

HONDURAS PREACHING MISSION

Personal Log of
LAURENCE A. JUSTICE
August 10-22, 2001

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I, Laurence Justice, Pastor of the Victory Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri traveled with Benjamin Gardner to the nation of Honduras August 10-22, 2001 to visit the field of labor of Baptist missionary Ted Tweet. During these twelve days I preached eleven times in ten Baptist churches and mission points in that nation. The cost for the entire trip was paid by me. I had originally intended to take Mrs. Justice with me but due to the premature birth of our grand daughter, Caroline Belle Tucker, in Greensboro, North Carolina on August 9th, Lyndy did not go and at the last minute Ben Gardner went in her place. The object of the trip was for me to observe the missionary's work and preach in as many of the churches with which he was connected as possible and then report to the Victory Baptist Church on my return. This log is reported as a day by day record that I kept during the trip.

FRIDAY AUGUST 10, 2001

I arose at 3:30 AM and Ben and I were driven by Lyndy to Kansas City International airport having left the house at 4 AM. We boarded Continental Airlines flight 705 for Houston, Texas at 6 AM. We were mistakenly given first class seating and enjoyed the excellent breakfast served in flight at 7:20 AM. It was unusual for us common folks to be given real silverware, cloth napkins and a full breakfast on this flight. The breakfast consisted of a bagel, grapes, cantaloupe, musk melon, orange slices and Philadelphia cream cheese. We joked about being among the social elite because we were able to ride first class.

Outside the sun was coming up but the clouds below us prevented our seeing the ground except intermittently when breaks occurred. When the clouds finally broke for awhile the light of the early morning sun reflecting off the hundreds of farm ponds below looked like the world had just been sprinkled with millions of sparkling diamonds.

We landed at George W. Bush Airport in Houston, changed planes and departed for Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras at 9:15 AM. A delicious lunch of roast beef and vegetables with tomato juice and a hard roll was served at 10:30 AM somewhere over the Gulf of Mexico.

The Gulf below was a deep blue at this point and below us between the plane and the water were puffs of clouds that left shadows on the water. We saw an occasional oil platform. In the distance a very small rain shower developed and rained into the ocean. Now the Gulf appeared as a vast expanse over which we seemed to be suspended almost motionless in the bright sunshine.

Next to us in the aisle seat was a Southern Baptist nurse headed for Tegucigalpa to do "mission" work. She said she was from Cullman, Alabama. She notified us that other missionaries were also on board. During the flight the usual dirty movie was shown on screens that dropped down from the ceiling of the plane. Head phones were provided for those who wanted to watch the movie or listen to music but they were not necessary because the sound of the movie was so loud it could not be avoided. There were many Honduran passengers and most of the flight attendants seemed to be Hondurans as well.

At 11:11 AM Kansas City time we passed over the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula and we could see a strip of several blocks of houses that stretched for miles along the coast. We could see the breakers in the ocean and the Gulf waters were now a murky light green in color. A group of college young people from a non-denominational church in California were seated in the rear section of the plane and were well behaved though somewhat scruffy in appearance. At this point the flight attendants distributed customs forms to be filled out by passengers before entering Honduras.

I began to read the day's edition of the "Wall Street Journal" that I had been given at the ticket counter in the airport in Houston. Far below I could see rough country covered with trees and sliced by an occasional road. After about twenty minutes I began to see more and more small villages, a typical one of which was made up of about six square blocks with a road in on one side and a road out on the other. The villages began to grow in size and were closer and closer together. They now were made up of about twenty square blocks and had more connecting roads. To the Southeast in the direction of Honduras a large thunderhead loomed and soon cloud cover moved in between our plane and the ground. After awhile breaks in the clouds revealed heavy vegetation on the ground and a few villages.

Suddenly the blue green Atlantic appeared to the left of the plane and there were several islands just offshore. These islands seemed to be more like an outer reef in the South Pacific. The water here was a very light green in color. Then we passed over a large city on a peninsula jutting out into the green Gulf. The water now became what I would describe as an emerald green. We followed these islands for many miles until we passed over a reef that jutted out like a huge triangle into the Gulf. Large breakers seemed to be pounding the reef. On the Gulf side the water suddenly turned deep blue. This triangle shaped reef must have been fifty or more miles long although I had no standard by which to measure it since we were flying at 39,000 feet above it.

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At 11:57 AM Kansas City time we passed over the North coast of Honduras. The water was now a lighter blue and the country looked like it had been largely deforested. As we moved further inland we could see a large meandering river with lots of sandbars. Looking back toward the Gulf I could not tell where the ocean stopped and the sky began. They just sort of blended together. The somewhat mountainous countryside was dotted with small villages along the bottoms of the valleys. The country seemed to have some farming going on and the number of small villages increased along with the number of roads. The clouds now became intermittent.

At 12:02 PM Kansas City time our plane began its descent into Tegucigalpa (pronounced TAY-GOO'-SEE-GAHL'-PUH). We could now see a number of rivers. The cloud cover became heavy as we descended. Suddenly we could see a huge valley that was full of the city of Tegucigalpa. The mountains in this area seemed to be volcanic. As we passed over the edge of the mountains surrounding the city we could see palatial homes with swimming pools looking down over the city far below. The city had several large government housing projects that were prominent to view as well as various shanty towns and a very large gray colored, four towered Cathedral overlooked the city. The plane touched down at 12:18 PM. Three old C-47 troop transports were parked on the tarmac as we moved toward the terminal.

Once inside we breezed through Honduran customs and proceeded to the baggage pickup where we soon discovered that the airline had lost my bag containing my toiletries and most of my clothing. After making arrangements for the airline to ship my bags to the missionary's home in San Pedro Sula, we exited the terminal and were met in the parking lot by Brother Ted Tweet and a friend of his, Bruce Martin. Martin was leaving that day to return to the States.

My first impression of the city as we began to make the four hour drive to San Pedro Sula was that it was poor and dirty and very crowded. Brother Tweet informed us that the population was between one and one half and two million people. Eucalyptus trees were prevalent and reminded me of Brazil as well as of Israel. The traffic was wild though not as dangerous and frustrating as that in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

I began to notice that there were scores of yellow buses in this city and later I noted them all over Honduras. They looked just like school buses in the U.S. Brother Tweet said they were originally school buses in the U.S. and had been driven to Honduras to be used as city buses and by transportation companies throughout the country. Some of them even still had the names of the U.S. schools that had originally used them written on the sides. The hillsides reminded me of those in the Colorado mining country back in the States. Beautiful Bougainvillea flowers were everywhere. One government housing project we passed was made of concrete houses that measured about ten feet by ten feet and had tin roofs. They were all exactly alike.

On the North edge of Tegucigalpa the highway took us up out of the valley and surprisingly the trees here were mostly pines that looked like Lodge Pole Pines. Looking back toward the city we could see a huge satellite dish that looked like it might have been a radio telescope type of dish. We passed a number of factories that the American media love to call sweat shops. The Hondurans call them Maquilas. If it were not for these there would be a lot less opportunity for Hondurans to make a living. We began to see stands of bamboo and burros loose along the highway. In one place we saw men using machines to dredge the creek bed for gold. There were a lot of Acacia trees with orange flowers on the tops. All along the road the natives had sticks of firewood for sale. The sticks were about 2 inches in diameter, about 16 inches long and were stacked in squares up to about 18 to 24 inches high.

The trip from Tegucigalpa to San Pedro Sula was about 175 miles. Most of the vehicles on the highway that day were Mercedes Benz trucks. The drivers were truly wild by American standards, passing on curves and hills with no apparent concern for safety to either themselves or others. We saw Banana trees and Mimosas as we drove through Pamarola, a place that had served as a military base during the Nicaraguan conflict in the 1980's. After awhile we passed through the city of Comayagua (COH-MAW-YAW'-GWUH).

Throughout this whole trip we passed into and out of vast valleys surrounded by lush green mountains. In one steep rocky canyon we passed a truck that had gone off the high mountain road the day before. There were still men present there trying to get the wreckage cleared up. In one particular area we saw women sitting in shady places along the road weaving baskets from palm fronds. Their work was expertly symmetrical and I so wanted to purchase one of their large three foot tall baskets with a lid to take home to Lyndy but I figured it would be too much trouble to take it back on the plane.

At 2:45 PM we stopped in a place called Siguatepeque for lunch at a restaurant called LaGranja d'Elia. I ate the cafeteria style lunch and my meal included fried fish and two wonderful drinks, one made of a mixture of orange juice and carrot juice and the other was a rice drink called Horchata (OR-CHAH'-TUH). After lunch we viewed the Macaws, Tucans and Iguanas that the restaurant had on display in a large cage. The Macaws were large parrots with Bright red, blue and yellow feathers and a long red tail. The Tucans were black birds with large curved yellow bills.

Back on the highway we continued our journey toward San Pedro Sula and we observed gangs of men cutting the grass along the road using the very prevalent Machete in one hand and a crooked stick in the other. They used the crooked stick to hold and bunch the grass so it could be more easily cut. We saw no lawn mowers in the whole nation, only men with Machetes.

After awhile we came to Lake Yojoa (YO-HO'-UH) which is the largest lake in Honduras. Spanish moss was growing everywhere on the limbs of the trees. There were a number of small huts at the side of the road in this area offering for sale fish that had been caught in this beautiful lake. The fish were hanging on strings in these little huts and the people selling them keep them wet all day until they are sold.

After passing over a Mountain range and starting to descend into the next valley we stopped at a roadside fruit stand, one of many in this area that offered several different kinds of bananas and plantains plus pineapple and coconuts. We bought some finger sized bananas to eat in the car as we continued. A prominent tree in this area was called the Ceiba (SAY-EE'-BUH). It has a large gray colored trunk and an extra large canopy of branches and leaves. There were several kinds of what I thought at first were parasites living in the branches of these trees. There were orchids that looked like Airplane plants and there was something that grew in six to eight to ten foot strands hanging down off the branches. They were of the consistency of what we call Mother in law's tongue in the States.

At 5:30 PM, still using Kansas City time, we reached the outskirts of San Pedro Sula but we were still a long way from our destination. San Pedro Sula is a bustling, dirty, crowded, smokey, hazy city. All this is neutralized somewhat by the blue and purple mountains that surround it. There were vendors darting through traffic at each intersection or slowdown. At this time they were selling mostly water in clear plastic bags. Passing Banco de Occidente we noted what we would soon realize was a common sight in Honduras, uniformed guards armed with twelve gauge shotguns and AK 47's. Such guards were stationed at every kind of business that handles any significant amount of cash including banks, McDonalds, Burger Kings, filling stations and grocery stores.

Driving through town we saw an occasional campesina (CAM-PAY-SEE'-NUH) or country girl carrying a basket or tub of various contents on her head. Brother Tweet told us that when you see a young woman doing this you know she is a country girl because the city girls can't and don't do it. Soon we found ourselves in an afternoon traffic jam that added another hour to our trip across town. The price of gasoline at the filling stations along the streets this day was about \$2.75 per gallon or thirty five Lempiras and fifty Centavos. Honduran money is based on 100 Centavos to the Lempira just like U.S. money is based on 100 cents to the dollar. Instead of the dollar sign they use the *L* sign so that the correct way to write the price of gasoline on that particular day was *L35.50*.

