CALLED OUT TO A FOREIGN FIELD

This written record is my testimony to the fact that God is faithful at all times, in all circumstances and He calls whoever He wants, whenever He wants into missionary service. He Himself makes provision, leads and equips. Read on to discover where your faith can lead you as a Mighty Warrior.

During the year 1980, at the age of 16, I was invited by a close friend to study the Bible with a local youth minister. I was raised in a loving home; however it was a non church home. I was led to the Lord by my friend and the youth minister.

God led me to become very involved in my youth group where I was befriended and taught to be a disciple by my youth minister. That very same year one month later I went on an evangelistic campaign for Christ in Honduras. The evangelistic campaign's theme was "Who is the Christ?" and during the campaign we participated in inviting the population to attend a nightly evangelistic service. The Evangelist who spoke each night was named Israel Flores. Israel was born in Mexico and graduated from a preacher training school in Honduras. Coming in contact with Israel was like meeting the Apostle Paul in person. Wow Israel was the real thing. The average attendance was 400 plus persons each night of the campaign with many people coming to know Christ. A local church was established in a place called, The Neighborhood of the Cross. In retrospect the name of the neighborhood where the first church was established was a very fitting testimony of God's power.

We also worked in the very rural Eastern areas of Honduras where we traveled by 4x4's, horses or walked for hours on end to minister to the people of the mountains. We traveled to small remote mountain villages where we befriended and learned to greatly respect the humble spirit of the mountain peoples. We were often moved emotionally and spiritually by their humble and self sacrificial giving to us. Oftentimes we were served chicken meat when they themselves did not eat the chickens because they were the source of eggs for their daily diets.

As we traveled by horseback the group lagged behind as a colleague and I plunged ahead following the logging road and trails. Before we realized it we were actually very far ahead of the others in the group but we could look back and see them from time to time from mountain ridges. As we rode along on the horses we began to hear a faint sound of drums beating. The drum beating kept getting louder and louder as time went by and we became startled as images of exotic Indians with war drums intruded on our mind. We were in the mountainous rainforest of Honduras and this being our first trip we did not know what to expect. As the sound of drums grew, we pressed our small Honduran horses harder to run forward away from the sound. We were amazed that the sound of the drums pursued us as we raced up and down mountains and forded streams. We were definitely being pursued. As fate would have it our horses tired out and we decided to find a place to hide in the brush. After coming to a stream and heading up stream we dismounted and hid the horses and ourselves. As the sound of drums continued towards us

we prayed for the Lord to intervene. A short while later we were able to peek from the jungle as the drums approached the stream we had forded. To our amazement the sound of the drums came from a Honduran peasant who was riding a horse with two empty metal milk containers. As the rider traveled the containers banged against the side of his horse and saddle, producing the sound of a drum.

As it turns out the group had come across him as they traveled along and someone was able to convey to him that the two of us were traveling ahead alone and that the group was concerned and wanted us to wait for them to catch up with us. As the Honduran man traveled along he caught glimpses of us and raced ahead with his horse and milk jugs to catch up to us causing us to hear the pursuing "war drums". What I learned from this is that our imaginative human perception is frail and misleading and that the real reality for a missionary is to trust fully in the Lord of host.

In my heart I began to understand what God meant when he said that the poor are indeed rich in faith. I returned to the U.S. as a stronger Christian and with a heart for missions.

As 1981 came and went I was still in High School at age 17 and managed to earn enough money to return to Honduras the next summer. During this second trip I was able to learn some basic Spanish and to build relationships with the locals. It is at this point that I met a blind man who had become a Christian during the prior year's campaign. I went to his home with a friend who had taken him a Bible in Braille and had arranged for him to take Braille reading classes. The blind man lived up on a steep hillside and he had to navigate a steep path to and from his home. He taught me what it is to be truly led by the Lord. Oftentimes he would turn around quickly and take off walking and we would ask, "Where are you going?" and he would reply, "To share the Gospel". He remarked that just because he was blind did not mean that he couldn't see what God wanted for him to do. I specifically remember being moved internally by God's Spirit and having a desire to be alone to pray. I went to an open field and poured my heart out to God and I said, "God give me a heart like Israel!" I remember tearing my shirt and then going and giving away all that I had brought with me to those in need.

It was around this time that two missionary families were led by God to move to the area to follow up with those who were becoming Christians and to continue preaching and teaching. Both of these couples later moved to Costa Rica as a part of an 8 family mission team. As they planned to move on to Costa Rica they called upon a man Honduran man to come down from the mountains and lead the local church. As it turns out this man was the rider of the horse who had a couple of years earlier chased down two gringo guys in the mountains who thought he was an Indian on the warpath. The lesson is that God unfurls His very own plans at His perfect timing.

At the age of 17 myself and 2 other persons were led by God to start a discipleship training program called **"The Honduras Bible School".** We started off with prayer and planning and began to work on what would become a model leadership training program that is still vibrant and working 27 years later. The stated goal was, "To evangelize all of Eastern Honduras" which was for the most part void of paved roads and was rural mountains and jungles. Santos was one of the first students of The Honduras Bible School along with 10 others from the rural mountain regions of Honduras. The first director of the School was from Belize and was a graduate of a Preacher Training School in Honduras.

And as God would have it the second Director of the school was a friend from Costa Rica. God used this leading over time to establish over 60 churches and to lead thousands to know Him. I have served as a board member for 27 years and have served as Vice President of the Board of Directors. I hold a Honorary degree from The Honduras Bible School which was awarded to me in the year 2000 at which time the class of 2000 was named in my honor. This program is completely operated in Honduras, by Hondurans as The Honduras Bible School. The U.S. board has moved on to propagate the leadership / discipleship training model as Leadership Development International with a goal to take the model of leadership development beyond Honduras and into the international arena.

