

Medical Missionary Reports (Part III)

Hondurans Have Hope

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Hondurans do have hope! They are human beings just like you and I. They do have families. They do live in houses. They do have their own personal desires, wants, needs and yes hopes.

After working with Hondurans, one of the emerging nations of the world, it is possible to see some programs that are helping. There are two that stick out in my mind that do offer examples of the kinds of hope that do exist. After talking with others and reading extensively, it can be logically assumed that the two hopes that stick out in my mind for Honduras do apply to other emerging countries as well. The two biggest hopes they have are: (1) their own interest and initiative and (2) the church.

Let's look at these two hopes of the future for Hondurans and citizens of other emerging nations. Hopes that are real and are a reality today — not at some distant, future date.

The best hope is their own personal initiative, their own personal desires to have a better way of life. They do go to great efforts to learn new skills and abilities.

Here is an example of individual initiative agricultural missionaries find in Honduras. Hondurans realize they need to learn to raise vegetables to supplement and improve their too starchy diets. They realize the first step in raising a good vegetable garden is to learn how to improve the soil. To teach Hondurans these basic and elemental steps of making a vegetable garden, workshops were conducted. They showed their interest and their enthusiasm by WALKING four and five days to attend these workshops. Most were illiterate so they brought their children who had a third grade education to take notes so nothing would be forgotten. All this effort to learn the new and spectacular skill — the use of the shovel and hoe.

No! Hondurans are not lazy. Even though this is what many people would try to have us believe. In my book, anyone willing to walk 4 or 5 days to learn how to use a shovel and a hoe so he can better feed his starving children is not lazy.

It is true that Hondurans do not work as many days per year as does the average resident of Lancaster County. Some studies reveal that they work only about one half the days during the year. But then, if 98% of the people of Lancaster County had active TB and all of us had heavy infestations of worms and amoebas that constantly made us ill, drawing up to a

glass of blood from our bodies daily I guess we would not be as active either.

The constant, vicious cycle of poor diets, disease and illiteracy make Hondurans appear lazy to those not caring to look at the root causes. Agricultural missionaries who are willing to look at these three root causes have learned that programs based on the needs of families in developing nations offered at the levels they can use do meet

with success. Success that does break the starvation cycle.

A second reason Hondurans have hope for the future is the Church. Agricultural missionaries soon recognize that the Church is the major hope that the mass of Hondurans have for receiving help. The Church is the only institution we found working in Honduras with a program philosophy that (1) is interested in reaching the masses and (2) has a continuing, follow-up program. The Church as an institution has been there, is there, and is going to be there.

The Church is operating programs in education through its educational missionaries. In some areas the church school for years has been the only in-

stitution waging the battle against illiteracy.

The Church is helping combat disease through its medical missionaries.

The Church is also sponsoring programs to train people how to farm more efficiently through its agricultural missionaries.

These are all in addition to the traditional missionary work that has been and still is being conducted.

This is the new look in missions. Programs designed to meet the needs of a total man.

Through vegetable gardening workshops, through demonstration plots, through poultry management workshops, through the introduction and management of new dairy, goat, poultry and other classes of livestock the

church with the cooperation of Heifer Project, Inc. is meeting the needs of the total man.

Agricultural missionaries are not necessarily career people. Some are ordinary farmers working short periods of time of up to two months per year. In fact, it is often the farmer with the practical knowledge of what to do rather than the college professor with programs that are beyond the reach of the people who is the most effective agricultural missionary.

A farmer who remembers encircling small vegetable garden plants with paper to prevent cutworm damage can demonstrate this to Hondurans, and it is a skill they will learn and do. Frequently, people without the practical knowledge become

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