Finally at 6:30 PM we arrived at the Tweet home, a lovely house reminiscent of the home of brother Steve Montgomery where we had stayed in Ourinhos, Brazil the year before. The house was surrounded by a concrete wall topped with partially unrolled concertina wire. The floors were all tile including even those in the garage area. The entire house was made of concrete and painted pastel colors, most prominently a dull yellow. It had two stories with the living room, dining room and kitchen downstairs and the bedrooms and den upstairs. It had lots of windows with bars on every one. Behind the house but still within the concrete walls was brother Ted's woodworking shop and Sylvia's laundry room. Lining the inside of the walls were various roses and other lovely flowers and bushes including Bougainvilleas. The garage entrance on the street is a large gate made up of wrought iron bars that opens electrically like an automatic garage door in the States. The Tweets like all Hondurenos have grown accustomed to the hot, sultry and oppressive tropical heat. They only have two window unit air conditioners, one in their bedroom and one in one of the two guest bedrooms.

Shortly after arriving at the Tweets' home I received e-mail messages from home; one from Lyndy and one from the realtor, Melonie Kimble, who had been trying to help us purchase a new home. Melonie's message notified me that our house in Kansas City had sold and a new house in Belton, Missouri was now available. She said that the contract would be faxed to me tonight for my signature and then I should return the signed contract to her in Kansas City. By now Ben and I were a little fatigued having been on the go since 3:30 this morning so I attempted to take a brief nap before the evening church service.

The evening service we would attend tonight was in a place called Colonia Llanos de Sula (COH-LOHN'YUH YAH'-NOS DAY SOO'LUH). What would be called subdivisions in the U.S. are called colonias in Honduras. This church was made up of mostly Black members though there were some Latinos. The pastor is a young Black man named Nerlin Palacios, a bright, outgoing, muscular man with a strong voice.

The service began at 7:35 PM with the singing of a hymn the melody of which had a strong African influence though there was no beat and no swaying to the music. I was asked to introduce myself though I was not invited to preach the message of the hour. I stood at the front and briefly told who I was and from where we had come. Brother tweet translated for me. Next in the service the congregation read aloud together from I Corinthians 9:1-10. I tried to read along with them in Spanish and was greatly helped by a side by side English/Spanish Bible belonging to Sylvia Tweet. Like all nights in Honduras it was hot and sultry. The church building had large open

windows with no screens and no glass. As in all the church buildings there were electric fans suspended from the ceiling though they were not always necessarily ceiling fans. The auditorium was right out on the street and the large open windows enabled us to see and hear the many people passing by in the street. There was a constant barking of dogs in the streets here and most other places. These particular fans squealed irritatingly in need of lubrication. The receiving of the offering in this as in all the Honduran churches was unique in comparison to the way it is handled in the States. The pastor announces that it is time to receive the offering, asks all to stand, leads in prayer and then invites everyone to go to the front and place his offering in the box that is located on the Lord's Supper table at the front of the church auditorium. A young Latino man led the congregation in singing all verses of three hymns. One of the hymns was "What A Friend We Have In Jesus." I sang the hymns in Spanish and surprisingly had very little difficulty doing so.

The pastor was spirited and dignified in his delivery of the sermon. The text of his sermon was Isaiah 30:1-3. There were approximately 30 people present and there was a good mixture of all ages in the congregation. The service ended at 8:35 PM after which we visited with the members out in the street and then briefly visited in Pastor Nerlin's home.

After a twenty minute trip back to the Tweet home Sylvia served us a delicious supper of casabe (CAW-SAH'-BAY) bread, fresh pineapple, pickled beets and cheddar cheese that was very salty but really good. After receiving another e-mail on the Tweets' computer, this one notifying me that the purchase of the new house back home had failed, we dropped off into unconsciousness at about 11 PM. This had been one of the fullest days of my entire life.

SATURDAY AUGUST 11, 2001

I awoke at 5:37 AM Honduran time and read Romans 10, 11:1-21 along with Psalms 88-92. My upstairs bedroom window faced the jungle covered mountains that rose up what looked to be just three or four blocks away. As the moisture laden clouds floated by they were snagged by the tops of these dark green mountains. There was a pleasant chirping of a number of different birds as I noticed the strange phenomenon of the colorful Bougainvillea intertwined with the concertina wire on the tops of the wall around the Tweets' home. Several joggers passed the Tweet home which is a two story yellow stucco house surrounded by a ten foot high and ten inch thick concrete wall. The floors throughout are tile in white 18 inch squares. The windows are large in order to let in as much air and light as possible and all the windows have heavy steel bars on the outside. The doors throughout are made of some native wood and the stairway and the kitchen cabinets are made of the same. The Tweets drive a gray colored Toyota 4x4 pickup truck with air conditioning. Brother Ted built and/or supervised the building of the house.

By breakfast time which was 8:25 this day, the clouds were beginning to build up around the mountains possibly promising that there would be rain today. We had a tasty breakfast of omelet and sweet rolls lovingly prepared by Sylvia. At breakfast the four of us read God's word each alternately reading one verse until we had read four whole chapters.

A carpenter worked on the cistern house of the Tweet house beginning while we were eating breakfast. Ben and I rested most of the morning after a most tiring day yesterday. During the morning hours Ted demonstrated the use of the Glorias or electronic music instruments we had brought from the States. These music boxes held all the hymns in one of the Honduran hymnbooks and can play the hymns when no human accompanist is available for the worship services. Sylvia also made or showed us how to make kombucha (KOHM-BOO'-KUH), a drink made of sugar, black tea and mushrooms as well as other ingredients which I have forgotten. Preparing the drink involves growing a culture for five days during hot weather. Orange juice is added after the growing process. Ben enjoyed the drink so much that he got Sylvia to give him the recipe and a small culture to take home to the states. (I wonder what Customs in Houston will think about this?)

At lunch we reviewed certain words I would be using in the sermon I would preach the next night to make sure there were corresponding Spanish words for them and that Ted would know which words to use. During the afternoon we visited all the members of the mission at Lomas De San Juan where brother Tweet is now serving as missionary pastor. While visiting in one of the homes we came across a man who said he had read the Spanish version of my tract "*Should A Baptist Church Embrace Pentecostalism?*" while a member of a Southern Baptist Church in a distant city in Honduras and had come to see the errors of that heresy. He wanted me to know how very much he appreciated my writing the tract. His name was Oscar Moradel and his wife Rosario was with him.

We next drove back out to the San Pedro Sula airport to retrieve my bag which the airline had lost on the trip from Houston. The bag was there and had not been opened or tampered with. Now we drove to the home of brother Julio Arguelles where we had wonderful Christian fellowship with Julio, his wife Rebeca, his son David and

his daughter Melissa. Brother Julio is pastor of Iglesia Bautista Independiente de Residencial La Gran Villa in San Pedro Sula.

We ate supper this night at a Pizza Hut near the Tweet home. This was to be the first American Pizza Ben had ever eaten and he didn't miss an opportunity to fill up on it! Finally we returned to the Tweet home where we had blueberry cheesecake for dessert and checked our e-mail before retiring at 9:30 PM.

SUNDAY AUGUST 12, 2001

I woke up at 5:28 this Sabbath morning and as soon as it was light enough I read Psalms 93-95 and Romans 11:22-36 in the word. My room had a window unit air conditioner which I ran all night on low and when I got up I turned it to fan only and opened the windows. I reviewed the sermon I would preach in today's morning service the title of which was "The Holiness Of God" and then I reviewed sermons for the other two services of the day, "I Am The Bread Of Life" and "I Am The Resurrection And The Life."

Breakfast today consisted of ham and egg omelet and sweet rolls, after which we sat around the table and reviewed various words and concepts in my sermons for the sake of brother Ted's translating today. Hazy sun and oppressive heat (89 degrees at 9 AM) characterized this day.

As we drove from the Tweets' house toward the mission at Lomas de San Juan we passed a number of colonias. I noted the prevalence of castor bean (not plants but) trees here. They were huge, larger even than those I had seen on my trips to Brazil. We also saw some of the birds that do a complete flip each time they utter a chirp and land in the same position in which they began. I was unable to find the names of these birds that we had seen in Brazil as well.

The people of the Lomas de San Juan mission, mostly Indians, were short and dark but seemed well fed and were gregarious. Morning worship here was held from 9:30 to 11 O'clock. The preponderance of the forty five persons present were men. The L shaped auditorium was jammed full and in the midst of the service there was an electric power failure. Brother Tweet did an excellent job of translating today as always during the trip. After church the people stayed around and visited with us through the translating work of both Ted and Sylvia Tweet. I wished I could speak directly to these very warm and friendly people.

Driving home for lunch I noted the dirt streets in some colonias through which we passed and the open sewers running along each side of all the streets. We had lunch with brother Julio's family at the Tweets' house. Our conversation about spiritual things was pleasant.

At 2 PM we left for a service at a mission point called La Orquidea on the Southern outskirts of San Pedro Sula where Ted and Julio serve as co-pastors and split the preaching duties. Ten persons were present this day when we met outside on the porch. I preached on "I Am The Bread Of Life" and the worshippers paid close attention. In the distance I could see beautiful purple mountains and dark rain clouds hanging over them. Sylvia played a digital guitar to accompany the singing. The colonia of La Orquidea is built on the side of a very steep mountain where one can stand in one house and look almost straight up to see the house next door. Since the open sewers run downhill I decided that I would try to get the house on the highest point of the mountain if I lived there.

From La Orquidea we drove to a 5:30 PM service at the church of which brother Julio is pastor, the name of which I have recorded above. This is a fairly large and well organized Baptist church that meets in its own building in another area of San Pedro Sula. I really enjoyed visiting with the members of this church, especially brother Ignacio Nacho Giron or Nacho as he is affectionately known. Brother Nacho drives cars from Houston, Texas to Honduras where he sells them for profit. Such trips usually take him three days.

We started the service here by singing the hymn "Jesus Loves Me." We then read I Chronicles 7:30-40 aloud together. A mixed quartet composed of myself, Ben Gardner, Melissa and Rebeca Arguelles and accompanied by brother Ted on the digital guitar sang "Love Of God So Great And Tender" in Spanish. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would one day sing in Spanish in a quartet in a worship service in Honduras but here I was, doing so and enjoying it as much as almost anything I have ever done!

My sermon topic was "I Am The Resurrection And The Life" and the large congregation paid rapt attention even during the pleasant and rather heavy rain shower that burst forth while I was preaching. No rain entered the auditorium through the large open screenless windows. I was amazed that there were virtually no insects here or anywhere else in Honduras. Brother Tweet told me it was probably because the environmental wackos had not been able to get DDT outlawed in the country as they have in the U.S. Ben Gardner helped brother Tweet in translating the sermon by sometimes suggesting equivalent words.

By the time we arrived back at the Tweets' house the rain shower had cooled things off to a pleasant level and I decided to leave the windows open this night. At this time I received an e-mail from Lyndy in North Carolina

telling me of the problems of Leah, Joel and Caroline and that they had gone home from the hospital in Greensboro, North Carolina at 5 PM North Carolina time today. I fell asleep without noting what time it was.

MONDAY AUGUST 13, 2001

It was cloudy and noticeably cooler when I woke up at 5:30 today. The first thing I did after getting ready for the day was pack for a three day trip we would make to the North coast of Honduras. After breakfast we intend to go to a local bank to exchange dollars for limperas and then to sign and return a faxed contract for the sale of our house in Kansas City, Missouri.

I noticed that the carpenter who had been working on the Tweets' house yesterday had a helper today. The Tweets' house was surrounded completely by a 10 to 12 foot high concrete wall. The walls of the house itself do not touch the wall that surrounds it but is as close as six feet away on one side, maybe 20 feet away on the front and back and maybe three feet away on the carport or garage side.

