence radiates in this group!

Fifteen of us arrived in Tegucigalpa on Friday morning, March 14th. We gathered all our baggage and loaded into a bus that would take us to southern Honduras. Five hours later we arrived in El Triunfo, which would be our home for the next 4 days! Our ministry opportunities began early the next morning as we were able to bless a poor family with concrete flooring in their three room humble home. As you can imagine, laying concrete floors in Honduras is a LOT different than in North America!! Many hours later and a lot of manual labor, we were able to complete the living room and the kitchen. (We didn’t have enough supplies to finish the bedroom that day, but delivered the extra supplies the following day so that it would get finished!) What a great opportunity to not only purchase all the materials, but to be able to actually do the manual work!!

During our weekend in El Triunfo, we were able to participate in services at three different churches. Our group led with songs, testimonies, drama and children’s ministry. What a great opportunity to partner with believers in another country. Language was a barrier – thankfully we had numerous girls who spoke and understood some Spanish, and we had a translator and the missionaries with us all the time. On Sunday afternoon we had planned to cross over into Nicaragua for a couple hours since we were so close to the border. But God had other plans for us! During the morning service on Sunday, Luis (the missionary) was talking with the Pastor and he mentioned a church outside the city that was in the early stages of forming. He asked if we would go out that afternoon and participate in their service. The church met in the backyard of the new pastor’s home. What a blessing the people were! It was a very poor village, yet the people were so full of joy and hope! While there Luis had gone inside the pastor’s home and shared with me that there was no furniture except for two hammocks! The pastor, his wife and two teenage sons had moved there in January and it was a definite step of faith. The clothes they had were in boxes on the floor. The exciting part of the story came the next day as we were assembling and painting benches for another church in the area. Our group had decided to try to purchase some furniture for Pastor Benjamin and his family. The carpentry shop we were making benches at had a dresser that was finished and they had beds in the making, but not quite done. We immediately made a deal with the shop and they had a crew working on the beds

immediately! By the end of the day, the dresser, a full size bed and two twin beds were being delivered to Pastor Benjamin! We were so thankful that we were blessed with extra funds to use for needs like this one!

Monday was a sight seeing day. We drove to the coast and took a boat over to the Island of Amapala. It was a great time of rest after 3 full days of ministry and traveling. We spent the night at a hotel on the island and took another short boat ride Tuesday morning to a small beachfront restaurant. We spent about 4 hours enjoying the beach and one another. Tuesday afternoon found us traveling back to Tegucigalpa, which would be our home for the remainder of our trip.

Wednesday was a difficult day as we visited the local dump. People, young and old, digging through trash along with the vultures, cows and dogs, was a site and smell none of us will ever forget. We gathered in the middle of the dump and sang some worship songs with them, performed our skit, shared a testimony and then shared snacks and a bottle of water to all. I was amazed again with the joy on their faces as they worshipped the Lord with us – despite their circumstances. As garbage trucks arrived at the dump, people would run to where they were unloading in order to get the “best” of the trash – rummaging for plastics, cans, and food. Luis shared with me that a lot of the kids that live here have a dream of one day being a garbage truck driver so that they can get first pick at the garbage. They know nothing more than where they live. Across the street, we were able to do some construction work at a school that a pastor began for the kids at the dump. We helped move block and dirt to assist in the building of a new trade building where the adults from the dump can come and learn a work skill (sewing, carpentry, and cosmetology) to try and help them get out of the dump. Two of our team are blessed with artistic ability and were able to leave our logo and names on the wall in one of the new rooms. Our hope: One day a kid from the dump attends this school, sees the logo and ends up enrolling at John Brown University! With God, there is no limit of what can be done!!

Thursday brought us to Nueva Capital, a poor village outside Teguc, where we laid a concrete floor for a single mom and did activities with over 100 kids in an impromptu service at the church in that area! Activities with the kids included songs, a puppet show, coloring, witness bead bracelets, balloon animals and face painting! It is so refreshing to spend a few hours with children! They welcomed us into their village and were just excited that we would want to spend time with them!

Friday was our last day of ministry. Our day included a few hours at a local nursing home and then a few hours at a local orphanage for disabled kids. This was the first time we had included ministry to the elderly in a JBU Volleyball Mission Trip. It was a tremendous blessing to us and to the elderly. We began with some worship songs, followed by our skit, and then made witness bracelets with them. While there, some just wanted to sit and talk with the girls, while others wanted their wrist or face painted. The elderly just soaked up the attention we were able to give to them and I pray we were an encouragement to them. Friday afternoon was spent at Hogar Bencaleth, where we spent a couple hours with 22 disabled children ranging from 5-21 years old. Many were stricken with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy. The children and the facility were beautiful! A piñata, songs, face painting and balloons were a great way to show love and to give joy to these kids with broken bodies.

Saturday was souvenir shopping day at Valle de Angeles, a tourist town on one of the mountain tops surrounding Teguc. A great ending to a fantastic week. We stayed at a hotel near the airport on Saturday night and were able to debrief our week and spend our last evening with the Carrion family (our host missionaries). Sunday took us from Teguc to Miami to Chicago to Tulsa and then home to Siloam Springs!

It's been two weeks since our return and we continue to meet weekly as a group to talk about our trip and to share what the Lord continues to speak to our hearts. This trip was for 10 days, but the impact continues! Thank you for your support in prayer and in finances. Our trip would not have been possible without you. “Combining Ministry with Sport” was definitely a success – again!

For all of the team,

Robyn Gordon
Women's Volleyball Coach