

“I’m going back so different in a lot of ways;”

Short-term missionary reflects on life-changing service in Honduras

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

LAM News Service

Tegucigalpa, Honduras (LAMNS)—Suzanne Westover sits pensively at an outdoor cafeteria near this city’s downtown area, sipping on a coke. Her answer comes slowly, thoughtfully.

“I’m going back so different in a lot of ways,” she explains. “God’s definitely working on a lot of things and changed a lot of things in me.”

Suzanne is reviewing her six-month experience as a short-term missionary with LAM’s new Spearhead program in Honduras. Explaining that her first few months in the city were difficult because she lived in an unsafe area and her movements were restricted, she remembers, “God definitely taught me a new kind of dependence in that I had never fully depended on Him. I got to the point where I realized that I was OK and the world wasn’t ending. God is with me and He gave me peace for the first time in my life so that I understand what the peace and joy from God is. I never had that before.”

During her term of service in this small Central American country, Suzanne has sensed the Lord’s leading as she has taught English at a Christian university, translated for medical groups providing clinics in rural areas and helped out with Compassion International projects through the church that she attended.

The Mundelein, Illinois, native, who is currently finishing her studies at Chicago’s North Park University, says she is planning to return to Honduras for an additional year through Latin America Mission’s YearOut Program. “I’m not sure whether God is calling me to full-time missionary service,” Suzanne explains. “I feel that what I’m doing here may be preparation for what is ahead of me in the United States, but that may change.”

Suzanne’s service in Honduras has helped her to capture a vision of what the church can be. “They take their Christianity and lifestyle seriously here in Honduras,” she says. “That’s what we are supposed to do, but in the U.S., we separate that a lot. Our Christianity is one thing, but what we do the rest of the time is another thing. That obviously is not what God has called us to do.”

The ministry of Suzanne and other Spearhead participants was organized through CONSEDE, a coordinating agency for 11 Christian organizations working together in Honduras, providing healing for the body and food for the soul. Other Spearhead missionaries worked in microenterprise projects and children’s ministries.

Some of the projects offer opportunities for overt evangelistic outlets, while others demonstrate Christian compassion without words.

“I had a nineteen year old student in my English class at the university who grew up in a Christian family but is getting into occult practices,” Suzanne remembers. “I’ve had some opportunities to talk with him after class, and a pastor in the class and other student have also spoken with him. Right now I’m praying for him because it is the most powerful thing that I can do in that situation.”

Meanwhile, as Suzanne prepares to return to Honduras, she is also praying that God will prepare her. “I don’t always feel real strong, so I just keep praying that He will give me the strength. I know that through Him, anything is possible.”

LAM’s short-term ministries involve Spearhead programs for young adults 18-30 in Mexico, Honduras and Brazil. In addition, the Mission offers one-year opportunities for adults of any age throughout Latin America.

Latin America Mission works in partnership with churches and Christian agencies throughout Latin America and supports missionaries and projects in many Latin countries as well as in Spain. LAM is seeking to place new missionaries throughout the region. The U.S. headquarters can be reached at Latin America Mission, Box 52-7900, Miami, FL 33152, by e-mail at info@lam.org, or by calling 1-800-275-8410. The mission’s web site may be found at <http://www.lam.org>. LAM’s Canadian office is at 3075 Ridgeway Drive, Unit 14, Mississauga, ON L5L 5M6.

Related web sites:

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