Brother Ted notified Ben and me that Hermano Julio had nicknamed Ben Mincho and me Lencho which are the humorous Honduran nicknames for Benjamin and Laurence. We took this as a sign of true acceptance with the people we were visiting, at least of pastor Julio.

The streets of San Pedro Sula as was the case of the streets in all the cities of Honduras were dirty and evidently are never swept. Everywhere we saw piles of dirt that had just been left after the completion of some repair or construction. The people throw wrappers and cups and other trash wherever they happen to be when they finish with these things.

Before leaving this morning we enjoyed looking at several bird nests in the rose bushes around the Tweet house. Some were the nests of small doves while others were of some little black birds, smaller than the Juncos back in Arkansas. There were also Grackles around that sang almost like Mocking Birds.

The weather was turning out to be hazy to cloudy today. Again I noticed the blues and purples of the nearby mountains. This beauty was enhanced by spots of sunshine here and there on the mountains that were the results of the broken places in the clouds. It is very easy to get too hot down here. Three times I have already approached this state. There is no breeze today. As we drove through the city we noticed huge tropical trees, some with trunks that looked like what I would call a modified Banyan tree except for the fact that they were about 60 feet tall.

The population of San Pedro Sula according to Ted is about 750,000 people. The Barrios of the city are found in canyons and on hillsides and in low flat places, places that are especially susceptible to the flooding that always hits them hard but again and again after such storms the people rebuild.

Before we left the house our realtor back in Kansas City, Melonie Kimble, called long distance to get our fax number that she could use to contact us in regard to selling our house. Her previous attempts to send faxes had failed so she decided to call me long distance.

Exactly one hour after we had planned to leave the house we finally did. We headed for Rosario de Giron's office where we received the fax from Melonie and I signed the contract to sell our house in Kansas City. Rosario promptly sent the signed contract back to Kansas City.

At 9:50 AM we started out for the coastal area on a four lane highway. There were high mountains all around us all morning. After awhile we crossed the Ulua (OO-LOO'-UH) River where a large bridge was under construction. It was being built because hurricane Mitch had destroyed the previous bridge. We saw damage everywhere we went in Honduras that had been caused by this monster hurricane. Virtually everything in Honduras had been either damaged or destroyed by Mitch.

About 11 o'clock we stopped in a place called El Progreso when we came to a Turi Plaza, a sort of chain store tourist trap. Some of the merchandise here was beautiful, things like solid mahogany wood doors for people's homes, but the prices were outrageous even by American standards. I purchased an Atlas that describes the country of Honduras even though it was written in Spanish.

Moving on down the highway we began to pass through some pretty wild country that reminded me of what is called in Kentucky the knobs country because of the large round protrusions of mountains from the jungle floor. These mountains were lush green with clouds hanging around their tops. In the valley through which we were passing there were huge dark groves of Oil Berry African palms. The old trees had been pruned so that new growth could come up from the ground. There were miles and miles of these groves. All the men out here in the back country carry machete knives. Most of the people live in thatched huts with mud walls held together by what look like sapling trunks about one inch in diameter and about six feet long. Most of the time these sapling supports looked like they had either never completely covered with mud or the mud had been washed off by the rain. As we progressed through this area the land became flat and the mountains were now several miles in the distance.

The Tweets now provided a special treat for Ben and me by taking us to the Lancetilla Botanical Garden & Experimental Center. The price was 45 Lempiras for Honduran citizens and 90 Lempiras for foreign tourists. It was out in the country not far from the city of Tela in heavy jungle. We had a young female Honduran guide who spoke Spanish only. We took a very interesting walking tour and were able to see close up all kinds of exotic Honduran trees and plants. There was the Cannonball Tree which was covered with a dull orange colored fruit with the size and shape of a cannon ball. We saw various plants growing in symbiotic relationships. We saw a Strychnine tree from which the well known poison is taken. We observed the famous Leaf Cutter Ants carrying their bits of freshly cut green leaves over a very long trail to their nest.

As we left Lancetilla at 1:24 PM heading for the city of La Ceiba we could see and hear a rain shower developing over the distant mountains. Passing through Tela we saw many children riding bicycles. The ever present buzzards circled overhead. Crossing the Rio Hicaque we passed a cemetery in which most of the graves were above ground vaults made of concrete. At 1:45 PM the rain shower reached us at about the same time some very high mountains came into view. These mountains had clouds hanging in the canyons that ran down their sides but the rest of the mountains were clearly visible.

Soon we came to a place called Arizona, Honduras where we bought diesel fuel at Texaco La Gran Via de Arizona. Filling our tank we hit the road again in the Tweets' 4x4 Toyota. Again we enjoyed the beauty of the purple mountains and the lush green valleys. The tall Cow Grass was prevalent here. There was a mountain off to our right here that looked very much like a volcanic cone, steep and very high. We crossed the Rio San Juan at San Juan Pueblo. In this area as well as everywhere in the country men were walking along the highway, some leading donkeys, some on bicycles, some in raincoats and all carrying machetes. The rain continued to fall and brother Ted decided we would listen to the tape of brother John Kohler's message on "The True Church And The Parachurch" that he had preached at the conference at Victory Baptist Church in Kansas City the previous week. We enjoyed listening to this outstanding sermon and commenting on it at points when we were especially blessed.

We were now getting close to the mountains again and they were almost covered with clouds. These extremely beautiful crags were majestic to the point of being breath taking. The roads since leaving the botanical garden were excellent paved highways. Brother Tweet informed us here that the entire valley through which we had been passing for most of the day was destroyed by hurricane Mitch. This particular part of the valley was filled with pineapple fields and orange groves. We passed several bridges under construction, all of which had been destroyed by Mitch.

At 2:39 PM we were approaching Pico Bonito on the outskirts of La Ceiba where an international airport is located. We soon arrived in La Ceiba, a large, bicycle filled city with many pickup trucks and donkeys carrying heavy burdens. The buildings were painted bright colors. Shell Oil Company filling stations were numerous and we passed a new Pizza Hut restaurant. At the banks here there were heavily armed guards standing in front of the buildings. There was even such a guard at the La Quinta Motel where we checked in.

Having checked into the motel we ate a meal, I'm not sure whether it was lunch or supper, at the local Burger King restaurant. We ordered our Whoppers and fries with no lettuce and no onions. We then pushed on for Balfate where we hoped to hold services this night. Ted told us that hundreds and even thousands were killed in Honduras by hurricane Mitch.

At 4:12 PM We first saw the sea which was light bluegreen in color. About this time ominous black clouds began to gather. We left the blacktop at a place called Jutiapa (Hoo-tee-yah'puh) just the other side of which we crossed Rio Papalstecha and the last bridge. From now on we would have to ford the rivers in our 4X4. While we were observing some loose donkeys on the road the rains began. The dirt road, the hills and the trees, as well as the local livestock, reminded me a lot of the lower road into the Falls Creek Baptist Assembly near Davis, Oklahoma. The rains became heavy and blinding and darkness was falling at 4:35 PM. We soon passed some loose horses on the road. There were no palms nor bananas in this area but lots of small trees along the fence rows and many creeks.

We arrived at Lis Lis (LEASE-LEASE) at 4:44 PM where brother Tacho, a black Honduran, is pastor and where brother Tweet said I was scheduled to preach the next evening weather permitting. The Iglesia Bautista Independiente here had a beautiful little building that looked freshly painted. Just a little ways down the road we forded a river where the water was low and which we hoped would still be at a low level after church. Not three hundred yards on down the road we forded another river, the Rio Bejucales. The water at this point was about four feet deep and we were a little bit anxious as we watched the water come up on the side windows on our vehicle. The roads got rougher and muddier as we continued toward Balfate where Ted and Sylvia had once lived for seven years.

We next stopped at the home of Pastor Jorge (HOR'-HAY). It was poor but very clean. He had a green parrot on the back porch that was talking but I could not understand his Spanish. Here we decided to turn back before the rivers rose possibly causing us to be stranded for who knows how long. It was still raining and the locals

advised us to do just that so we started back to Tacho's house and on the way saw brother Antonio on the road driving his 12 cattle home. Recrossing both rivers we came to brother Tacho's house where brother Ted conferred with him about whether to hold a service at Lis Lis tonight and trade with Rio Esteban where we had scheduled a service for tomorrow. They decided to have a service here in the church at Lis Lis tonight.

Almost immediately some women came to sweep out the 120 seat church auditorium. The floor of the auditorium was a very nice tile that can be easily cleaned. Before the services the small Honduran children were as curious about me as I was about them and I enjoyed giving each of them a Honduran coin or two. Ben helped open the heavy wooden windows so we could catch every bit of breeze possible. At this point in time a large group of Grackles began to flock to and roost in trees across from the church and it was very noisy for awhile with their scratchy sounds.

The inside walls of the church building were of plaster and were painted a bright light green. The outside was a buff colored plaster or stucco with two bright green stripes high up on the walls. Brother Tweet had built the pews and had done the electric wiring for this really nice church building.

All those who attended the service walked to church in the rain and mud and came from all the surrounding area. I was told that the town drunk had been saved five years previously in this church and had a wonderful testimony. He left the Catholic Church when the Lord saved him thereby abandoning 500 years of family and Honduran tradition. Most people in this congregation were dark skinned Indians. Every one present knelt when Pastor Tacho led in prayer.

The hymn singing was accompanied by a guitar and the hymns were local and of somewhat of an African flavor though they had no rhythmic beat. The singing of the large crowd was lusty and heart felt. A large number of children (Neen'-yohs) was included in the congregation this night. We sang #197 in their hymnal, "Power In The Blood," and the teen aged music director pitched it about two keys too high but this in no way hindered the singing. I began to wish that I had brought a tape recorder so I could share this wonderful music with the people back home in the States. The next hymn was #336 "Con Gran Gozo Y Placer" during which two small children lay down on the floor in the aisle and went to sleep.

In this service I preached on "How Does God Speak Today?" from Jude 3 and Ephesians 6:17. Some of what was involved was the fact that God no longer gives direct revelations and visions today but speaks only through the written word of God. When I had concluded the message Pastor Tacho told the congregation that this very day two Pentecostal preachers in that village had prophesied that the nearby rivers would rise today and people would be killed. Of course, it didn't happen. God's timing is perfect!

On the drive back to La Ceiba we saw three what I called Ring Tailed Cats or what looked like them anyway. We actually hit one as it ran across the road. After the long ride back to La Ceiba we ate a late supper at the Golden Palace Restaurant. We ate family style and had chicken and vegetables called Pollo Con Verduras. At long last we arrived back at the La Quinta Motel where everything that happened after that is just a blur.

TUESDAY AUGUST 14, 2001

Dissentery was on my mind when I woke up at 5:18 this morning. Ben and I walked through a wet neighborhood after it had rained all night. Very few people were stirring as we strolled through a neighborhood very similar to one through which Lyndy and I had walked a number of times in Ourhinos, Brazil in July of 2000. Ben took our American money to the motel desk and exchanged it for Honduran Limperas. The woman at the desk shortchanged Ben five Limperas and when he had arrived back at our room he realized it so he returned to the desk and in front of other employees he asked for it. The woman quickly returned it to him and was greatly embarrassed because she had been caught red handed.

This was a very large motel whose corridors were a maze of halls and that crossed each other at various points. While walking these halls we came across a group of United States Air Force soldiers in uniform who were staying in the motel. When we asked them what they were doing in Honduras they gave us rather vague answers. The best they could do was state that they were there on some kind of medical mission.