In 1982 at the age of 18, I was blessed to again be able to return to Honduras for an evangelistic mission. I felt a calling on my life from God but did not fully understand the when, where, how and what of the calling. I had determined in my mind that upon graduating High School that I would attend a university and become a Youth Minister. During this trip to Honduras in my senior year of High School God led me to clearly see my calling. It was during a visit to the mountains where we were preaching and providing basic first aid that I came to hear the call of God clearly. I remember a young girl who was about 8 years old. She was a beautiful child but when she came forward nudged by her mother it was evident that she had a serious problem. Her leg was wrapped in banana leaves that were tied with a shred of cloth. She had a fever and had chills. When I removed the cloth and the banana leaf I was struck with a great sense of compassion as I saw that her leg was swollen and that an infection had set in leaving a large infected wound in her calf. There was an obvious red streak leading from the wound indicating that a serious infection had set in. Her mother explained that she had been running through the forest on a trail and a branch had torn into her leg. The mother said that since she had no money and no medicine that she decided to follow the traditional ways of healing the wound by caking on cow patties tied on with banana leaves. The gravity of the moment for this child's life and for my life were immense. I quickly realized that my limited ability and the rudimentary cotton and antiseptic were not going to improve Maria's lot. I searched in my heart and God spoke to me clearly and said, "Who is going to make a difference here? Who will step forth and make a difference?" I spoke back and said, "I will make a difference here Lord, I will minister to these people"
From that moment on my life took both a compelled and decisive turn. I cleaned the little girl's wounds and sought continued medical treatment for her. God impressed on me the need for an outreach to the whole man. When I returned from this mission trip I knew that my calling from God was for missions and that I had no choice in the matter, I was called out to serve in a foreign field.

Arriving back at my home church I shared my experience with church leaders who to my dismay did not comprehend my calling. I shared my experience with my parents who were non church folks and although they understood they were apprehensive. I had a room reserved at college after all and I had a roommate assigned and so many plans.

God led me to contact a group of missionaries who had set up a language training school for their team in Costa Rica. Some of the team members had worked on campaigns in Honduras and had worked as missionaries in Honduras and we knew each other. When they learned of my

calling they invited me to come to Costa Rica to work and learn with the 8 family mission team.. I knew I had to get a grip on the language and culture to be an effective missionary so this leading and opportunity was God given, so I seized the opportunity and agreed to go to Costa Rica prior to moving to Honduras as a full time missionary.

I was shocked by the response that I received when I approached the leaders at my local church to request that the church support me in this calling by helping me financially to be able to go to Costa Rica to learn language, culture and missions. I was told that as a church they were not able to support me or this calling because of a host of reasons: I was too young, too inexperienced, subject to the passions of youth which might lead to my having an ungodly encounter with a foreign lady and bring reproach to God's word. I was dumbfounded and sought out God because I knew His calling was sure. I felt as though I were being pushed, pulled, led, called out with urgency to serve God in missions. My understanding from God was that now was the time to move out and make a difference. After prayers, I returned to the church leaders and asked that if they could not support me as a church would they consent to me asking individual members for monthly support. They agreed as long as it was understood that the support was not from the church as a whole and that the support was not long term because they had the above listed issues of concern and the church had financial priorities that needed contributors. This in effect would be a competing unendorsed mission. I agreed with this approach and set about asking my friend who had led me to the Lord to be my non paid financial secretary and then I set out to request $30 dollars per month from 10 individuals for 6 months. With a total support package of $300 dollars per month for 6 months I had achieved headway except that I didn't have an airplane ticket. I also found out rather quickly that I didn't know exactly where Costa Rica was on a map. My mother asked me to show her where I was headed and I had learned a quick geography lesson. Regarding the airplane ticket I was led by God to sell my truck and some possessions to pay for a one way ticket. I could not afford a two way ticket so faith said go one way and God will get you back.

When I left for Costa Rica on a flight out of New Orleans I was not so valiant, in fact I was scared. I couldn't eat and my legs trembled along the way. God's grace provided a motherly type lady who sat next to me for the entire Journey and she kindly let me babble and confide in her the mission that God had sent me upon and how that I was courageous in Him until now. She was a blessing for this fright filled journey.

Upon arriving in Costa Rica I was met by one of the missionary couples who clearly explained what their missionary training was all about. They explained that right now, while in the car, English was ok but that they were going to take me to drop me off at the home of a Costa Rican family who would be my new temporary family.

They explained that the **LAMP School of Language and Culture** stood for LAMP (Language Acquisition Made Practical). The practical part was that for the next 6 weeks I would not see or speak to another English speaking person with the exception of seeing the missionaries at Spanish language church services. In addition my Spanish language teacher did not speak English and would require 4 hours of daily study coupled with meeting and attempting to speak to a minimum of 40 people daily. I had to learn 20 new vocabulary words on a daily basis. The host family had been instructed to feed me what they ate, when they ate, and how they ate. The host family had strict rules to not give me anything different or additional unless I learned how to

ask for it in Spanish. So began an epic journey into learning the Spanish language and Hispanic culture.

Interestingly enough my host family had a 3 year old boy, a 10 year old boy and a 12 year old girl. I was able to start with the youngest child and work my way up the family ladder. My favorite or only show that I could comprehend on TV was "Los Tres Chiflados" or "The Three Stooges". As it turns out, The Three Stooges don't speak very much so that made it easy.

