

Missions

**Missions Exposure
in Nicaragua
and Honduras**

**Interview with
First-Year Missionaries**

**Flooding in Peru:
Healing Amid Destruction**

MOP 2017 Report



Thinking It Through

BY MICAH TUTTLE

I Live in Babylon but I'm Not From Here!

By 550 B.C. the Babylonians had conquered much of the known world. Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Judah, taking captive their best and brightest youth. Following the narrative in the first chapter of Daniel, we see a spiritual illustration of what has happened to our world: it has been taken captive! Earth has been sent into exile. The devil has been allowed to rule for a short time.

We continue reading that the captives were taught “the literature and language of the Chaldeans,” and “they were to be educated for three years.” Notice what’s happening here; the Babylonians’ tactic after conquering a nation was to assimilate these superb young men by brainwashing them!

Every aspect of life for Daniel and his three friends was dramatically altered during this reeducation—culture, language, religion, education, music, literature, and clothing. Their very names were changed to be associated with the Babylonian gods. Daniel, which in Hebrew means “The Lord is my judge,” was changed to Belteshazzar. His new name meant “Guardian of the treasures of Bel.” Hananiah was changed from “Grace of God” to Shadrach, meaning “Inspiration of the sun.” Mishael was changed from “The Lord is the all-powerful God” to Meshach, or “Devoted to the god of Sha.” Azariah, meaning “The Lord is my help,” was changed to Abednego, or “Servant of Nego, the god of fire.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s plan was deliberate. Similarly today, Satan is calculating. The strategy was and is to blur the identity of God’s image-bearers and to brainwash them. Have you noticed this in our day and age? There are hidden agendas presented via the media, music, internet, and television programming. Education is not immune from these influences: humanism, blurred gender lines, homosexuality, abortion, and so on. The story in Daniel chapter one offers a perfect illustration of Satan’s tactic right up to the present day.

Imagine their first day of school. Four young men enrolled in the infamous “University of Babylon,” without parents and far from everyone and everything familiar. The richest and most prosperous city in the world stood in stark contrast to Jerusalem, now in ruins. Babylon, famous for its hanging gardens, luxury, and entertainment, offered seemingly endless pleasures.

One could easily get lost in Babylon just like the world today.

Notice a defining moment in the life of Daniel! These words are monumental: “Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself.” Everything had changed for Daniel. Everything, except the resolve of his heart. Strong in the Lord, he decided beforehand that he would remain faithful to his God.

The battle was and is for the mind! You must choose this day whom you will serve, resolve to remain faithful whatever the cost, and determine not to defile yourself in this world! You must refuse to be assimilated into the system of this world and reject the religion of Babylon! To survive as an ambassador and image-bearer of the living God in an identity-blurring society, you must purpose ahead of time to preserve purity in a pagan world. With Daniel, you must take courage and recognize: “I live in Babylon but I’m not from here!”

Daniel also had godly friends, which was a decided advantage. What an asset to faith good friends can be, side by side, resolving beforehand to be faithful. Standing together, these young men risked their lives before the most powerful man on earth. And God blessed them. God honors those that honor Him (1 Samuel 2:30). Notice how the Lord blessed them. They were not only “better in appearance” and “skilled in all literature and wisdom,” but “Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams,” and they were “ten times better” than all the wise men of Babylon!

Daniel lived in Babylon until the first year of King Cyrus. After a careful reading, we note his service to four kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. We can estimate this to have been nearly seven decades! Throughout the book we read about one test after another. In every one he was proven faithful. Daniel started well, continued well, and finished well! Many start well but finish badly. Where are the persevering Daniels of today? We must pray for faithfulness over the long haul.

We see Daniel tremendously blessed because of his perseverance and faithfulness. He had incredible resolve, held up under unusual testing, and saw incalculable blessings. As we look to our celestial home, may we be like Daniel recognizing, “I live in Babylon but I’m not from here.” ■

Michah Tuttle serves in Peru.

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2 Nations, 8 Days

A Tale of Missions Exposure

BY JIM HAESEMEYER



What can be learned about missions on a trip lasting only eight days? Given the varying nature of missions activities and the widely diverse fields of service, is the idea of acquainting young people with God's call to the foreign field in such a limited time valid? Despite the obvious challenges, David Reeve (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 29), Garrett Lassiter, and I hoped the answer would be a resounding yes.

Jim McCarthy, Steve Price, and Brady Collier, leaders of the intensive Discipleship Intern Training Program (DITP), asked us to take some of the men from the program to Central America. Our goal was to expose them to the gamut of missionary work—from fledgling efforts to mature assemblies in both rural and urban environs.