I now took my Bible to a courtyard area near the motel swimming pool and read my Bible readings which included the 13th chapter of Romans. After completing my devotions I wrote in my trip log and otherwise enjoyed the very pleasant weather. The day was cool after the all night rain. Looking up at the nearby mountains I could see a torrent coming down one of the canyons. The motel pool was surrounded by palms and other plants. The red tile roof and red brick columns around the courtyard and pool give this place a small flavoring of a resort. My dissentery continued.

We hoped to go shopping this morning in La Ceiba which is a fairly large city. We hoped to find smaller, privately owned shops this day instead of such outrageously high priced places as the Turi Plaza we visited

yesterday. A shop inside the motel had some pretty wooden chests featuring carved parrots and Maya Indians and Honduran street scenes but we figured we would do better by going to shops downtown.

While waiting for the Tweets to come out for breakfast Ben and I turned on the TV in our motel room and found CNN in English which was a surprise but not really pleasant due to the heavily leftist bias of that network. We only half jokingly referred to it as the Communist News Network.

Sylvia and I had to take a medicine for our dysentery called LOPAR as soon as we could find a drug store. Once this had been done we were off to see La Ceiba. One of the highlights of this driving and walking tour of the city was the old banana dock on the water front. For years until the Dole Company moved to another port this dock had been used to load bananas on ships from around the world. Now were it not for its use by a few lobster companies it would be totally abandoned. It is in bad repair but the surrounding ocean and the lobster boats and the native blacks hanging around gave it an exotic Caribbean flavor that was very appealing to us traveling North Americans. The bright greens of the ocean and the dark purples of the distant mountains and the grays and whites of the puffy clouds along with the rustic wharf stacked with many lobster traps was a picture to behold and remember. Local children were diving from the dock and from ships anchored just out from the dock laughing while their mothers watched with some concern. At one point just as we walked onto the wharf we could see the local sewer draining into the ocean and it was a sickening sight but it didn't seem to bother those walking on the beach and jumping from the dock.

Next we visited several shops in search of souvenirs. There weren't really too many tourist shops. Mostly what we visited were just regular Honduran stores, one of which was the local hardware store. Here I purchased machetes for our son Eddy and our son in law Joel Tucker. One was about 16 inches long and sharp on just one side and the other was about 36 inches long and sharp on both sides. I was very pleased at their quality and the price was amazingly low; \$2.00 U.S. At noon we ate lunch at an Applebee's Restaurant at a mall called the Mega Plaza. Mega Plaza was a large and very modern indoor mall with nice stores and luxurious automobiles on display in the walking areas. We then went back to our motel.

At 1:15 PM we left for Rio Esteban and as we traveled along we listened again to brother John Kohler's conference sermon on "The True Church And The Parachurch." We were aggravated by the way the Honduran road crews make road repairs. They will cut a ditch across a brand new stretch of highway and then not fill it in level. This leaves terrible bumps that seem to grow rougher by the day. At 1:55 we arrived at Jutiapa again and waited at the end of the one way bridge on the outskirts of town for a tractor to cross coming toward us. The river was up.

We soon passed a huge herd of Charolais and Brahma cattle owned by the richest man in Honduras, a Sr. Rosenthal. A couple of miles on down the road we came upon a farmer herding about 20 Brahmas down the road. After awhile we forded the river which was not up as we had expected it to be. In this area near the river there was a village of Indians who lived in mud huts. The children were playing in the road naked and in various stages of undress.

Once across the river and into the Balfate area we met Roxanne McKinney, wife of Dr. Jefferson McKinney, an Independent Baptist (Arminian) missionary living in the area. She had seven American children with her. They were riding bikes. This was in the area where the Tweets had once lived. We allowed some local Honduran children to ride in the back of our truck in this area.

We now came to a very sad sight, an area where all the many coconut palms had been killed by some kind of blight. All that was left of the formerly beautiful palm trees were the hundreds of trunks with no leaves or fronds left on them. There were literally miles and miles of these here. We forded another river and we noted that the clouds were now lowering again and the tops of the mountains were once again covered. The road was just one pond after another.

Arriving in Rio Esteban at 2:44 PM we stopped to greet several Black members of the church along the road. Shortly thereafter we forded another river after which the road became one big mud hole. Brother Tweet took us to the home of Pastor Lisandro Cordova where we had a very interesting visit and ate supper. Lisandro raises a pig-like, tapir-like animal called Tepescuyente (TAY-PAY-SQUEE-EHN'-TAY). This nocturnal animal, the size of a small to medium sized dog, had reddish hair with rows of white spots down its side. He kept two of them in a cage with two dog houses inside the cage. Pastor Lisandro also had another small animal with a head like a tapir and a body about 12 inches long called a Guatusa (GWAH-TOO'-SUH). This critter was covered with fur but its feet were bare or hairless. It had no tail that I could see.

There was a large number of children playing in the road in front of this brother's house. Lesandro's children kept a pet green parrot on the front porch of the house. Several three year olds were playing marbles in the road, something I considered a little strange for children that young to be doing.

Now the rain began to fall again and we could hear thunder rumbling up in the mountains. Brother Ted drove Ben and me all over the town of Rio Esteban whose population Ted estimates at about 5,000 souls. On this

driving tour we passed buildings of the Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel where I was scheduled to preach this night. The church buildings were adjacent to the beach so we got out of the car and walked down to and along the beach. We watched the waves as fishermen were returning to Rio Esteban after their day's work. They were coming in canoes made of hollowed out logs and in larger and more sophisticated boats. Off to our right down the beach a huge and beautiful mountain jutted out into the sea and clouds sat on its top. As we walked slowly down the beach at what was now sundown we picked up sand dollars and shells and peeked into crab holes. The rain over the past few hours had changed from a few sprinkles to a steady downfall now. I hoped that it wouldn't rain enough to bring the rivers up and prevent our returning to our motel at La Ceiba this night.

Driving back through town we saw pigs running loose everywhere. There were many mud walled, thatch roofed houses none of which had chimneys. Smoke from cooking fires filtered through the thatch making it look like every house in town was on fire. Brother Tweet informed us here that there are no paved roads within forty miles of Rio Esteban.

Pastor Lesandro had four children all of whom were barefoot and constantly playing with pigs and parrots. The people in this town had colorful umbrellas, each of which was of one bright color or another. The mothers use umbrellas but the children all walk in the rain. My dysentery was now improving but still lingered.

Tonight I plan to preach on Matthew 11:28 where the Lord Jesus says "Come Unto Me." Brother Tweet said he had baptized most of the members of the church that we had met here. Most all people in town recognize him and speak to him on the street even though he has been gone from here for at least five years.

Here we were introduced to the Marzapan or breadfruit tree. Sylvia cut open one of the fruit that was light green in color and about twice to three times as big as a softball. The skin had a design that was made up of small six sided figures with a black dot in the middle of each. The insides were white, fibrous and grainy. Sylvia said they fry the fruit in strips. The shape is slightly oval but closer to round and it has a one inch in diameter stem.

Brother Tweet and I now sat down on Pastor Lisandro's front porch and reviewed the vocabulary I planned to use in this evening's sermon. Finishing that I quizzed Pastor Lesandro about what makes up scriptural baptism and he passed the quiz with flying colors. He said basically that there are four requirements baptism must meet in order to be scriptural. It must have the proper candidate, a true believer in Christ. It must have the proper mode which is dipping or immersing. It must be done for the proper purpose which is to picture the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It must have the proper administrator which is a New Testament church. Brother Tweet had trained him well.

We were privileged to eat supper in the home of Pastor Lisandro whose wife and her sister served us a delicious meal of red beans, grated dry cheese, fresh avocados, tortillas, HOT sauce and homegrown pork. As we finished our meal a crowd gathered in the street in front of the house, already arriving for tonight's service. My case of dysentery was still smoldering even after I had taken more medicine. After supper I enjoyed presenting Pastor Lisandro's children; Kevin, Nahum, Jonathan and Carol one American dollar each as a gift. It was now 6:24 PM and the rain had finally stopped.

Tonight would be the first church service in which these people would use the new Gloria accompaniment machine that Ben and I brought from the States. These electronic musical instruments will play six hundred and fifty hymns with a great variety of instrumentation sounds. Volume and tempo can be adjusted to taste. They are helpful because traditional instruments for use in church worship such as organ or piano are not available in most areas of Honduras.

Pastor Tacho brought a large group from his church in Lis Lis to the services tonight, all riding in the backs of two pickup trucks. This was the first and only church building we would visit in Honduras that had screens on the windows. It had electric ceiling fans and light fixtures with small florescent bulbs. There was a raised platform upon which the pulpit was placed surrounded by a wooden railing built some time ago by brother Tweet. There was a wrought iron fence based in concrete across the front of the church yard. The back of the lot fronted on the Caribbean Sea. There was a residence next to the auditorium and a member family lives there for the purpose of watching the church property at all times because thieves are so very prevalent in Honduras. Just before the services this night a medium sized pig came running through the church yard but no one paid any attention to him.

Before the services every person present including men, women, boys and girls, made it a point to shake my hand and welcome me. There was a packed house of probably well over two hundred people. I looked out into the front yard and saw more people arriving by truck. The singing of this mostly black congregation was wonderful, yea, heavenly. It had a definite African flavor but had no prominent beat. The Blacks in this part of Honduras are called Garifunas. The crowd was so large that it wasn't as quiet as usual during the sermon but most people were listening closely. Several people stood outside the front door and listened because there was not enough room inside. Five little boys sat near the platform in the doorway on the side of the auditorium.

The drive back to La Ceiba that night was once again exciting. We forded the two large rivers and at one point a large nocturnal bird hit our windshield. When we passed through Jutiapa a fiesta was in progress and everyone in town was out in the streets. Several times we had to wait on the crowds and honk to get through. I noticed several booths along the streets under the hanging electric lights that were manned by what Ted said were card sharks. All over town loud American rock music blared over loud speakers. Arriving at about 10:30 PM we went to bed as soon as possible. This was truly one of the most enjoyable times of preaching in my entire lifetime.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 15, 2001

We started the day at 5:30 by cleaning up. I read Romans 14 and Psalms 103-104 as I sat in the pool area of our motel. The sun was shining this morning and as usual it was hot and sultry starting out. The tropical heat was bearing down as I was aware that I still had a lingering bit of dysentery. Our plans for today were to check out of our motel, drive to Balfate for an evening service and then make the three hour trip back to San Pedro Sula and the Tweet residence for the night. We planned to take it easy in La Ceiba this morning until about 1 PM when we would leave for Balfate. As we drove down the street this morning we saw several specimens of the "sewer plants" that grow wild here but which are grown as indoor plants in office buildings back in Kansas City. The large leathery looking leaves are about twenty inches across and have many holes in them making them look somewhat like large ferns. We laughed about them because they are called sewer plants and grow in the ditches here but in the States they are seen as an exotic and desirable decorative plant.

At 7:30 we had breakfast at the local Burger King restaurant and at 8:21 AM we went to a grocery store. Surprisingly inside this large store a hymn was being played over the loudspeaker system. It was a choir singing "I Surrender All" in Spanish of course. We then visited a downtown grocery warehouse where Ted's friend works. While Ted counseled with this friend about some matter Ben and I enjoyed observing the various flora in the vicinity. One interesting example was a tall tree that had two different plants growing on it in a symbiotic relationship. One of these plants growing on the host tree was an orchid and the other was a vine of some sort that reached down from the limbs towards the ground. On the ground we saw a plant that had leaves similar to the Mimosa trees in the States. The leaves on this plant closed when we would touch the plant. Sylvia told us that the name of this plant was Durmilona.