As time went by my single language mind grew to comprehend things in two languages. The trouble then was how to control the thinking process. There was one particular occasion when I called my mother back in the U.S. and she said that she was very concerned for me. When I asked why she was concerned she said that she had finally received a letter from me and that apparently parts of it were in English and parts of it were in Spanish. As I wrote the letter my mind thought of things to write alternately in both languages. While this may be practical it is very unnerving. I soon learned to actively control which language I was thinking in. As it turns out I was not learning to translate from English to Spanish but learning to think in Spanish and to comprehend in Spanish without any need to translate. I once had a bilingual dream where I was standing on a street corner and someone came up and spoke to me in English and then another person came up and spoke in Spanish and then I translated for both of them in the dream. Wow God was equipping me for his purposes! I prayed often for complete learning because in order to be an effective missionary called by God I had to be able to communicate the Gospel effectively. After a number of weeks I sat in church services one Sunday morning and as the sermon ended I was amazed that I had understood every word in Spanish and all of the content and intent of the speaker. It was a great time to be alive and equipped by God. Soon I started to concentrate on losing my English, Louisiana accent while speaking Spanish and God helped me to do that effectively. This was accomplished by God to the point that when I spoke on the telephone the other party had no knowledge that I was not Hispanic. That is an equipping from God.

At my host family's home beans were the order of every meal, every day with Friday being the day that there was a small piece of meat, if it was it was a good week. At the start of the week they would cook a large pot of beans and we would have beans and eggs for breakfast and beans and rice for lunch and gallo pinto for supper. Gallo pinto is beans and rice mixed together and stir fried.

The beans would be either parados, "standing up beans", or refritos, " Refried beans". Meals are accompanied by tortillas and usually some variation of white cheese.

As I lived with my host family I participated in soccer, family trips, vacations and social events. I also learned missions by working with the missionary families and the local churches. After six months I was now Practically bilingual and practically out of money. With no ticket to return to the states and that not being an option anyway, I began to pray and seek God's leading as to how His purpose in my life was going to be achieved.

The next week a friend came down to visit me in Costa Rica and upon arriving he handed me an envelope. I asked him what was in the envelope and who had sent it. His response was that he did not know what was in the envelope and that in the crowd of people who were seeing him

off at the airport someone unknown to him approached and asked if he could carry down an envelope to me. He said sure to the stranger and boarded the airplane.

Upon opening the envelope we were both amazed to find $3,000 dollars in cash in an unmarked plain envelope. This answer to prayer would start a new phase in my missionary journey that would last a lifetime. God answers prayers in accordance with His purposes was the lesson learned along with a comprehension that I need not worry about things like clothes, money , food , shelter and such because God knows I have such needs and provides for them.

I understood that this time of equipping had come to an end and it was now time to proceed to Honduras; which was after all where God had called me to be a missionary.

Only having now less than three thousand dollars and wanting to use the Lord's money wisely I decided to travel to Honduras for a series of evangelistic campaigns by Tica Bus. I knew that I had unfinished business in Costa Rica and that I would go to Honduras for two weeks and then likely return to close up shop in Costa Rica. I asked an American friend and a Costa Rican friend to come with me on the bus ride to Honduras from Costa Rica via Nicaragua. My American friend had left college to come down to Costa Rica and eventually on to Honduras with me.

With bus tickets in hand we decided it would be a great thing to evangelize on the bus because after all we were going to be with the same people on this journey for a long time. With this in mind we went and purchased bags of fruit with the idea that we would give them away on the bus along with the Gospel. As we traveled along in the Costa Rican countryside we sang hymns and spiritual songs and shared fruit and the Gospel with our fellow passengers. After a while we arrived at the border crossing between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Everything was pleasant on the Costa Rican side and as we passed over to the Nicaraguan side a somber mood set in. This was after all a country that the U.S. was in a de facto altercation with via the Contras based in Honduras. For the most part I was oblivious to all of the politics because I was concentrating on other things. Upon exiting the bus I was suddenly made aware of this grim reality.

The armed soldier who greeted everyone as they exited the bus solemnly waived everyone along until he saw me, the green eyed blond headed gringo exiting the bus. At me he gravely waved to go in an opposite direction to stand next to a wall by a row of offices. Both Rick and Martin were waved along with the crowd to the luggage check area. My American friend had the Tico "Costa Rican" look and the other friend was a Tico so they did not have any ready made issues to confront.

As I prayerfully waited for what was next I was joined by a couple of other unfortunate passengers at the location next to the wall. I was then summarily summoned to follow the AK47 armed soldier to an office where an official of rank sat. Once inside the office the quizzing began. Who was I ? What was I doing? Where was I going? Did I work for the CIA? I told them that I was a missionary on my way to an evangelistic campaign in Catacamas, Olancho, Honduras. The official said that he thought I was a spy sent by the U.S. to perform a spy mission. He went on to further inform me that the largest Contra base in Honduras was located about 15 minutes outside of Catacamas where I had just told him I was going. He again said that I was a spy. I told him to look in my suitcase and he would find evangelistic tracts and printed

