

Honduras Update July 23, 2009

At this time Heart to Honduras has only a handful of North Americans remaining in Honduras. Three young women (Lauren Sempsrott, Amy McIlwain, and Callie Wulf) are there using their fluency with Spanish to accomplish ministry assignments, and Doug Endsley and his grandson are there for a month working with those who are constructing buildings on our camp site. Last week President Gordon Garrett traveled to Honduras – and home again - and reports that a lot of progress is being made on the camp site due to reassigning our Honduran staff which normally works with our teams. They are working with Doug on camp construction.

In terms of the political situation, Gordon reports that people seemed very tense because no one knows what is going to happen next. Today's report from the Associated Press indicates that President Arias of Costa Rica has given up trying to bring the two sides to an agreement and has suggested that another mediator be assigned by the Organization of American States. The deposed president – Zelaya – is threatening to set up a base in the northern Nicaraguan city of Estelí (the hometown of several of our School of Discipleship students in past years) and decide how he is going to re-enter the country. He is promising to come in un-armed, accompanied by his family, reporters and supporters.

A spokeswoman for Honduras' national police said that officers were ready to execute the arrest warrant for Zelaya which was ordered by Honduras' Supreme Court before June 28 for his attempts to hold a referendum to change the constitution. It was on that date that the military sent Zelaya into exile instead of arresting him – a move that military lawyers themselves have called illegal but necessary.

In light of those political developments, the tensions remain, and though there have been many demonstrations from both sides, none of them have turned violent. Some polls show the people to be about evenly divided in their support of one president or the other. Even though it does not appear that anyone is in danger if they travel to Honduras, the uncertainty of what will happen next has caused the American Embassy to advise people not to travel there. Because of this, twelve teams have had to cancel their plans to travel with us this summer. It remains our prayer that there will be a peaceful settlement that will allow us to resume our short term mission trips to support the people and churches of Honduras.

On a separate note, today President Gordon Garrett's mother (also Camp Director Matt Garrett's grandmother) passed away here in Ohio. Please pray for this family, and especially Gordon, as he deals with both his mother's passing and the responsibilities of safeguarding those who travel with our ministry.

Heart to Honduras Staff

Saturday July 4, 2009 Update

Miguel and I talked earlier this morning.

The Ambassador students and the Cherry Hills team are at the airport. Miguel reports that things are calm and no issues with traffic, protests, etc. (Gas and food prices have not increased!).

Allison and most of the other Ambassador students will leave Monday. Callie will remain with the two students who have chosen to stay and serve in Honduras as originally planned.

Miguel and I will talk again Monday to see how the political climate is following the weekend. At that point we'll make decisions about teams planning to travel to Honduras in the near future. We are also planning a Skype Meeting Monday to discuss camp construction progress with Miguel, Jose, Gustavo, Doug and me.

I will continue to put my vacation "on hold" until we get a better sense of what we'll need to do in the coming weeks.

We continue to pray in hopes that Jerry and Steve are doing better today.

Blessings,  
Gordon

Greetings,

This is an update for Thursday, July 2.

We have talked with Miguel and Allison regarding the situation in Honduras.

Miguel was in San Pedro Sula yesterday and is there again today. He said roads are open and feels things are getting better in country. Asked how everyone is Miguel replied, "We are doing wonderful."

Allison has discussed options with the Ambassador students (high school and college-age students) serving in Honduras for 2-4 weeks. The students have discussed options and preferences with their parents. Five students have chosen to return to the US (2 tomorrow and 3 Saturday) and the rest will stay until their planned departure on Monday or later. Parents have been calling the airlines to arrange for change of flights. Delta and Continental Airlines have been very helpful during this ordeal. These five students will be driven to Jimmy and Sandra Pinell's B&B this evening and Jimmy P. will drive them to the airport (not far from his house) in the morning. The remaining students also discussed options with their parents and have chosen to stay.

The Cherry Hills (Denver) team have a Saturday 7am departure. They will leave Friday afternoon for the B&B and be taken to the airport very early Saturday morning. Two people from this team planned an extended stay and trip to Roatan. They have decided to stay and continue with their trip to Roatan.

There is discussion of international leaders coming to Honduras this weekend to work out a plan to restore the ousted president, Manuel Zelaya, back to power. The current president, Roberto Micheletti, is clear that he and Congress have no intention to allow Zelaya back as president. Where this international showdown will lead is very uncertain.

So...we continue to pray. We continue to discuss current and future options. Teams have planned for months and months (or years!) to travel to Honduras this summer. The Lord has a plan in all this. We trust Him to lead us day by day as we make important decisions that touch many lives and plans. But our prayers are especially focused on the bigger picture of the people of Honduras and especially the poor. What impact will these events and decisions have on their lives? Zelaya claims to be the advocate for the poor but aligns himself with Chavez, Castro and other socialist/communist leaders who claim the same. Have we seen the poor of those countries rise from poverty to a better life of freedom? Zelaya knowingly and repeatedly made decisions that violate the Honduras Constitution—a constitution of democracy. I am baffled by the strong unified support of the international community for Zelaya.

As people of God we are to pray, pray, pray and move forward in faith. We are not to give into fear or panic. We are very thankful for Miguel and our staff in Honduras who have shown spiritual grit time and time again in the face of adversity. They will protect any and all under their care but their lives are being poured out in living sacrifice for Christ over and over. And so we pray especially for Miguel, our leaders and their families. Thank you for your interest, support and prayers!

In Christ,  
Gordon Garrett  
Heart to Honduras

PS Steve DeLisle, HTH Ministry Team Coordinator, is in a hospital recovering from an ailment that struck 10 people in a Boy Scout Camp he and his son attended this week. Swine flu has been ruled out. Please pray for a speedy recovery for Steve. Also, Dr. Jerry Grubbs, HTH Board Chair, is recovering from an out patient procedure yesterday. The surgeon expressed some concern for additional surgery. Please pray that Jerry will recover quickly...and fully so that additional surgery is not necessary.