Next Ted drove us to another area of town and then up a road called Las Maugas. We were travelling to a place called Yaruca which was up a canyon road into the mountains. The river we followed was filled with huge boulders and the jungles and mountain vistas can only be described as majestic splendor. One of the outstanding sights here was a very long waterfall that we could see across the canyon and up high. The water must have fallen about three or four hundred feet in two or three divisions that were close together. The river that ran through the bottom of the canyon was filled with rapids that had attracted a group of about seven or eight international tourists who were rafting in a large rubber craft. We took pictures of these German and Latino adventurers.

After coming back down from the summit of the canyon road we stopped in an area where there had been a lot of turbulent river flooding during hurricane Mitch. Many round and smooth granite river boulders had been exposed here and we loaded several into the Tweets' truck so the Tweets could display them in their yard at home.

Moving back into La Ceiba we stopped for diesel fuel at a station where we paid \$1.76 U.S. for each gallon. I jumped out of the truck while Ted was refueling and passed out some Spanish language salvation tracks to eight men who were waiting nearby for a bus. Back in town we stopped at the Mega Plaza and drank Zanahoria Naranjas, a wonderful drink made of carrots, orange juice, sugar and ice blended for two minutes in an electric blender.

At 1:30 we checked out of the motel and had lunch at Pizza Hut and then started towards Balfate. Along the way we saw a huge tree with thirty three huge swinging bird nests suspended from its limbs. The nests were similar in shape to what we call Baltimore Oriole nests but were much larger in size. They were made of grass and were elongated swinging baskets, about three feet long, with a hole at the top for entry by the birds and the eggs were evidently laid inside at the bottom. Struck by this very unusual sight we stopped to take pictures and to quiz the people living nearby about the nests. A neighbor lady told us that the birds had been living in this tree for many years.

We forded the two rivers again and this time stopped so I could take a photo of the truck crossing the river with water up to about four feet deep on the truck. Not too long after crossing the second river we came to the ocean where we spotted a Pelican floating in the sea. Brother Tweet took us up on a high mountainside overlooking the Caribbean as dusk was falling. On this mountainside was a new hospital under construction. It was being built by something called Cornerstone Ministries. The location of the hospital was a place called La Quinta. We toured the project that was about half finished. A Southern Baptist medical missionary was leading in this effort. Inside the

walls were stacks of used hospital and office equipment donated by people in the States and sent here for use in the hospital once it would begin operation. Brother Tweet knows all those involved in this project.

Our service this night began at 6:30 with the song "Every Day With Jesus" led by Pastor Jorge Ramos (RAH'-MOHS). We sang a number of other songs that were unknown to us either in words or melody. All of them were pitched very high and a definite African influence was obvious. The people sang with loud volume and a straight tone. A large crowd of 54 persons comfortably filled the church building and this was the first time a Gloria had been used in the services of this church. We had brought this one with us from the States. I thrilled as we sang "How Great Thou Art." Looking around I noted a 100% participation by those in the congregation who "raised the roof" singing at the tops of their lungs. There were no rhythmic body movements by the worshippers, just lusty singing. There were some unusual biting black bugs that bothered me during this song service. This reminded me of the huge tropical cockroaches I had seen at the banana docks yesterday. They were three inches long and had huge yellow wings.

At 8:35 we began our long drive back to San Pedro Sula. At about 9:50 we came upon a wreck on the highway in which a motorcyclist had lost control and had hit some rocks. He was lying spread-eagled on his back in the middle of the highway and was bleeding profusely. He was not moving and we all concluded that he was dead. There were no police on the scene and the truck driver and car driver that had stopped tried to get each other and us to take the victim to a hospital that was several miles back in the direction from which we had just come. Brother Tweet attempted to call the police on his cell phone but was out of range of any towers so this was futile. We refused to take the man to the hospital because of the great danger in which it would place brother Tweet as far as possible law suits against him as well as possible resentment of his being a gringo. He finally persuaded the truck driver to take the man to the hospital. Just before leaving the scene we determined that the victim was still alive and had either a broken hip or leg in addition to whatever was causing the bleeding. I thanked the Lord for preserving us from such an accident. The night before we had had a near miss when we hit our brakes and skidded almost into the path of an oncoming semi trailer truck.

We arrived at the Tweets' home at 11:54 PM and found the guard Ted had hired to watch the house sitting in the porch swing at the front of the house. We checked our e-mail (I received messages from both Lyndy and our daughter Leah Tucker) and went to bed. Before falling asleep I turned on the window air conditioning unit in my room.

THURSDAY AUGUST 16, 2001

For some reason I woke up at 5:10 this morning but stayed in bed until 5:57 because we wanted to take it a little easier today after a pretty grueling couple of days of travel to and around the North coast of Honduras. I cleaned up, wrote e-mails and viewed photos of my new grand daughter sent over e-mail from Lyndy in North Carolina.

At 9 AM we had a breakfast of Danish puffs and a ham and egg omelet after which I reviewed with brother Ted the vocabulary of my sermon for this evening. In this reviewing it was our purpose to be sure there were equivalent Spanish words for some of the English words I would use and also to eliminate idioms and colloquialisms that would not be understood to my Honduran listeners. The sermon I had chosen for this night was "Salvation Is Of The Lord" from Jonah 2:9. After breakfast we all had our morning devotional together and read from Charles Spurgeon's Morning And Evening.

The oppressive tropical heat was bearing down already when we left the house to trade American dollars for Honduran Lempiras. I traded \$300 for L4,600. One of the things we had to do this morning was visit the Avon Company offices where Rosario (ROW-ZAH'-REE-YOH) worked. I had to receive and sign another fax concerning the sale of our house in Kansas City and return it immediately to our realtor. From there we went to the location of the Lomas de San Juan mission where Ted and Ben mowed the yard in the steaming hot tropical sun. Due to my old age I sat in Ted's air conditioned car and read a recently purchased booklet, "The Lord Gave The Word" by Malcom H. Watts. Something happened to my camera and I could not get it to work again so Ted let me use his very expensive camera for the remainder of the trip. Leaving here at 12:30 PM we went to another colonia where the future home of the Lomas de San Juan mission was located and here Ted and Ben sprayed poison on the weeds and Ben ran the weed eater.

At 2:15 Sylvia had lunch ready for us and we had Tilapia fish which is a type of gold fish. During what was left of the afternoon we visited the Continental Airlines office in downtown San Pedro Sula seeking to get our trip home rerouted through this city so that we would not have to drive back to Tegucigalpa to board the plane. The Lord worked it out thus saving the Tweets an entire extra day of driving on the day we would go home. We next went to the downtown post office where a pesky young woman kept flirting with Ben until we solved the problem

by giving her a salvation tract after which she soon lost interest in Ben. When we started for the Tweet home we found ourselves in a jam in the afternoon rush hour and had to spend a lot of time just sitting in the stalled traffic. When we reached the house at 5:21 we rested for awhile and I was able to doze for about twenty minutes. Sylvia's custom in such situations was to eat after church so we resigned ourselves to waiting.

The evening service began at 7:05 and we lingered for some time afterward to fellowship with hermanos Carlos, Edin, and Nacho and hermana Rosario plus three young boys; Ignacio, who speaks fluent English, and Carlos and Mario who are hermano Edin's nephews. I gave one dollar bills to each of these three boys who seemed to appreciate it.

Returning home by 9:45 we ate a bowl of dry cereal and turned in at 10:10 on a hot and sweaty night. Just before retiring I stepped onto the bathroom scales and was shocked to see that I had lost ten more pounds in the last two weeks and was now down to 176 pounds, nine pounds below my ideal weight. Several at home as well as here in Honduras have told me lately that I am too thin or have been losing too much weight.

FRIDAY AUGUST 17, 2001

I came to consciousness at 5:50 this morning, thinking about Lyndy, Leah, Joel and Caroline in far away Elon College, North Carolina. I was also a little more concerned with my own continuing loss of weight. I read Romans 15 and Psalms 107-108. All this was at the conclusion of a swelteringly hot night during which I mistakenly tried to sleep with the windows open. Ben and I packed for the day's travel before the Tweets got up and then we worked for awhile on bringing our personal logs up to date. It was our plan to leave today for Tegucigalpa where we would stay Friday through Sunday and to preach in three different churches in that city, a couple of which brother Tweet had not visited in several years.

As we sat waiting eagerly for the Tweets to arise I looked West out of my second story bedroom window at the jungle covered mountains where the white puffy clouds were already building. This vista always gave me a certain enjoyment and inner peace. The dark lavender Bougainvilleas on the wall around the house were especially bright and beautiful this morning but there is still only one word to describe the climate no matter what time of day and that is HOT! The flora in this country, even in the cities, is awesome. What must be ancient trees rise high into the air, their strangely shaped and very large limbs covered with various orchids and ferns living in symbiotic relationship with their hosts. Gazing at the lush green mountains I was pleased by the patches of yellow sun that drifted slowly across the greens of the jungle pursued by dark blue shadows.

At last at 8:30 AM we went to a Burger King restaurant where we ate breakfast and stared awkwardly at the armed guard standing inside with his twelve gauge shotgun. From there we went to a large bank in downtown San Pedro Sula. As Ben and I sat in the lobby waiting for the Tweets to take care of some financial business we admired some wonderful artwork depicting Honduran bird life with its rich and exotic colors. A maid came over to us and asked if we would like coffee or a glass of cold water and when she returned she brought them on a sterling silver tray. We felt like royalty and were careful to express our appreciation for the hospitality.

The next place on our itinerary for the morning was the Continental Airlines offices where we hoped to verify the change in our point of departure from Honduras. The female airline employee that served us was very accommodating, spoke excellent English and gave us exactly what we had asked for as far as changing our point of departure from Tegucigalpa to San Pedro Sula.

While at this office we asked the two armed guards out front in the street who were acting tough and threatening if we could take their photographs. Immediately their eyes lighted up and they became semi human in demeanor. One asked us to wait for just a moment so he could run to the business next door. When he came back he had picked up a comb and was combing his mustache and straightening up his uniform. Both men who must have been between thirty five and forty years old became very friendly and fairly strutted for the camera. Several days later when we returned to Tegucigalpa we drove past the Continental Airlines office here and these guards recognized us, smiling big and waving with great animation. Before leaving town Sylvia made sure we purchased some bread made with tender corn that the locals call pan de elote.

As we left the city we saw women washing their clothes in the filthy rivers of San Pedro Sula. At one circle intersection we came upon a Pepsi truck and trailer that had somehow overturned in an accident. As we sat waiting to pass we observed a front end loader lift the trailer and set it upright.

About this time Ted received a cell phone call from Rosario warning us of danger on the highway to Tegucigalpa today because the Mara 18 gang had announced that they would be on the highway to Tegucigalpa to kill their enemies. Members of this extensive gang have a large number 18 tattooed on their chests. Because the police in Honduras are largely ineffective there are vigilantes all over the country who kill these gang members to rid the populace of their menace. These vigilantes are made up largely if not exclusively of retired police officers

who are fed up with the way the corrupt courts prevent the police from enforcing the law. Now they take the law into their own hands and execute murderers and robbers whom they know to be guilty and/or have been turned loose by the courts. The ineffectiveness of the police also helps account for the presence of armed guards at all businesses that handle large amounts of cash.

As we left the city we returned to the La Orchidea mission property where we had held services last Sunday afternoon. This was the little building located in the colonia that was built on the steep side of the mountain. Passing through the rough and rocky streets in this area we passed a pickup truck in which three men were working by selling fresh unwrapped and uncovered meat on the street. We now headed down the highway and through the town of Villanueva. There are hundreds of thousands of people in this area.