invitations that we were going to use in Honduras to invite people to hear about the Gospel. He looked in my bags and found the material and then proceeded to ask for my passport. The greeting official gave him my passport and he said in cold Spanish, "Do you see those hills over there?" To which I responded, "Si". He added, "It is in those hills that you are going to die today?" I rather calmly explained to him again that my purposes were to serve God and that I was not concerned about politics or wars. He responded that he did not believe me and that I would die in Nicaragua. I explained to him that I had filed my trip plans with both the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica and in Honduras and that if I did not arrive as planned that they would send people to look for me. His response was, "Who is going to look for you in Nicaragua, Gringo?" No one will come look for you here, people die here all of the time and no one asks questions. From somewhere on my human side I said to him, "Yeah, well my name is on the passenger list for the bus and if I don't show up in Honduras you will be the reason for an all out war between my country and yours!" He told the greeting officer to bring the passenger list. Wow! I thought in my mind that my bluff had worked. He looked at the list on the clipboard and then came over to me and said, "This is your name right here, correct?" To which I responded proudly that it was my name. He then with a demonic grin took a common pencil with an eraser and erased my name off of the list. He then gruesomely stated, "Hey, Gringo, Guess what? You are no longer on the list!" My response was none. I could only pray as I watched the other passengers loaded up on the bus and drove away. I was shocked that Rick and Martin had not come to rescue me and that I was alone. At that moment I could not clearly see how God was working in all of this because I could not find anything else to say. I can usually find something to say but when my name was erased off of the list, I guess it stunned me with the thought that he was now in control and that HE was possibly not. That was a blow that I did not want to admit.

I began to silently and earnestly pray and to put on a brave face.(Fear not them that can harm the body, but fear him who can condemn the soul) was the thought that came to my heart. But I was worried. In what seemed like an eternity, but was probably less than 10 minutes, I prepared my heart to meet God and for the official deadly plan to start. Then we both heard it at the same time.a distant rumbling sound. Then as quickly as it had disappeared the Tica Bus came back and stopped in front of the officials office. As he marched outside to see what the disturbance was all about he was greeted by a bus load of angry passengers who demanded to know what had happened to the Gringo who sang with them, gave them fruit and told them about Jesus. They demanded that I be returned to the bus. The official took into account the testimony of the crowd that myself, my American and Costa Rican friend had testified to them of Jesus and that we were truthful witnesses. As it turns out my friends could not come up with anything to do that made sense so when alone with the bus passengers they brought to everyone's attention that I was missing. What I learned from this is that God is bigger than war, government officials, communist soldiers with AK47's and death threats, God is the plan and there is no other resolution if it does not come from Him. I nearly sold out and nearly thought I could talk my way out of this until I was left speechless and then saw God take over. Sometimes we need to not lean on our own understanding but lean on God's provision as he is faithful.

As I boarded the bus I felt led to stop and talk with the official who was preparing my death before my eyes. I told him eye to eye, in his own native tongue with no accent that I had no issues with him and that as I had told him my mission was to speak of Jesus. I showed him my round trip ticket for Tica Bus and that I would be returning from Honduras in two weeks and that

if he was there I would buy him a coke and we could continue talking. The rest of the trip was a success granted by God because many came to the Lord in Honduras and true to my word I returned two weeks later to the same border point and to the same official and bought him a coke and told him more about Jesus. This is what God wanted. I learned that the people of Nicaragua were being led into a tyrannical system of communism that dictated to them that the U.S. was going to invade and take their lands and homes away. Each community was rallied to conduct 24 hour vigils of their towns and farms. I saw with my own eyes children so young that when they marched with their AK47s the gun butts dragged the ground. People were being oppressed by the power of darkness and at the same time faith was growing because there were believers in Nicaragua who were standing up and speaking about Jesus.

Now back in Costa Rica I had only a short time to wrap up my training and head back to Honduras.

During 1983 as I arrived in Honduras I was confronted by a new reality. The CIA some years earlier had begun covert operations to fight against the rise of communism in Latin America. Honduras had become a launching pad and the major operations location for Contra rebels who would do battle in both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The country was crawling with the presence of all types of foreigners and buses and vehicle checkpoints along with passport checks were the order of every day. The locals told me, "You speak like a Tico; if you are going to work in Honduras you need to speak like a Honduran!" Thus I understood that all Spanish is not the same. In light of what was going on I thought it wise to heed their advice and begin to learn Honduran Spanish. Each country in Latin America has their own slang and their own local terms. Each country has a slightly different way to pronounce words and in different countries the same exact word can mean one thing and in another country mean something totally different. I remember thinking, "God if you wanted me to work in Honduras why did you send me to learn Costa Rican Spanish?" Obviously God knows exactly what He is doing and I trusted in His provision and equipping. While beginning my mission work I also, by osmosis, set about to learn Honduran Spanish.

Being in Honduras with no financial support led me to serious contemplation about how to support myself as a vocational missionary. As my friend and I prayed about this we came to understand that we could use most of what was left of the $3,000 dollar gift to establish a contracting company to contract for the production of mahogany doors which would be exported back to the U.S. A Christian home builder agreed to purchase the doors and to invest in the endeavor. Thus we began to build contracts with primarily Christian owned carpentry shops who produced the doors which we in turn exported to Christian builders in the U.S. The concept presented many challenges which were eventually overcome with God's help. Over the years this produced sufficient income for me to work as a vocational full time missionary. After a period of time my American friend decided to return to the U.S. for schooling and to act as a Sales Agent for the stateside part of our business.

God blessed the faith exhibited by all and He kept us all in unity of spirit and purpose. Remaining in Honduras for a number of years, God led me daily to work with local christians and ministers as we went door to door inviting people to study God's word. God blessed these

days as many came to know the Lord and the churches grew in numbers and in strength. It was not too long before the humble building could not hold the number of worshippers who came. The church and it's leaders decided to lease a larger building in a more central location. The church building was to serve also as a base for the training of the students of the Honduras Bible School. With the Director and students in place and the curriculum developed classes began. A key part of the training for students of The Honduras Bible School was the practical application of their knowledge. Just as I had learned in Costa Rica through the program called Language Acquisition Made Practical, so the students at The Honduras Bible School learned Bible and evangelism in a very practical way. They studied 4 hours in the morning and then applied their learning in a very practical way by going out all afternoon on a daily basis to evangelize. In this way 10 students daily headed out to evangelize the small town of Catacamas. Now I understood why I was sent to learn "Costa Rican Spanish". It wasn't just the Spanish language that God was equipping me with, it was a practical model for learning and sharing the Gospel.