The outset

On a humid Saturday afternoon, I drove down a winding two-lane road into Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and across town to the airport to pick up David, Garrett, and the arriving team. Despite their long flight, the team, which included

Nicholas Weaver, Rami (from the Middle East), Josiah Dinatale, and Ben Knott (son of missionaries Carl and Ruth Knott, MPH Day 16), wore broad smiles of exuberance.

A 20-minute drive through the heart of the capital brought us to the home of Charlie and Holly Wooler (MPH Day 18). As always, the Woolers displayed grace in the abundance of food they provided for us travelers. As we sat around the table, they also shared insights, counsel, and edifying stories, all of which were gained from their nearly 40 years of service in Central and South America. Our trip was off to a good start, indeed.

The journey

Early the next morning, we braved traffic on our way to an inner-city assembly, which was packed with local believers. However, our visit was brief because we had to travel to an older, larger assembly, located about 20 minutes away. After a quick lunch, we drove through more traffic north of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and up a mountain to an assembly camp in Valle de Angeles. There, we joined Ted Windle of TeamWorkers, who would travel with us to Nicaragua where he and Jeff Reid, the leader of the Canadian team, would construct a chapel in the tiny community of El Jocote.

On Monday morning, we loaded two vans with bags, tools, and passengers. Following a long, winding descent down the back of the mountain, we entered the broad Zamorano Valley, and shortly thereafter, we arrived at the Nicaraguan border.

The border crossing from Honduras to Nicaragua was a lesson in patience, as usual. We stood in a line for Honduran immigration, then a line for Honduran customs, a line for Nicaraguan immigration, a line for medical questioning, a line for Nicaraguan customs, a line for vehicle insurance, a line for the local municipal tax, another line for vehicle fumigation, and, finally, one to collect all the receipts given at the other

lines. A mere three hours later, a smiling Nicaraguan guard lifted the pipe barrier and, slipping the gearshift into first, I eagerly let out the clutch, getting us happily on our way.



TeamWorkers building the new chapel in El Jocote.

The team learning patience at the Honduran border.



Believers gathering for an evening meeting at El Jocote.

Destination Estelí

Our base for the next three days was the mid-sized city of Estelí, nestled in an expansive mountain valley in north-central Nicaragua. The sun hung low over the high mountains to the west of town as we pulled up in front of the chapel and wearily exited the vans.

As we entered the building, a throng of Christians engulfed David with enthusiastic hugs and handshakes, since they had not seen their beloved brother in several years. After a hearty meal, the believers dispersed our team members to various homes for a night of refreshing sleep.

Mornings in Estelí are brisk, and the crisp air ensures that the wake-up shower is brief, as it consists of a half-filled bucket of

water and small cup for flinging the water on one's body. Once we enjoyed a tasty breakfast of plantains, beans, tortillas, and coffee, the team divided up. While Ted procured construction materials for the El Jocote project, Javier, a brother serving the Lord in Matagalpa, arrived in a wheezing communist-era car. Garrett and Nick piled into the car, and it sputtered down the dirt road. The men spent the next few days evangelizing and preaching alongside Javier, who was eager for the help. Meanwhile, I took Ben, Rami, and Josiah to a town called Ocotal. There, we stayed with a Honduran missionary named Daniel and organized an outreach in an impoverished barrio on the outskirts of town. Later, Ben wrote the following regarding his time with Daniel:

Daniel and Marta live in a very simple house—just two rooms attached to the side of a courtyard, a small bathroom, and a kitchen with only three walls (the open side faces the yard). I remember sitting around the table in their three-walled kitchen, celebrating his birthday with a small cake, and surrounded by his wife and two children, I heard him thank God for such abundance of blessing and goodness, and for the privilege of having us there with him. I remember him looking at me with tears and saying, “What more could you ask for?”



Clockwise from top left: An abundance of witnessing opportunities at the Matagalpa street market; Team member witnessing door-to-door in a rural area near Ocotal; The team heading home after a day of evangelism; Rami preaching while Garrett interprets.

Destination Dolores

Thursday morning found us driving south toward the town of Dolores where Tony Flett and family (MPH Day 20) would graciously host us for the rest of our stay. In the pattern that plagued us the entire trip, a normal four-hour journey turned into an all-day affair when we became hopelessly lost.

The next three days were a flurry of seeing, experiencing, listening, and learning. We participated in door-to-door witnessing with Tony, hospital visitations with Mitch Parent (MPH Day 20), evangelism in Managua with Mark Bachert (MPH Day 20), and ministry at an assembly in a rural area known as “El Panama,” as well as at an outreach that Mitch and his family established.