What a panorama greeted us as we moved out into the countryside. Around the complete circle of the horizon were grand purple and green mountains. In the distance in one direction we could see what very possibly was a volcanic cone. As we cruised through this scenic paradise a lady with whom we would be staying in Tegucigalpa called us on the Tweets' cell phone but the call failed three times and we were never able to finish the call.

The countryside here was dotted with palms and banana trees with vast fields of sugar cane surrounding them. In one place we came across some houses in a barrio that had been built by Habitat For Humanity. These all concrete houses were about half the size of the native homes in the area. All along the highway here we saw roadside fruit stands and furniture stores. These furniture stores seemed to specialize in bar stools and rattan furniture. As we came up closer to the sides of some of the mountains in this area we noted that pineapple and corn were growing on the steep mountain sides. It looked like it would take a great deal of extra labor to cultivate and harvest these things in this location because of the steepness of the fields in which they grew.

As we started up over the mountains headed in a generally Southern direction there were many roadside stands offering pinadas, pottery and fresh fruit. We now passed into an area dominated by pine trees just like those back in Alabama. After awhile we passed the beautiful Lake Yojoa. In this area the Spanish moss was growing all over the wires of the power lines. There were a number of fish mongers along here, men and boys who had caught the beautiful strings of bass in the lake. The fish were hanging about five or six on a string from the roofs of the small road side stands and the men and boys manning the stands were constantly pouring small amounts of water over the fish to keep them fresh looking. This azure lake bathes the feet of the tall nearby mountains. The Orchids that grew in the trees here looked a lot like what we would call Airplane plants.

Once past the lake we entered an area where the short Indian men carried heavy bundles of firewood on their shoulders and where many of the locals operated or worked in lime factories near the highway. In these places they burned rocks in stone ovens to produce lime to be used in making concrete and for other purposes.

Now we could see vast valleys and verdant mountains with varying shades of blues covered with humid clouds and lush jungles. Here and there the local Indian people were farming their small plots on the steep hillsides as they carried out their subsistence farming. We also observed some of the Indians making adobe bricks.

At 1:11 PM we stopped for lunch at Granja d'Elia Restaurant where we ate smothered fish, rice and french fries. The after dinner mints tasted like cough drops. Yuk! As we neared our destination of Tegucigalpa we stopped at a Texaco station to replenish our fuel supply of diesel. The temperature here was as pleasant as the resort in Cloud Croft, New Mexico.

Continuing down the highway we passed over the summit of a mountain pass and suddenly below on the floor of a huge valley was the sprawling metropolis of Tegucigalpa. Tegucigalpa is an Indian word meaning mountain of silver according to brother Tweet. The altitude of this place is 800 meters or 2,400 feet above sea level. Arriving here at about 4 PM we went first to the home of Pastor Roberto Manzanares and his wife Rebeca, a very bright, highly educated (for Honduras) young couple. This was an apartment made of concrete and having one room downstairs containing the living room and kitchen and one bedroom upstairs plus a bathroom. This very attractive and musically talented young woman is the daughter of Pastor Julio in San Pedro Sula. She is an accomplished violinist, perhaps the best known violinist in Honduras. She teaches music privately at a nearby colegio which is a jr high and high school. It was in Pastor Roberto's church that I was scheduled to preach this evening.

After a brief visit here we went on to what was called the Love And Life Center, a cancer center for children run by the Honduran government, where we would spend the next three nights. After placing our things in our rooms we went to a very large shopping mall called the Multi Plaza where we ate supper at a Chinese place called the Waimin Restaurant.

After supper amongst what must have been thousands of people out in the food court of this mall we passed through an area called Comayaguela traveling up and up and up through some dirty, rocky and very steep streets thronged with teeming thousands of people to the Templo Bautista Colonia Ayestas or Baptist Temple of the Eastern

Colonia. Roberto (age 24) has been pastor here for the past seven years. I was told that he preached his first sermon at age 12. Brother Tweet thinks he is one of the best of the Honduran Baptist preachers.

Roberto began the service by leading the congregation in singing Onward Christian Soldiers. I was privileged to sing in a mixed quartet composed of Rebeca singing soprano, Sylvia Tweet singing alto, myself singing tenor and Ben Gardner singing bass. We sang in Spanish and got through the song pretty well as far as the harmony was concerned and the pronunciation of the words was of only slightly less quality. The name of our song was "A Los Pies De Jesucristo." The congregational singing was acapella and four strong parts could be heard.

Typically the church building had open screenless windows but because the mountain climate in Tegucigalpa is much cooler than that in the rest of the country there were no fans in the building. The inside walls were a Salmon color and the shutters were a blood red. Thirty five people were present in this service comfortably filling the auditorium. I noted that Roberto is articulate in Spanish and very confident. We sang hymns and Psalm 27 and Psalm 28. All had indigenous melodies. The congregation here was made up of mostly very young adults and teenagers. My sermon was directed specifically to youth and was very well received and afterwards I learned that my sermon had dealt with some specific problems that some of the young people were involved in.

After church as we rode back to the hospital to spend the night we saw the remains of many buildings that had been destroyed by hurricane Mitch. Hundreds were swept away by flood waters in this area and are still buried in the sands of the creek beds, their bodies never recovered. At 10 PM I tried to add a little to my log but quickly fell asleep.

SATURDAY AUGUST 18, 2001

We woke up a little earlier than usual this morning. It was about 4:55. During the night we had heard the coughing of the children across the breezeway from us in the hospital. We also had heard the constant banging of the sheet metal roof in the wind that came up during the night. We soon discovered that there was no water coming out of the pipes. The director of the hospital later told us this was due to the severe drought they had been experiencing for quite some time in Tegucigalpa and the surrounding area. The water was turned off all over the city except for one hour each day. Rebeca would tell us later this morning that they sometimes have to go three and even four days without any water at all. We did the best we could to clean up. We planned to leave at 6 AM for the interior of Honduras and a very isolated place called Lepaterique where brother Tweet says "you can clap your hands once and kill five flies."

When we left the hospital the climate was wonderfully cool and a bit breezy, something completely different to what we had been experiencing in other parts of the country. As we drove through a modern business district we came upon a military truck unloading soldiers in the street. This was no doubt part of the rumored threats of violence we had been warned about yesterday. Both McDonalds and Burger King were closed at this early hour so we had to go to the Intercontinental Hotel of Tegucigalpa for breakfast. It was strictly high class and luxurious in every way. The entire hotel staff spoke Spanish only. We had eggs and bacon and pancakes. The price was stiff to say the least.

Next we drove to the apartment where Roberto and Rebeca lived to pick them up and take them with us today. They will stay in the back country where Roberto will teach the people a class in preparation for organizing themselves into a Baptist church this coming December. As I walked from the car to their apartment to get them I could hear a vendor walking through the apartment complex calling Agua! Agua! Or Water! Water! He sold water in large multi-gallon bottles and in soft plastic packs that hold about one glassful.

Getting under way I noted the ever present buzzards that in this country circle overhead whether it was in the big cities or in the countryside. A little ways outside of Tegucigalpa we began to ascend into the mountains and we passed the nearly empty city reservoir. We could now understand why the water was only turned on for an hour or two each day. There was very little water left in this lake. As we climbed higher into the mountains outside Tegucigalpa we soon left the pavement and found ourselves on a winding gravel road. The area was covered thinly with pine trees and dotted with Maguay plants. These are the large rubbery plants from which they make Tequila in Mexico. After awhile we stopped beside the road and as I heard the wind in the pines and observed the dark blue skies and felt the crisp mountain air and the bright warm sunshine I was reminded of the many summers I had spent with my family in Colorado as a boy. Here and there along the road we would see cabbage fields worked by individual subsistence farmers. Frequently we noticed a parasite growing in the pines trees. It is called Matapino.

Then suddenly we came over a hill and could see far below the little country village of Lepaterique. This would be a whole new world for us, even different from any place we had seen in Honduras. In the ancient traditional style this little village had a gleaming whitewashed stucco or adobe Catholic cathedral as its architectural

focus. This of course was the first thing about the village that caught our eyes when the village came into view. We immediately noticed the wonderfully cool climate and were told that the climate is mild here year round.

The outstanding memory of this place is pastor Jose Martinez and his lovely family. His wife Clementina was in poor health after a recent very serious surgery. His beautiful daughters, and I do mean beautiful, are Sarah aged 19, Dalila aged 17 and Ester who must have been about 16. They also had a son, Josue, who was probably 18. Their skin was the very attractive olive color of many Hondurans and their personalities were most pleasing and gregarious.

When we first arrived at the home where brother Jose and his family live we were told by Clementina that Jose and Joshua were down the road working on building a new house. Ted, Ben and I and Delilah walked the three hundred yards to the new house where we found the Martinez men working inside a concrete block structure of good quality that they had built from the ground up. It was now closed in and they were just beginning to finish the inside. Both their concrete work and their wood work was of excellent quality. They told us the house was one of several paid for as a sort of aid project by the government of Spain. Jose told brother Tweet that the government of Spain did not pay enough to make building these houses worth his while.

Jose and Clementina were gracious enough to ask us into their home so that we could experience first hand a typical home of a native Honduran family. The house was made up of two rooms, one being the living room and kitchen and the other being the bedroom. Actually the living room/kitchen also must have served as a bedroom. Jose had made the chairs from rough wood and the seats of the chairs were made of cowhide. The house had a sheet metal roof and in an outbuilding there was a gravity toilet.

There was a cookstove made of stone and covered with stucco or adobe and painted white. There was a built in steel grill on the top. Wood was loaded into the front of this 24 inch high and four foot long and 20 inch wide stove. Black iron skillets, pots and pans as well as spoons and spatulas hung on the walls on racks made, undoubtedly, by Jose. There was a stainless steel sink and a few cabinets. There was also a stone or adobe oven in the back yard for cooking bread.

We had the pleasure of eating lunch with this very hospitable Christian family and were given the privilege of asking them any question we wished about their home and their country and their family. We were introduced to all kinds of exotic foods which I unhesitatingly sampled and yes, gorged myself on in some cases, knowing I would probably never taste them again. One of these was a strange fruit called Guanabana. The exterior of this softball sized fruit was dark green with little black bumps all over it. The inside was slimy and gooey and stringy and white and tasted like nothing I had ever eaten. The taste was not unpleasant but neither was it exciting. It was just different if not bland.

Sarah, Delilah and Esther helped Clementina cook the meal of white rice, red beans (frijoles) and Ayote, a large green squash shaped like a twelve inch by seven inch pumpkin. Esther pulled up some lemon grass and made tea for us. Clementina made us some real corn tortillas, much thicker than those we usually have in the States.

As we ate and had fellowship together a crowd from the neighborhood began to gather. After awhile someone brought out a Mandolin and a guitar and Rebeca and Joshua began to play and sing "How Great Thou Art" along with Jose. They then sang Candu, a typical Honduran song of a boy singing to his girl friend. What a blessed time this was. I shall never forget it. The Martinezes are truly beautiful people in every way.

All good things have to come to an end and this experience was no exception. After lunch we all said goodbye and the Tweets, Ben and I, leaving Roberto and Rebeca in Lepaterique, headed back towards Tegucigalpa.