This is why Costa Rica was my training ground because the model for practical learning and sharing was there. The model that said it was necessary to get up and go, to get out of your comfort zone and reach out to others every single day.

One day it dawned on me that practically everyone I met in town had professed Christ at one time or another and most had been Baptized. I then thought about the lives that many of them were now living and God impressed upon me the understanding that evangelizing and churching people was not enough. We needed to teach people to be disciples who could make disciples. After all Jesus said to go out and make disciples not just believers. With this new realization I prayed for God's guidance and for help in making disciples out of believers.

In retrospect we realized that the practicality of bringing rural people to town in order to train them as ministers was filled with many complications and hardships. Some of the issues involved the practical things such as the fact that most rural peasants don't keep up with time on a clock as their days are not tightly scheduled and their mindset is based on planting and harvesting cycles which is very different from a structured school environment. Other things that come to mind is that most of them never had to pay rent before and never received a monthly paycheck and had no idea how to budget their money. Most of the first year class had never had an electricity and water bill to pay and this was truly a hard concept for them to grasp that you had to pay for these things and that they were expensive. We also found out in retrospect that these rural ministers were not always well received by small town folks who could easily comprehend that these ministers were under educated mountain folk. The biggest lesson of all was that after it was all said and done and all of the training had taken place some of the graduate ministers did not want to return to their former villages and their former rural lifestyles. They had after all graduated from a Bible School and were seeking to move ahead in their social economic standing. The inherent expectation had been created that these now graduated ministers would be supported by churches in the U.S. to go about preaching and teaching in Honduras. After all Honduras is a third world economy who's citizens can't be expected to economically be able to support their own ministers, correct? We found that this first year graduating class went on to be supported by U.S. churches and individuals and churches and they accomplished great things for the Lord however these great things were not in the rural mountains where they had come from. So in effect the rural populations were left on their own

because big city preaching school candidates can't effectively go and live the rural lifestyle and often aren't accepted anyway. Then those chosen by outsiders to be trained as ministers didn't want to return to the rugged lifestyle of mountain peasant living. God worked wonders through the first class of graduates who went out and made disciples in many large and medium size towns. Back at The Honduras Bible School the board and the directors prayed for a solution which would propagate a practical training solution which would lead to no expectation of U.S. financial support, a school that was uniquely Honduran and a school that left people in place in their communities.

The other critically important element was to involve the local churches in recommending, supporting and selecting candidates from their church to be provided with leadership training in lieu of an outsider looking in and selecting what seem to be outstanding individuals within the church bodies. The Honduras Bible School in effect became Honduran in nature by inviting select Honduran Christians to serve on the board of directors, by asking newly established churches to among themselves independently to select persons who they themselves would support and recommend to be trained in practical discipleship. This model from God proved to be a transformation of The Honduras Bible School from an entity where students were removed from their communities and relocated for training to a school that went out to the students and trained them in place by extension training. This method asked the teacher to go out and meet the student where he lived and to discipline him there in his element and in his local church with no expectation of financial gain. This was a practical way to make disciples in every community and God blessed it greatly. The person who led this effort for a few years was a Costa Rican who was in the youth group at the church where I studied language and culture in Costa Rica. He and his new family relocated to Honduras to work with this practical means of making disciples. This effort continued on 27 years later with The Honduran Bible School being its own Not for Profit Honduran entity led and directed by Hondurans. There have been hundreds of graduates who have become in effect vocational ministers of the gospel who are able to make disciples in a practical way as they go about their lives. God is in this all of the way.

On the U.S. side of this entity the board voted some years ago to turn over the reins to the Honduran entity and to move on. In a particular board meeting it was stated that we should end the U.S. board as it had no purpose now, having fulfilled its mission. Moved by God I spoke up and said that there is no reason to kill a great horse just because it has done its job. Upon further thought prayer and input it was eventually agreed that the U.S. board who had contributed so much over the years needed to realign it's focus instead of disbanding and retiring. God led this to become what is today Leadership Development International which has a stated mission to propagate internationally this practical model of making disciples. Most of the Board of Directors of **Leadership Development International** are former U.S. board members of The Honduras Bible School.

During this period of mission work God led me to new heights of language abilities and cultural abilities and also led other people to come down on mission trips and to initiate their own God led efforts.

As groups came down to participate in evangelistic campaigns many were moved by God in different ways. As a result of this moving of God's spirit the next project that grew out of The

Honduras Bible School was a project geared at ministering to the whole man instead of only making believers and disciples. I participated in the planning to bring to The Honduras Bible students basic training in first aid and rudimentary health care.

It was my background with the little injured girl in the mountains and my commitment to God that I would make a difference in this place that motivated my part of this effort. The concept was instituted to train these ministers so that as they evangelized house to house that they would be able to reach out physically to heal the sick and give compassionate care to the needy. The concept was raised of also establishing rural satellite healthcare clinics in newly existing churches as a means to outreach to the rural communities.

As all of this was taking place my means of support was growing as God saw fit to grow the little door export company into a corporation with 30 employees and a facility producing not only doors but furniture, cabinets, handrails, spindles, and eventually prefabricated houses designed to fit on one flatbed tractor trailer which would be exported to the U.S. Needless to say my time was at a premium and the very means of support now interfered with my ability to be a missionary. On the one hand I had partners and a business to run and on the other the full needs of the ministry.