Among these experiences, we had the opportunity to meet the young men from a training program directed by Mark. These men take a crash course in language acquisition through complete immersion and are then sent out to work alongside Honduran missionaries and Nicaraguan nationals. The training is intense yet thorough.



Remi visiting with the Flett family.

Destination Managua

On Saturday night, we traveled from Dolores to Managua for a joint meeting with the believers in the area. The building was packed. Kyle Wilson (MPH Day 20) directed the meeting, and Nick preached while Ben interpreted. I stood at the back of the room so that I could take it all in: the energetic singing of the assembled Christians, their rapt attention as Nick gave a challenging message, and the warm fellowship as the believers chatted and laughed with one another.

As I surveyed the scene, my mind went back to a time more than 20 years ago, when I accompanied a Honduran brother Oscar Cubas to Tauquil, Nicaragua, a tiny village tucked up close to the Honduran border. Although a Communist uprising prevented Stan and Esma Hanna (MPH Day 18) from building a church in the area years earlier, Oscar desired to establish the

first assembly in Nicaragua and reached out to the people when relative peace was restored. During that visit, Oscar, eight or nine local believers, and I gathered around a rugged wooden table in a dirt-floored adobe and broke bread in remembrance of the Lord's love and work. Later, we baptized five new believers in a pond located on the outskirts of the village. It was a small but encouraging beginning.

Years later, as I observed the assembly in Managua, my heart was overwhelmed with thanksgiving and gratitude. Seeing all the believers unite out of a shared love for the Lord was an unforgettable moment.



Nick preaching to believers while Ben interprets.

The answer

A little after 5:00 on Monday morning, I dropped the men off at Managua's international airport and turned the old van north, toward my home near the Honduran border. I was weary but immensely thankful to God. Had we accomplished our goals? Yes. Precious memories were made in just eight days during the visits with seven missionary families, the ministry in 11 assemblies, and the merging of two nations. More importantly, God sent dear brothers from the DITP who enthusiastically and wholeheartedly gave themselves to learning and serving. Their ministry and selfless examples blessed the assemblies here in Nicaragua, and they blessed me. I thank God for what He is doing in Central America through the hard labors and intense dedication of the missionaries, both permanent and temporary, and the nationals. And I thank Him for allowing me to experience even a portion of it. ■



Jim and Sharon Haesemeyer were commended in 1989 by South Plains Bible Chapel, Lubbock, Texas.

Interview with Pablo & Bethany Calderon



First-Year Missionaries Share about Daily Life

Pablo and Bethany Calderon and their three-year-old daughter, Carolina, recently followed the Lord's call to serve in Romania. Pablo and Bethany work at an international school where Carolina attends, minister in the local church, and are learning to speak Romanian. Pablo is heavily involved in music ministries and is part of a band called The Ineloquent with Daniel and Georgiana Eakins (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 15). Pray for the Calderon family as they seek to form relationships with those around them and serve the Lord in Romania.

What foods do you eat?

Here in Romania, if we eat "fast food," we generally have Turkish shaorma (similar to a gyro), ceafa de porc (the neck of the pig), Greek food, snitel (breaded chicken), or fries. Almost anything you order here comes with French fries! Bethany was able to order a Crock-Pot through a friend here and uses that a lot at home. She loves to cook and bake, so we don't have to eat out too often. We enjoy having people over to our house for meals. Carolina's favorite snack is pufuleti, which is basically Cheeto Puffs but without the cheese. Plenty of great fresh fruits and veggies are available too, but because they are so fresh their shelf life is shorter than what we are used to. This requires more frequent trips to the grocery stores. Also, we are learning that food expiration dates are more of a suggestion.

How do you get around?

We were able to purchase a vehicle after a couple of months, and it is very helpful since we are constantly going between school, home, church, and running errands. Bethany also uses public transportation quite a bit to get around, and taxis are readily available too.

What is the weather like?

The weather here is comparable to the Midwest in the U.S. This past winter had the most snow Brasov has seen in 10-plus years, which made Bethany happy since she loves snow! The summers are very hot and humid as well.

What cultural behavior do you find interesting?

Most Romanians fear what they call "the current." They don't like breezes coming through a window or having fans on since they believe this will make them sick. We sleep with the windows open and a fan on, so people think we are crazy! We see people sweating on the bus in 90-degree weather, but they refuse to open the windows. Also, it's common to see people

walking around with cotton balls in their ears to protect from the cold air.

Do you feel settled?