Arriving there Ted decided to take us to a tourist Mecca called Valle de Angeles. This was a town on the outskirts of the capital made up almost entirely of very large tourist shops, some the size of warehouses. The goods offered for sale here were of the best quality in all of Honduras. The main item available here was the exquisite wood carvings of Honduran artisans. These were mostly chests of various sizes and wall hangings made of native Honduran dark mahogany. I purchased such a chest for Lyndy that was covered with hand carved and life sized rose stems and blossoms. I also purchased one for our daughter Rachel that had hand carved Magnolia blossoms on it.

Returning to Tegucigalpa we arrived at our rooms at the hospital at around 4 PM to find that the water had been turned back on, at least for about twenty minutes so we quickly took cold showers. We ate supper at a nearby large and beautiful mall that featured a three floor atrium. There were literally thousands of people eating in the twenty or so fast food restaurants in the food court on the second floor in this mall.

After supper we drove by the American embassy in downtown Tegucigalpa so that we could use it tomorrow as a point of reference when we would drive across town to go to church. The embassy is a huge fortress of a building with unbelievable security features.

Arriving back at the hospital where we were staying at 6:50 PM Ben and I straightened our room and went to bed at 7:20, bone tired after the many and varied activities of this wonderful day. My thoughts at this time were,

What a day! I went to sleep to the sounds of the children playing in the hospital rooms across the hall. The water came on again after we had gone to bed but we were too tired to get up and use it.

SUNDAY AUGUST 19, 2001

We awoke at 5:27 AM to the sound of the tin roof of the hospital banging in the wind. I read God's word while we waited for an employee of the hospital to turn on the water pump so we could shower and shave.

How aggravating it is the way this nation works!!! The water service is sporadic. They have new highways yet they cut ditches across the brand new black top and never make the patches match the surface of the existing road. The police are ineffective while thieves are seemingly everywhere. Sexual indulgence is the norm. Government corruption is pervasive. There is a general non-progressive attitude on all levels. Lies and mistrust are the order of the day each day. It is all because there is no moral basis for life here. Yet, what tremendous potential this country has, more perhaps than the U.S. in many ways. But oh, what misery and waste instead! How thankful to the Lord I am that in his sovereign and unfathomable providence he put me in the United States of America!

After eating breakfast at a nearby Burger King restaurant we started for church on the other side of the capital city. In the heart of the downtown area we stopped at a city park that had some idolatrous relics of the ancient Maya Indian culture that had been excavated elsewhere and brought in and put on display here. There was a giant stone turtle, an altar and several grotesque idols. We would see more of these in days to come when we would visit the internationally famous Copan Ruins in the mountains of Western Honduras.

We had to drive up the winding street on the side of a mountain on which the city was partially built to reach the church building where we would worship today. The Pastor of Iglesia Bautista de El Bosque or Baptist Church of the Forest is Hermano Guillermo Carias Rios. Pastor Guillermo is a thirty seven year old bachelor who is very serious and intense.

The church's building is located high up on the mountain overlooking Tegucigalpa. It is a large building with a wide center aisle. It had two sky lights covered with fiberglass that made the auditorium bright and cheery. There is always a cool breeze through the open windows here due to the altitude of the church's location.

In this very friendly church every church member makes it a point to shake hands with every other person present in every service. Many of them hug and kiss each other. Some of the men kissed me on the ear. Fifty eight persons attended the Sunday School here today. The worshippers sang Psalms using their Bibles as hymnbooks and having no music scores. The melody of one Psalm sounded very Jewish but could also have been of Indian derivation. We also sang songs that sounded similar to the choruses sung in our churches back home. As part of the worship Pastor Guillermo called on a man in the congregation to come to the pulpit and read a scripture passage from Ecclesiastes 5:1-20. This had also been done in most of the services in which I had already preached in Honduras. When it came time for the offering all those present stood and went to the front of the auditorium and placed their money in the plate on the Lord's Supper table. We then sang what sounded to me like "Leaning On The Everlasting Arms" but when I looked into their hymnbook at #161 I found that the name of this hymn was "Dulce Comunion."

As we left the church building and headed down the steep winding street on the side of this mountain we came upon a pick up truck that had been parked in such a way that it blocked the very narrow street. A water truck coming up the mountain stopped and its driver got out and released the pickup's handbrake. Then he and a couple of other men picked up the bumper of the truck and set the truck up onto the sidewalk so that the water truck could pass. As we rode along we were introduced to a church member who was riding in the car with us, hermano (or brother) Danny Martinez. He and brother Guillermo and two other brothers from the church were treating us to lunch today at the downtown Tegucigalpa Pizza Hut. This was to be a lengthy time of very warm and frank Christian conversation. I asked these Honduran Baptists all kinds of serious questions ranging from doctrinal matters to politics. In turn they asked me some very frank questions including the matter of just why I had come to Honduras. They also asked me what advice I would have for them as young Christians to which I responded that they should give disciplined attention to the study of God's word and should follow their pastor's leadership in all things as long as he was following God's word. I found that hermano Danny had once worked for the Honduran government and in that capacity had visited Washington, D.C. and New Orleans.

After lunch we walked through a nearby city park that was filled with interesting street vendors hawking everything from radios and walkmans to exotic Honduran fruits. There was also an acrobat entertaining the crowd and taking up a collection. Swarms of people had come out to the park on this beautiful resort-like day in Tegucigalpa.

Saying Adios to these brothers, we retrieved our car from a local parking lot and decided to drive around and see the sights in Tegucigalpa. We drove to the top of another mountain on whose sides Tegucigalpa is built and

as we ascended we passed the home of the American Ambassador to Honduras. It was a palatial house on a huge compound. I was somewhat embarrassed that the American Ambassador would live in such opulence in the midst of so modest a people.

After climbing for what seemed about forty five minutes we reached the summit of the mountain where was located a large National Park to which thousands of sightseers in buses and cars and on bikes had come to gaze out over the vast city below. It seems this is a favorite Sunday afternoon pastime in the capital. All the buses we saw were former American school buses that had been brought to Honduras. This was a peaceful and calming experience but it was also a sobering one as we looked down at the hundreds of thousands of people living below and realized how few churches there were here in which the true gospel of Jesus Christ is preached.

Back at the hospital we refreshed ourselves for a little while and then drove to a little church near the airport for our final service of the day. Hermano Levi Rios was pastor of La Pradera Iglesia Bautista which was located right at the curb of a main highway that led out of the city. Needless to say there was a lot of noise and interference in the services this night.

The service began at 6 PM with the singing of "Are You Washed In The Blood?" A mixed quartet sang a hymn that I did not recognize. The pastor read Psalms 119:57-64 and then a mixed duet made up of a Black man and an Indian woman sang "Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus." The sign at the front of the dimly lit auditorium noted that forty seven had attended Sunday School that morning. I preached on "The Meaning Of Life" from Romans 8:28 and was well received. There were a couple of people present who understood English and I got to visit with them some after the conclusion of the service. One of these was a Hondureno named Luis who had been educated in Forestry in Idaho in preparation for returning to Honduras to serve as a consultant to various businesses. I also visited briefly with the pastor whose knowledge of English was very limited.

Now we drove back towards the hospital and on the way we stopped for supper at a Ruby Tuesday's restaurant where they tried too hard to be just like the Ruby Tuesday's restaurants in the States. By this I mean that they had the rock music turned up so loud that we could almost not hear each other when we talked. As we sat eating our late supper an American military officer and his wife who were from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania approached our table and asked brother Tweet if he was a Baptist missionary. He had seen the sign on the side of brother Tweets' truck. When brother Tweet said Yes, the officer who turned out to be the chief military attaché to the American Ambassador to Honduras asked if Ted knew where there was a Baptist church in Tegucigalpa. One of the men under him was a Baptist and was looking for a church in the area. Brother Tweet told him about two of the three Baptist churches there along with addresses and telephone numbers.

Back at the hospital the water was turned on for twenty minutes. We quickly cleaned up and at 10:11 PM fell fast asleep.

MONDAY AUGUST 20, 2001

This morning's Bible readings included the second chapter of I Corinthians and Psalms 116 through 118. I read them at 5:30 before packing for our return to San Pedro Sula. The weather today was partly cloudy and pleasant. I felt much better today after having some difficulty yesterday with diverticulosis. I found myself hoping that we would have room in the truck for all the bags and things we had purchased to take back to the States. We ate breakfast at 6:30 AM at the same Burger King where we had eaten before. During breakfast brother Tweet informed us about some interesting and important statistics concerning Honduras including the fact that the country is the size of the State of Tennessee, the population is approximately six million and it has a number of different climates largely according to the altitude of any particular location.

After breakfast we left Tegucigalpa for the last time and headed North back towards San Pedro Sula. At 9 AM we stopped again at La Granja d'Elia restaurant for a rest break. At 9:28 AM we passed Lago Yojoa, at 10:22 we reached the outskirts of San Pedro Sula and at 10:35 we went to a large grocery store called Comisariato Los Andes. While the Tweets went inside Ben and I sat in the truck and watched a poor Honduran man about 45 years old trying to sell lottery tickets to people in the parking lot. At 10:57 we arrived back at the Tweet home and were thankful to the Lord for our safe trip.

Ben and I immediately began packing the gifts we had purchased for the trip home. I also sent some e-mail messages at this time to Lyndy and our children; Leah, Eddy and Rachel. While waiting for lunch I sat in the porch swing during a rain shower and read more of "The Lord Gave The Word" by Malcom H. Watts. My thoughts wandered as I looked around the grounds and then around the neighborhood and saw several lizards, Iguanas and others, creeping up the walls on the Tweet home and on other houses in the neighborhood. One 16 inch long Iguana was sunning himself on the roof of the Tweets' home during the times of intermittent sunlight. During the afternoon

as I watched one such Iguana he suddenly ran for cover when a good afternoon rain shower hit at 5:25. This shower was heavy enough that the mountains could not be seen for awhile and things now cooled down for the night hopefully.

We ate a delicious supper of fried plantains and corn mush lovingly prepared by Sylvia. We visited for a great while about the Bible and about history and then packed our bags for the trip home on Wednesday. At 9:15 I turned out the lights and was soon asleep.

TUESDAY AUGUST 21, 2001

At 5:20 AM I read I Corinthians 3 and Psalms 119:1-48, checked my e-mail and ate a breakfast of banana nut bread, scrambled eggs, bacon and fresh squeezed and very strong grapefruit juice. At 7:54 we left for a place called Copan Ruinas and what would prove to be a most unusual, interesting and exciting day. I would estimate that this place was about 100 miles West of San Pedro Sula and a little bit South.

Soon after leaving San Pedro Sula the countryside began to change. Now there were no palm trees, just low vegetation on the sides of the hills. One of the interesting things we observed is that when someone has car trouble along the road in Honduras they build a small brush pile several yards in front of and behind their cars on the highway as a signal to other drivers that there is danger ahead. I also noted that when the Indian men in the back country want to stop and talk they crouch down to do so. As I looked out into the distance the vast and huge mountains surrounded us everywhere. Here and there we would see Indian men carrying bundles of firewood on their shoulders as they walked along the roads and women carrying various burdens on their heads usually in some kind of pan or tub. There was a lot of what the natives called Cow Grass growing here. It was difficult for me to distinguish it from the Johnson Grass back in Texas and Oklahoma except it may have grown a little taller.

At 9:13 AM we passed through a town called Sula. In this area they were growing tobacco and the tobacco barns were unusual in that they had no sides on them. They were just posts with roofs on them and seven or eight shelves each having tobacco on it. A lot of people were walking along the highway in this area. After awhile we started up into the mountains where we saw houses and fields high up on their very steep sides. We passed through a number of villages in this area that are not on the maps we had. Along the road the natives had spread tarps using them for shade for selling ears of corn and wicker baskets that they could be seen making. Many of the houses in this area were made of adobe. We also observed several men on horseback.