Along the way I was introduced to the beautiful lady who is now my wife of 23 years. She was a Catholic, as is the majority of Latin America and we dated for a couple of years in Honduras. When I say dating I need to clarify that I lived in the rural Eastern half of the country and she lived in the capital city. The bus ride to see her took roughly 5 hours and with my time at a premium we dated as time permitted. I was resolute with God that I would not marry a person who differed in faith from myself as this would be an unequal yoke. I prayed and we prayed and she began to study the Bible with a local minister who was a friend of mine and over a short period of time she became a Christian. I never mentioned to her that I had made a vow to not marry in an unequal yoke so that her decision for Christ would be solely based on a true response to the Gospel message. Shortly after she became a Christian and the Honduras Bible School had it's new director God worked it so that my company could relocate to the capital city where the labor force, facilities and the export capabilities were greater. I relocated along with our company to the capital and the business continued but my mission work slowed down. I was not content that my focus on missions had shifted from vocational mission work to a vocation. Somehow in retrospect I don't think God was pleased either as our company became a corporation with other partners involved. The reason for existing became muddled, at least in my mind. For God's own reasons my involvement in the company ceased and the company moved on and relocated to another part of Honduras.

With no means of support and a buyout package that was limited in dollar amount and on a promissory note I opted to return to the U.S. for employment. This in itself caused many decisions to take place. I had to leave behind my fiancé for a time until things settled down financially. I left for the U.S and worked for a furniture production company for some time and eventually earned enough money to make the magic phone call to Honduras to ask my fiancé to be my wife. To my astonishment the answer was, "This is a life changing decision for me and it involves me leaving my family and moving to the U.S. so I will let you know next week." In

retrospect it was the proper way to make such serious lifelong commitments but at the time I wanted a yes answer.

The week of waiting was a similar experience to the plane ride to Costa Rica. A week on no appetite, apprehension and fear was the order of the day. Finally the answer came in a positive happy phone call and we made plans to be married in Honduras in a matter of a few months. We were married in Honduras in 1985 and returned to the U.S. We remained engaged in missions and as a young married couple we were active and faithful in our local church. During 1986 a phone call came one night telling us about a doctor in Atlanta who along with his wife had been motivated by God to go down to Honduras and start a medical mission linked to The Honduras Bible School. The call was an awesome answer to the earlier prayers on how to equip the ministry students with basic first aid and healthcare training. The caller also said that our local church had donated a 1968 school bus, the very bus that I rode in for youth ministry activities earlier in my Christian walk, to the Honduras mission work. The caller wanted to know if myself and my wife would drive the bus down to Honduras along with the doctor and his family. Because I had driven to Honduras on two prior occasions and had mission experience in Honduras we prayerfully agreed to make the journey. The account of this trip can be found in a booklet written by Mr. Charlie Walton who is a writer who came along for the journey with his son. This book is called, Travels with the Jungle Doc and is a worthwhile read on travels in third world countries. I will not elaborate on the actual journey here as it can be read about there in Charlie's book. I will say that it was an awesome, fearful, beautiful, risky drive in a 20 year old school bus from Louisiana to Honduras. The bus being driven by me and others who had never driven a bus before gives you insight into just how powerful God can be. I recommend reading his book for more details.

Upon arriving in Honduras with the bus and the Clark family it was understood that the Clark family would be leaving for Guatemala for language training for an extended period prior to returning to Honduras for their mission. Dr. Clark asked me if myself and my wife would be willing to stay on in Honduras and lay the foundation for his mission work since I knew all of the people involved, was on the board of The Honduras Bible School and had visited all of the rural churches on a frequent basis. My wife and I did not have support to stay on as missionaries but Dr. Clark offered to share a small portion of his support with us so that we could stay on as missionaries again. We prayed about this and took the good doc up on his proposition. We saw the Clark's off to Guatemala and set about laying the groundwork for what has become one of the largest full time ministries in Central America. The ministry goal was to preach and heal which was the fulfillment of our plan at The Honduras Bible School to be able to equip the ministers with the ability to create disciples in a practical way but to also minister to the whole man. One day after a meeting as I meditated on scripture God revealed to me to suggest the name **PREDISAN** as a name for the mission. http://www.predisan.org/ Predicar in Spanish means to Preach and Sanar means to Heal so in it's basic Spanish form Predisan is an acronym for Preach and Heal. This name was well received and became the official name of the mission.

Dr. Clark asked me to register this name with the Honduran government and to obtain the necessary permissions to operate the ministry. I was able to do this with the help of my father in law who was the Director of Natural Resources under the Callejas Administration in Honduras. We worked for one year with the Clarks in Honduras laying the foundation for Predisan. During

this year we moved five different times because we could not find a house to rent in Catacamas that had daily water. Sometimes we didn't have water for weeks at a time and were often bathed by Guacal. By Guacal means to dip the water out of a holding tank with the shell of a plant and bathe with cold water poured over your head. This was part of our missionary life along with frequent trips to the mountains to hold medical clinics and to establish rural healthcare clinics and rural healthcare workers among the rural Christian populations. Charlie Walton's 18 year old son, Don, who lived with my wife and I had returned home for the holidays and tragically died in an accidental carbon dioxide poisoning. Let me say right here on this page that Don was an awesome young man who was poised to do great things in God's kingdom before he was called home early. Charlie and Kay continue on with Predisan for over two decades as it has grown to be a very large not for profit Christian medical ministry. Predisan Honduras is now directed by a full Honduran staff. www.predisan.org Dr. Robert Clark has passed away in the U.S. and his wife Doris stayed on in Honduras to provide over two decades of leadership to Predisan as a missionary. The Clark children have grown up to become medical doctors themselves and participate with mission Predisan.

