

September, 2020

Hello family and friends,

I apologize. I have tried to edit but the words rebelled! I am sending the lighter pictorial version separate. You may choose.

As many of you know, in our early years in Roatan we had the opportunity to share our lives with Juan, a Spanish teen who needed some people. It was a mutually beneficial relationship – we “parented” Juan and he showed us how to navigate all sorts of things Honduran.



One day I was fuming about something Honduran that I felt was restricting the people. Juan turned to me and said “What do you expect of a third-world country?” I chided Juan for this view of his country. “Don’t call it a third-world country. The term is ‘developing country,’” I admonished. During the past few years, we have felt that so many people were making good progress. We were seeing such a change in the standard of living for the people we visited.

Effective six months ago, that ended. Roatan went into lockdown. This tourist island has no tourists. The figures we hear are that 80% of the people who had work before the lockdown now have no means of earning an honest living. There is no developing happening in the country! As one of my friends says, “Es feo.” (It is ugly.)

This same friend reports that her husband and his father now have Covid. Until a few weeks ago, there were very few cases of the virus, but this has changed with the hospital in crisis mode and the Covid center turning people away. Two out of the eight or nine families we check in with have family members who have tested positive. (Did you just stop and pray? Thank you.)

There is not a day that we do not have conversation with at least one person from Roatan via social media. Usually they are just checking in with us but sometimes they make a need known to us.

And so, what are we doing? How can we help this third-world country from our snug home here in Canada? Back when this all started we decided that even though we were not physically with the people we have always supported, we needed to respond by providing encouragement and demonstrating what we read in I John 3:18 *“let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”* (ESV)

While we can’t support all the people we know, we have selected a small number of families that have been placed in our path. These families include our students - we want to ensure that these kids can continue to thrive - sort of. These families are also very generous, so we know that they will extend support as they can to their neighbours.

Over the past six months, we have provided these families with money for food, and gas to cook this food. The worst message we have received is, “we have no food.” We have paid the power and water bills. Families can survive on \$300 per month with the power bill swallowing up a large chunk of this. Because the students receive all their school lessons online, we have paid for internet or data for their phones. What we are doing is what we are called to do - responding in love with our actions.

Not to say that we don't love in word and talk too. We send encouragement in our written messages. There have been lots of translation errors, but the heart of the message is always clear. Our message is simple - you are not alone - we care for you.

We are so appreciative of all the donations we have received. Thank you! When we receive a donation, it is usually sent out immediately via Western Union to meet a need. We've told you before of the way God matches a need and a donation, usually almost immediately. During the past few months we have been able to purchase two replacement phones, cover the expenses of dental work, and purchase medicine and cover medical needs. A friend has a new circular saw so that he can work. Another needed barb wire. We sent money for baby formula and pampers. We - you - covered the expenses to have a new power meter installed. Each special purchase was the result of a special donation.

Recently, our church council sponsored an outdoor Sunday evening concert. We were invited to share our work, and the resulting support was overwhelming. Part of this money went toward the purchase of a new water tank for a family that was struggling to collect enough water for their needs. Water was coming to their house once every two to three weeks, and their three barrels did not have the capacity for their family of eight. As soon as we received news of how generous the donation had been, we contacted the family. A few days later, they had a new 2500 litre water tank sitting in place - just a few hours before the water was turned on to their pipe.

Many of you responded to our Mother's Day appeal. Take a look at the top banner! Each of these three families were provided with a \$300 gift to give their new little one a good start. The elated thank yous we received were meant for you!

And Juan? He is on the Mainland where he has lived for five years. He has supported himself with various types of employment. Up until a few weeks ago, he was employed as a security guard but one guy had to be let go, and it was him. He and his motorcycle are scraping a living making deliveries for a department store. For now, I would have to agree with him. He lives in a third world country. There is no government assistance and Covid has broken what was of the health care system. Public schools are providing lessons erratically and teachers are not paid. Honduras is not developing, as of 2020. All of the progress we had seen has been erased. Poverty is ugly!

Our prayer requests for this time:

1. Please pray for those locked in poverty and suffering with Covid. Pray for healing and hope.
2. Please pray for us - there are heart-hurting days. Pray for discernment.
3. Please pray that the needs we are providing for and the funds we have, balance.

I want to share with you what I have shared with our Spanish friends. It's from Psalm 46.

God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear. Though (.... there is lack of provisions, no work, incapable government, Covid) The Lord Almighty is with us. (and He says) "Be still, and know that I am God."

Thank you for your prayers and support so that we can respond in love.

Peace and Hope to All,

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