As we drove through this area we listened to a cassette tape of brother Dan Cozart's sermon on "The Nature of the Church" and we moved into a high valley the prominent trees in which were pines and eucalyptus. There were many Brahma cattle here. Highway crews were cutting brush from the right of way with their machetes in one hand and crooked sticks in the other.

At 9:34 we entered the large town of La Entrada. This was a coffee growing area. The school children here wore clean uniforms of white shirts or blouses and dark pants or skirts.

The mountains were getting larger now and the highway was getting smaller. We were moving into ever remoter areas all the time. The houses of many of the Indians in this area were stick and mud and hemp huts called Barechi. As the highway wound upward we passed through sugar cane fields and there were fruit stands here and there along the road. I could see Elephant Ear plants growing wild. In one place we saw purple Cow Grass. Coffee trees were growing on the very steep sides of the very high mountains but they were mostly part of subsistence farming and not plantations. Now we passed through a little village called Santa Rita where somebody had placed uprooted bean plants on the edge of the road for a distance of about fifty feet. They were placed in a strip about ten feet wide and about five feet out onto the highway itself. This person had just pulled up the plant, leaves, stems, roots and all and turned them upside down on the highway to dry. We passed over a river that was clean and clear, something rare indeed in Honduras. There were more tobacco sheds or barns in this area.

We now came to the town of Copan Ruinas, Honduras. It was located far up in the back country. The Copan Ruins is a national park intended to preserve the ruins of an ancient Mayan Indian city. It appeared that only about a third of the ruins had actually been excavated by archaeologists. The remainder has been covered by the jungle and some of the huge exotic trees growing in the ruins appear to be at least three hundred years old. Two of these trees were some of if not the most beautiful and majestic trees I have ever seen and I have seen the giant Redwoods of Sequoia National Park in California. Though not as tall as the Redwoods their trunks are massive and their limbs are twisted in a way unlike any I have ever seen. There are large stone pyramids and other buildings with tunnels winding through their interiors. There are large open areas between the buildings. There are ball courts evidently used in some forgotten ancient games. There are sacrificial altars with channels and grooves for the draining of the blood of the human sacrifices once offered there. There are large Buddha-like statues with what

appeared to me to be Negroid features. There were several guards on the premises but no guides to interpret the ruins.

As we strolled through the ruins in the bright sunlight passing through the grassy courtyards between the pyramids and altars, we came upon a strange and what later proved to be demonic scene. I looked into a room in one of the stone buildings. There were no windows and no source of light in this room except the door. I started to enter but noticed a group of perhaps twelve persons standing in a circle inside and holding hands. Just outside the door a European looking woman about forty five years old was seated with a man sitting behind her and another man standing in front of her. She seemed at first to be having difficulty breathing. As my eyes focused on her I noted that her breathing became more and more difficult and she began to make some kind of noise like a lion growling though it was a matter of the way she was breathing. The man behind her seemed to be helping her physically to breathe and the man standing in front of her was giving her some kind of instructions. In the next few moments the noise the woman was making grew louder and louder until it was frenzied and her body was now heaving wildly. The people inside the room remained quiet and did not look out the door at the woman but continued in what seemed to be a trance of some kind. Ted told one of the guards nearby that something was wrong and the guard came and watched for awhile but then left, afraid evidently to say or do anything. The whole thing lasted for at least forty five minutes and we finally decided it was a séance and that the woman was demon possessed. It was a frightening and at the same time very disgusting experience. The woman finally calmed down, almost suddenly and was led away by the two men.

In the large grassy area central to these ruins a little boy about 8 years old came to us and wanted to sell us some heads of ancient Mayan Indians carved in stone. I immediately purchased a small one and asked if he could get more. He then took us to his father who was an on duty security guard in the ruins. He was sitting under a huge shade tree carving the heads at that time. I purchased a larger sized one. Ben also purchased one or two.

As we moved out of the ruins we came to an area near the gate of the park where about a dozen huge and strikingly beautiful Macaws were hanging around. We went over and stood and sat in the midst of them for a few moments taking pictures and observing them closely. Never have I seen more striking birds than these deep red, royal blue and bright yellow parrots! I took a picture of Ted sitting among them. We asked the guard standing nearby why these birds congregated here and he said that they fed them every day.

We next visited the museum in which many statues and carvings excavated here were on display. There were many replicas of animals and birds including the Macaw and bats. There were creatures that were part animal and part man. The style of art even though very ancient was what today we would call impressionistic or even a Picasso style because of its sheer ugliness. The central item on display was a reproduction of the interior of one of the pyramids. It was a building maybe fifty feet long and fifty feet high and fifty feet wide that was covered with carvings and bas reliefs of the sun and the various deities and creatures worshipped by the heathen Mayans who had lived here long ago.

After leaving the museum we stopped and read aloud the first chapter of the book of Romans that describes how man in his depravity has changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto four footed beasts and creeping things. I remember feeling as if I had been in the very presence of Satan this day and thought about how in the book of Revelation the Lord Jesus Christ refers to Pergamos as where Satan's seat is.

Leaving the park we stopped on the street just outside the gates to look at the wares being offered by the local Indians. These were mostly cheap imitations of the idols of the ancient Mayas found in the ruins. We now drove about a hundred yards into the "modern" town of Copan Ruinas whose quaint cobblestone streets and many tourist shops made me think I had traveled to a different time period in history. In one of these shops I purchased an oil painting by a local artist to give to our daughter in law, Beth Justice. It was a slightly impressionistic depiction of a nineteenth century Honduran village with red tile roofs and white stucco walls, high blue mountains and lush green plants.

At 3:21 PM we started for home over the winding mountain highway passing through the city of Conception at 3:48. The purple and green tops of the mountains were now touched by the clouds and showers blessed us sporadically. We passed through Quebrada Honda at 3:51 and La Jiqua at 4 PM. The sun could now be seen sinking in the West and smoke from cooking fires could be seen everywhere slowly winding into the sky. People were cooking everywhere, indoors and out. At 4:03 we passed through Rio Temechectin shortly after which we returned to La Entrada and then at 4:22 we drove into Chicuilá. All along the way here the local men were leading their cows home and from time to time we would see fish vendors with their strings of fish for sale. There was a lot of truck traffic and there was more and more the closer we got to San Pedro Sula. The mountain sides throughout this area were so steep as to be virtually straight up and down but everywhere there were cattle grazing these mountainsides. Now we could see a whole panorama of mountains and there were rain storms all over the whole vista. At 5:10 I noted that there were now literally thousands of people on the road, some standing, some

walking and a few riding in pickups and some in yellow American school buses. They were all going home from work whether in factories (Maquila) or in fields. During these hours we listened to a cassette tape of a sermon by brother Royce Smith on "The Origin of the Church." At 5:50 PM we arrived at the Tweets' home in San Pedro Sula.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 22, 2001

Today was to be the last day of this wonderful preaching trip to Honduras. I arose at 5:15 AM and after reading I Corinthians 4 and Psalms 119:49-104 I sat in front of the large screened window in my upstairs bedroom and watched light come into the sky over the mountains. I could feel a slight breeze as I gazed at the mountains for the last time.

After packing our bags and while we waited on breakfast Ben and I read some materials concerning things we had seen and learned while in Honduras. I read a handbook explaining the Copan Ruins we had seen yesterday and Ben read a paper on Kombucha, a drink he planned to concoct when he would arrive back in Kansas City. After a very satisfying breakfast of ham and eggs we made a quick trip to the Guamilito Market in downtown San Pedro Sula market looking for some last minute souvenirs and then returned to the Tweet residence for some final packing.

At 9:40 AM we left for San Pedro Sula Airport in the Tweets' truck. In the course of the conversation we enjoyed on the way, Ted informed us that the word Honduras means deep water. Arriving at the airport at 10:10 AM we checked in at the ticket counter and waited for an hour and a half before our plane was ready for boarding. While waiting here a man who looked like and claimed to be an American from Texas told us a sad story of being robbed and beaten the night before and having his passport stolen. He said he had been on his way back to the States and now needed money to get home. I didn't buy his story but he sure was convincing the way he told it. At 11:15 we said Goodbye to the Tweets and moved through the metal detectors to another waiting room where non passengers were not allowed. Finally at 11:48 AM we boarded the plane.

The Continental Airlines plane was full, mostly with Hondurenas and Hondurenos. Our plane actually took off at 12:23 PM and very quickly the mountains surrounding San Pedro Sula disappeared into the clouds. At 12:26 we passed over the coast on the Caribbean side of Honduras which could be seen through occasional breaks in the clouds. The green islands with coral reefs around them appeared like a string of emeralds against a dark blue velvet sea. The large string-like reefs looked from our viewpoint here like light green undersea riverbeds. At 1:35 PM the blue of the Gulf of Mexico below blended so closely with that of the sky that it was virtually impossible to tell where one ended and the other began. I experienced here something similar to what is called in a snow storm in Wyoming, a whiteout only here I would call it a blueout.

At this point all passengers were given Customs Declaration Forms by the flight attendants. These forms asked for the names, addresses and countries we had visited on our trips and the monetary values of the items we were bringing into the United States. I declared the value of my treasures to be \$250. While filling out this form I continually glanced out the window at the ocean below and sighted an occasional ship or oil tanker with long wakes behind them. At 2:19 PM the atmosphere was becoming very murky.

Now the sun could be seen reflecting slightly off the dark blue waters. We could see puffs of clouds far below the plane and far below them their shadows on the water. The usual dirty movie was shown during this flight and the screens were so located that one could hardly keep from seeing.

I spent this time reviewing the now concluding trip in my mind. Brother Tweet has done an outstanding job of missionary work in the years he has been in Honduras. He has faithfully preached the gospel of Jesus Christ where heathenism and Catholicism's darkness have for so long held sway. He and another missionary now departed have established strong, solid, vibrant Calvinistic Baptist churches in virtually every part of the country. It's too bad most of our Baptist people back in the States have no idea what he has done and is doing in that remote part of Central America!

At 3:30 PM we crossed the Texas shoreline en route to landing at Bush Airport in Houston where we would change planes for the final leg of our flight home. At 3:56 PM Central Daylight Time we touched down in the USA at Houston after being waved off and making a complete circle to the North and then to the West and then landing from South to North.

Deplaning in Houston we walked at least a mile inside the airport in order to make connection with our flight from there to Kansas City. We left Houston ten minutes late at 5:30 PM. The air conditioning on this particular plane malfunctioned and it was HOT! I had to check my carry on box because of its size even though I practically begged the flight attendant to let me take it with me on board. Passing over the Red River that forms the border between Texas and Oklahoma we soon could see what was probably the Indian Nations Turnpike in Eastern

Oklahoma. At 6:12 PM Ben and I looked out of the plane's window and saw below us the first complete circle rainbow I had ever seen or heard of but there it was. Passing over the area of Northern Oklahoma and Southern Kansas we flew through what looked like canyons in the clouds and these clouds were all shades of whites and grays and blues and purples.

At 6:45 PM we began our final approach to Kansas City International Airport in Kansas City, Missouri. We were coming in through some thunderheads as we passed over the Kansas River and then the new Kansas City, Kansas Race Track. At 6:51 we passed over the Missouri River with the downtown buildings of Kansas City, Missouri on our right below in the sunshine between the clouds. Circling from the West to the North of KCI Airport we then descended to touchdown moving from North to South. Our wheels actually touched the ground at 7:00 PM. Thank you Lord!