Yes and no. Most days we feel settled and adjusted to our new "normal." But some days little cultural differences we see or things we aren't able to find here will make us feel out of place.

What do you miss the most?

Carolina misses her grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, and Chuck E. Cheese's! Bethany misses certain foods or ingredients to bake with that are not available here. She also misses being able to drive where she wants to. (Almost all cars here have manual transmission and she hasn't learned to drive stick shift yet.) Pablo misses certain foods, such as barbecue or a good steak, and watching American football.

What is a typical day for you?

A typical day for us here is waking up and getting to the international school by 8:30 a.m. Bethany works in the office, Pablo teaches history, and Carolina enjoys her prekindergarten class until 12:45 p.m. We go home for lunch and then Pablo usually leaves right away to head to the church to prepare for either a prayer meeting, worship night, or The Ineloquent music practice. Bethany either stays home with Carolina and babysits another child or heads to the park. The church and music ministry keep Pablo very busy, so we usually only get to have dinner together a couple of times a week.

How do you relax?

We enjoy going on family outings to see beautiful castles and other Romanian cities. We also enjoy having "down time" at home to play games or watch a movie. Someone bought us the game Settlers of Catan in Romanian, so we enjoy playing

God is slowly tearing down the walls of division in our city!

that together and with guests. Bethany also loves to bake for family and friends any chance she can get.

How do you get to know people?

Pablo has several opportunities through the music ministry to meet new people. Recently, Bethany has had a good opportunity through Carolina's dance classes. She is able to talk with several moms and the dance studio's owners.

What is challenging?

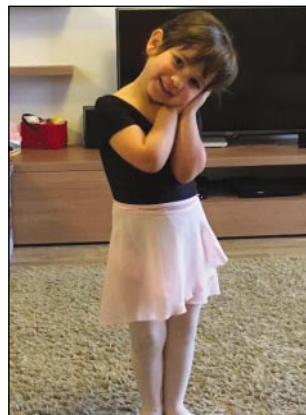
The most challenging thing is definitely the language. We began taking language lessons and are working to learn it, but it is still a daily struggle to remember everything we've learned. Most of the younger generation knows English, so that helps with communication.

What is exciting?

Recently, our local church had a worship night that leaders from other churches attended and were involved. This is very exciting, because, when we started hosting these worship nights, we were often told that this would be a very difficult thing to accomplish. God is slowly tearing down the walls of division in our city!

How can we pray for you?

We deeply value and appreciate any prayers! We could use prayer for stamina and endurance as the days are long. Please pray for unity among the Romanian believers. There are so many things that cause division here. Pray for those we've met in our community, that God would continue to open doors for our relationships to develop. Also, pray for us as we raise our daughter, Carolina. She is at the age where discipline seems to be a constant occurrence in our home! She is a very sweet, funny, and strong-willed little girl. ■



From top: A band rehearsal with Daniel and Georgiana Eakins; A Romanian meal, including shaved chicken and parmesan salad; The clock tower of Sighisoara; Carolina ready for dance class and her new dance class friends.



Flooding in Peru

Healing Amid Destruction

BY PABLO & SARAH CENEPO-TORRES

Torrential downpours in the northern mountainous region of Peru spread east to the coastal strip in late March and early April with devastating effects. While heavy rains are common in the Sierra, this unrelenting rainfall was far beyond normal expectations. Those who live in the valleys that trail the Andes to the Pacific shoreline were warned that something drastic was about to happen. Forgotten ravines and rivers, such as the ironically named Río Seco (Dried River), came to life with such renewed strength that they were ready to burst. To make matters worse, cumulus clouds of apocalyptic proportions arrived and peppered the coastal desert sky.

A moment of devastation

Though the common Spanish adage says *Guerra avisada no mata gente* ("Warned war does not kill people"), the abundance of adobe homes in the coast, coupled with poor city infrastructure, guaranteed major damages. In Trujillo, the rains paved the way for flash floods to distribute large amounts of debris throughout the city. Most of the city's major roads were covered with a thick layer of sediment, some of it rising up to about 12 inches. Thousands of adobe homes collapsed, and even cement homes ended up with pools on their roofs. The storm severely damaged the potable water piping and stirred up blackwater, resulting in a scarce, unsafe water supply. Our city was virtual mayhem.

On the national level, the flooding ruined the agricultural land, destroyed key sections of the highways, and obliterated crucial bridges. Besides the shortages of clean water and food, many people began living in the open because their homes were either nonexistent or too dangerous to enter. Before the flood waters subsided, official numbers reported 94 people dead and more than 700,000 homeless. The stage was set for God's people to share His love with the many in need.