After one year with mission Predisan we opted to return to the U.S. as we only had partial support though Dr. Clark's missionary support. Upon returning to the U.S we lived in Louisiana where I worked in a city government position and we continued to support and be heavily involved in missions for some years.

Another surprise phone call came one night asking us if we would be interested in moving to Honduras to operate a Resort Hotel on the North coast of Honduras. With a desire to spend time with our Honduran side of the family and to be active in the country again as a vocational missionary we took up the offer and moved to Honduras. While in Honduras I collaborated with the 7th Group of Special Forces U.S. Army assisting them with interpretation, translation and resource localization. After completing the construction projects and successfully managing the resort hotel for one year a tragic event occurred in that one of my assistant managers was murdered. Shortly after that we received two death threats which are to be taken very, very seriously in Honduras. We don't comprehend the nature of the threats as to why we were selected but having the knowledge that my assistant manager had been murdered one week earlier we were counseled and advised to vacate the area. We had worked with the local churches and some of the former Honduras Bible School students to implement leadership development while we were there and we were not happy about having to leave on short notice.

We remained long enough to put into place trusted management and then we left unannounced in the middle of the night. At this time we had two small children and we left most of our possessions there and drove off into the night. My wife stayed with the kids for a short time in the capital while I returned to the U.S. to seek employment. I became employed at a parish government agency in Louisiana where I worked for 14 years. During this time we remained active in missions and in 1998 I was invited to join the Board of Directors of **Mission del Caribe**. At the time Mission Del Caribe's stated purpose was to introduce people to missions by facilitating mission trips and establishing mission camps. The arm of Mission Del Caribe which facilitated these activities was called **The Journey Program**. I had been asked to locate a piece of property to help establish a model working ranch, farm and mission compound for Journey Mission groups. The property was to be over 1,000 acres in size. I traveled to the very remote

Eastern half of Honduras on foot and by canoe for two weeks searching for this piece of land. This trip is written about in a book called, "A Dialogue: A Trip To The Mosquito Coast". It was a very interesting and very dangerous trip through battle zone areas where Contras and communist forces clashed in the remote Eastern area of Honduras. I located a piece of property here that was next to the Patuca River and would have been an excellent location. It was later decided that the location was too remote and so we continued searching. By providence I came across a 1,600 acre ranch that the owner wished to sell in San Esteban, Olancho, Honduras. The ranch was located in a valley called Paradise Valley. This is written about in a book called, "They Call It Paradise" and is sold among others by **Honduras Outreach** at www.hoi.org I assisted to negotiate the successful purchase of this 1600 acre ranch. Clearly other persons of great faith invested their finances into this purchase and thus the first Journey Missions Camp was established. Many people played a part in establishing, leading and financing this ministry and they are to be commended for their faith. As the Journey camp took wing other projects were also growing such as **The John Abraham Children's Home** which I had previously been asked to help establish. This children's home came about when one of the mission groups visited and a mother of a starving child offered to give them her child so that it could live. The John Abraham Children's Home was directed and ran by a former graduate of the Honduras Bible School and his wife for over two decades. They provided for the needs of orphan children through this ministry and their network of supporters. Juan and Blanca Mondragon is the name of this faithful couple. Other projects that grew to become their own entities were **The Good Samaritan School** which provides Christian education to Pre kindergarten through High School. Again a participant on a mission trip was moved by God to create and minister to this area of need. The school has operated for over two decades and the school Director was the wife of a gentleman who was one of the early converts to Christianity in this area.

As Mission Predisan they have instituted a ministerial medical intervention program for those addicted to alcohol. This program is called **CEREPA** and has operated successfully for many years intervening in the lives of addicts and introducing them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

While in Louisiana we were asked to help start another organization which came to be called **ASOCRIDE** which is an acronym for **Association for Christian Development.** We assisted with the purchase of land, building of buildings and hiring of staff for a new Christian Elementary School at Trujillo on the North coast of Honduras. While later living in Honduras and managing the Resort Hotel my wife served the school by teaching English to the student. ASOCRIDE continues it's mission today with each student being sponsored by individuals.

In addition to this God led me to assist in the creation of a child welfare and adoption agency called **M.O.M**. an acronym for **Missions of Mercy.** This agency facilitated adoptions for orphan children over many years.

The Journey Program relocated to the North Coast of Trujillo and a new camp was established there. The 1600 acre ranch continued to be operated by Honduras Outreach Inc. and flourishes today as a very strong, motivated and whole man outreach to residents in Central Olancho. Honduras Outreach Inc. headquarters' location is in Decatur, Georgia and they specialize in facilitation of mission trips for interdenominational groups. On site in Honduras they have a full staff and groups participate in evangelism, elementary school development, health care and many

other awesome projects. www.hoi.org During 2007 I was actively recruited for a position with Honduras Outreach as CEO, however after months of prayerful search Mr. Tom Paul was installed as CEO and is reportedly doing and awesome work in the Lord.