A time of restoration

All three of our main ministry fronts—the Trujillo Bible Center assembly, the Hogar de Esperanza orphanage, and the Elliot Christian School—formed a crew of 20 to 30 volunteers who committed nearly a month to daily relief work in the neediest areas around us. With the prayers and financial support of God's people, we intended to make a significant difference in the lives of many. After receiving support and discovering that we came in the name of Jesus, not the city or a political party, several individuals remarked, "This is the real way to help people."

At first, we devoted the majority of our time to distributing simple meals, groceries, clothing, and fresh water in devastated areas. Then, after assessing the best way to help those without roofs over their heads, we designated a team of brothers exclusively to rebuilding efforts. Two days into our projects, we learned that materials such as lumber, tin sheets, and plastic were as scarce as fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat. Finding the needed supplies took extra time and resources, but the Lord faithfully provided them and continues to do so. We are privileged to have partnered with the believers here in sharing the Gospel in word and deed, and we are thankful to have been the hands and feet of the believers who faithfully prayed for and gave to help those whom the flood affected most! ■



Pablo and Sarah Cenepo-Torres were commended in 2002 by Grace Bible Fellowship in Portland, Oregon.



Top (L-R): Workers replacing a home's roof; Believers distributing groceries to those in need; Believers sharing fresh water with those affected by the flood. **Bottom (L-R):** Assembly volunteers preparing to rebuild devastated areas of Peru; Pablo sharing the Gospel with a group of locals.

May We Introduce

Steve & Patricia Phillips

Serving in Nigeria



Steve's testimony

Imagine a self-centered, rebellious Eastern mystic with no Christian upbringing getting blown out of an exploding building at age 19. Now imagine that same conceited philosophy-lover, convicted of Christ's resurrection, praying, "Well, Lord, I guess this is it; I want you to be my Savior." These extraordinary events happened in 1969.

Floods of cleansing washed that heart and illuminated that benighted mind—commitment to the King of Glory immediately replaced the squalor of those darkened chambers. Three things became readily apparent in that moment: first, commitment to the Truth is foundational; second, Jesus is Lord, and He dictates to me, not vice versa; and third, the Bible has the answer to all of life.

Thus commenced a devouring of the Scriptures. Each day, I spent four or five hours in the Word; each week, I underwent one-on-one discipling in the Word for six or seven hours at a sitting; and I spontaneously shared the glad tidings with family, friends, and peers. It was like a well of water springing up to eternal life.

From the very beginning of those days, the following passage simmered its fire deep within me: "And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named . . . but as it is written, 'They who have no news of Him shall see.'" (Romans 15:20–21) Years of preaching, testifying, counseling, and teaching the Word of Life ensued in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Honduras, Senegal, and Gambia. Then, in 1998, I realized God's desire for my life.

Patricia's testimony

I was raised in a Christian home. At a very early age, I developed a sensitivity to sin, feeling the pull of temptation but not wanting to head down that path. I confided my troubled heart in my loving mother, and she gently shared the Word of God with me. At age nine, I received Him.

Singing praises, attending Sunday school, and enjoying missionary study classes filled my early years. Bible camp was always a favorite of mine, and I later counseled at camp, taught Sunday school, and listened to various missionaries around my family's table. Now, I look back with fondness on all the messages from the Word of God that I heard each Sunday.

Since I was 11 years old, my heart's desire was to be a missionary; however, that ambition had to wait as my father thought it inadvisable for a single woman to venture to the foreign field alone. At age 30, I met and married a wonderful man who shared my heart's desire for bringing Christ to other parts of the world. Then I aspired to be a godly wife and mother in order to live my life as a fragrant aroma, as Christ did.

Together

After Steve's return from Senegal, we met a student from Nigeria here in the States. A year and a half of discipleship took place in our home until he returned to his country. Left with a feeling of uncertainty about our life, Patti suggested, "Why don't we pray about whether or not the Lord wants us to go to Nigeria?" So, we prayed for one and a half years. Then, Isaiah 55:4–5 strengthened our hearts. We informed the brethren at our local assembly of our desire, asking them to pray if this was God's will. Six months later, they unanimously concurred, and in 1998, just two months after being commended, we arrived in Nigeria with five children via a one-way ticket. We spent the next 10 years in West Africa focused on evangelizing in the bush, discipling local believers, establishing home churches, teaching, advising, writing books, and producing a gospel film.

Now that our children are grown and settled in their various endeavors, we have returned to Nigeria for more of the same work. Pray that the Lord will open a door for effective service for us. ■