In 1998 Hurricane Mitch struck Honduras and made landfall where our Journey Missions Camp was located. With knowledgeable people on the ground MDC quickly became a leader in providing ministry outreach, relief and development to the people of Honduras. MDC was blessed to be able to raise over 1 million dollars in the ensuing months which was used to rebuild homes and lives of thousands of affected people in Honduras. MDC worked with it's sister agency The Honduras Bible School to produce damage assessments and strategies to respond to devastation of Hurricane Mitch. This response was multi year response and included the implementation of something unique to MDC's efforts which was the ability to hire and put into place **Relief Ministers** who were trained in relief work and in ministry. This was a unique opportunity to reach out to the whole man. These efforts included the establishment of a Christian Medical Clinic called **The Good Samaritan Clinic** at Trujillo, Honduras. This clinic was operated successfully by Dr.'s Tony and Maria Clara Tabora for several years. This was an awesome Honduran Christian missionary couple who laid down their careers and service for the victims of Hurricane Mitch. Dr. Maria Clara also assisted with the **BECA Program**, which is a scholarship program for needy students. BECA in Spanish means scholarship. In a tragic incomprehensible event Dr. Tony Tabora was brutally murdered at Trujillo, Honduras. The case was never solved and no one was ever arrested. Dr. Maria Clara of necessity relocated with her children. The Journey Missions Ministry continued forward but eventually relocated to Catacamas,Olancho, Honduras.

I participated heavily for years in the Hurricane Mitch response and out of these efforts I learned that as Christians and missionaries we are uniquely tailored to respond to natural disasters because we bring Christ along with us to every encounter. This mindset led me to help create **MDC Disaster Assistance Response Teams** which are trained teams of Christian Disaster Response Ministers who have differing specialties. During the year 2000 El Salvador experienced dual earthquake events that were catastrophic and MDC was blessed to be able to send in a team that included myself as a Disaster Response Specialist, An Agronomist from Honduras who was both an Agronomist and past Director of The Honduras Bible School, a Honduran minister who was the current Director of The Honduras Bible School and a Honduran Medical Missionary. Although employed in Louisiana with a government agency I made a request to my supervisor to allow me to take off vacation time to lead the Disaster Response Team to El Salvador in the wake of the first earthquake. Little did I know that upon assembling the team in El Salvador on our very first morning as Dr. Tony and I discussed our strategy, a second large earthquake occurred instantly killing thousands of people. We ran outside in the midst of the earthquake and found destruction at every angle. After things settled a bit we were taken to the home of a local Salvadoran Missionary. From here we participated in organizing a nationwide representative board with damage assessments and response could effectively occur. We were not able to leave the country as the earthquake had forced the closure of the runway and electrical lines and buildings were down everywhere. From this missionary's home we had email communication and were able to communicate back to the U.S. for reporting and fund raising efforts. Over $100,000 dollars were raised and administered through this nation wide representative accountability group. Many thousands of homes and church buildings were rebuilt

through these funds and leveraging mission work groups to travel to El Salvador. MDC responded also in South America and in the U.S. during Hurricane Katrina. Reporting on the Hurricane Katrina response can be found at www.hunterhills.org/katrina . MDC was able to participate in many relief and development projects in Southeast Louisiana and to assist in the facilitation of work groups and relief staging areas for supplies. MDC participated in planning and assessments in addition to lending on the ground expertise and coordinator with other support agencies and groups. I was on the ground in Louisiana for over 7 months both employed in local government and leading disaster relief missions.

I failed to mention that during our time living in Louisiana we managed to achieve the distinction of having personally flooded on three separate occasions and having to rebuild from scratch. We always bought in non flood zones and we still flooded. I can express to you how much patience, endurance and faith goes into rebuilding your life three times over, but it is enough to not want to do it again.

While my family stayed in Alabama post Hurricane Katrina I had to return to my employer who had also completely flooded. In addition to my employment duties, I had to accomplish the rebuilding of our home, help rebuild my parents home and help lead other efforts at relief.

An awesome relief group called **Hilltop Relief and Rescue** was founded around the time of Hurricane Katrina and they are a California based relief agency with a website at www.hilltoprescue.org . This group did an awesome job at helping the people of Southeast Louisiana and the founders have been very active in working with myself and others in Latin America and the U.S. It has been our privilege to have interacted with many Christian groups, agencies and individuals who have given themselves first to the Lord and them to those around them wholeheartedly.

We are currently living in Cleveland, Georgia and we remain active in missions. A recent blessing in our lives was that I was recently asked to serve on a Missions Development Team at our local church. We have been blessed in that our sons have become active also in missions. Our sons have traveled frequently with us on mission trips. Our oldest son who is currently a college student spent the summer before last in mainland China on a 3 month evangelistic mission where he took Jesus to the Chinese people. This summer he spent 3 months in Italy sharing Jesus with the Italian people and my wife and kids spent the majority of the summer sharing Jesus with Honduras. Our oldest son Kevin is currently serving as the Development Officer for **Mission Pointe Resource Center**. www.mission-point.org

God's renewed calling on my life is with the fresh understanding that IT ALL HAS TO BE ABOUT JESUS! Relief and development and disaster relief are good works, but this new calling is different in that God is calling out 300 Mighty Warriors for His unified purposes. Chief among God's purposes for M300 Ministries is the snatching of lost souls from the flames and the unified work of the battle against ungodly dominions, powers and principalities.

While it is impossible and would be boring to list every detail of your life in such a writing as this it is my hope that this writing is just enough to assure you that God continues to CALL OUT PEOPLE TO A FOREIGN FIELD and that you can rest assured that He is in control now, then

and forever. My passports are filled with stamps from Central American countries and Mexico and each trip has a story of faith behind it, but what is written here is so that you may believe in God's power, calling and His provision.

Historical Bio: Dennis Wayne Gaines

(Written by Wayne Gaines principally for his sons and grandchildren) We are called to leave a Godly legacy and with this in mind, I write this principally for my family and anyone else who can be encouraged by it.