

belize



Belmopan Mission Journal



March 12-19, 2016

MISSION JOURNAL
BELMOPAN BELIZE
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Saturday March 12, 2016 by *Diane Rudebock*

Belize here we come!

Our Methodist mission team arrived at Will Rogers airport in Oklahoma City by 9 am dressed all alike- in our grey Belize Mission team shirts. The Chapel Hill team included Chad Detwiler, Marc Fleischer, Jessica and Adam King, Tula and David Chadwick, and Diane and Rich Rudebock. We welcomed team members Tina Meinkoth from Lost Creek United Methodist Church in Stillwater and Austin Leonard from Frontline Church in Edmond. We each had our own bags and tools ready to do the 'bag shuffle'. This meant that all the tools went into four canvas duffle bags that our famous leader, Chad, brought. We love that he is so organized! Jessica was gracious and volunteered to pack the 750 golf pencils and supplies for the school in her bag. Once she opened her bag, and Diane saw how light Jessica packed; Diane knew that she over packed- which Rich immediately confirmed.



The agents at American Airlines made our ticketing process easy; soon, we were all lined up at the gate with Rich joking with the airport security staff while Diane was graced with TSA pre check, breezing through security! Little did we know what was in store for us on the flight. We quickly found our seats toward the back of the plane to Dallas. Tina and Austin brought their reading, and Angi, the flight attendant, asked Austin what he was reading; Austin replied, the Bible. Her face lit up and asked, "What's your favorite book? Have you seen the movie Risen?" She promptly began to explain the movie in a very animated way. She continued sharing her faith and Bible verses with us - so amazing!

Upon our arrival to Belize City at 4:30 pm, we were asked to depart from the plane using the outside steps. As we approached the terminal, there was a young lady inside pounding on the window, obviously very excited to see someone she knew. She was jumping up and down, laughing, and could hardly contain herself. We all wondered who she saw from our flight...then Austin started laughing and realized he knew her from his FL Kaleo trip... What a very small world!



After Diane took a picture in the Custom's line, Chad reminded her, "No Pics" as it was against customs policy and we breezed through customs. Outside, we were greeted by Derek, a nice young man, who drove us on the 1 1/2 long van ride to Belmopan. It was dark by the time we were arrived at Camp Camalote, and our camp hosts, Heather and Joey from Alabama greeted us. They had been long time missionaries in Belmopan, and purchased the camp in June 2015.



After unpacking, we were treated to a fabulous dinner by chefs Ethel and Betty who made cooking a family affair.

After dinner, Chad led our devotion sharing two stories, both focused on God's unending love for us. He also asked us to share in 5 words or less how we were feeling. Words expressed were "excited, anxious in a good way, happy, ready, grateful, blessed ..."

- Diane asked the group to share a memory of this first day which are as follows:
- Rich-seeing the beautiful landscape of the courtyard for the first time
- Chad- how quickly the relationships formed
- Adam- fun to recognize the landmarks on the drive even though it has been 5 years since he was here
- Jessica-looking forward to the Iguanas on the walls!
- Austin- how welcomed we were all along the way and especially when we arrived at the camp
- Tina-we have the same shirts as before, but this year, as we traveled, so many people asked her about the trip and she got to share with them - all because of our Mission Team shirts.
- Tula- how impressed she was when the girl at the Belmopan airport volunteered to take our group picture when Chad was getting ready to take the picture
- David- the Classen Circle round-about in Belmopan was finished
- Ethel-welcomed Ms Tula back for her birthday
- Betty- happy to be here with us and see Ms Tula and Mr David
- Juan- happy to be with us
- Leah - happy
- Marc - looking forward to leaving it all behind!

We were all in gratitude for a safe journey and anticipating what God had planned for us in the upcoming week. What a mighty God we serve!

Sunday March 13, 2016 by Chad Detwiler

All rested well our first night. Many took morning walks to see and enjoy the beauty of Camalote Camp. Green grass, bright flowers, birds singing and roosters crowing start a Belizean morning. The five acre camp contains trees bearing fruit in the kinds of orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit, mango, banana, and plantain just to list a few. Breakfast at 8:30 was scrambled eggs, beans, meat, biscuits, pineapple, grapefruit, bananas, juice, coffee, water and the favorited Marie Sharps pineapple jelly. Jessica shared the morning reflection; live above your circumstances with Gods perspective...rest in His presence.





Off to the Zoo! The Zoo continues to improve with more paved paths. Some were able to pet a tapir and a deer. We were able to watch the feeding of "Lucky Boy" a black panther that was rescued from another facility. He is 'lucky' because he was rescued in time and has lived to be 20 years old which is past their normal life span. The zoo keeper places meat in easy to find places throughout his enclosure but his eyes and nose at this age take him a while to find all the meat. Today was sunny and hot so it was a good introduction to the weather we will face this week on the worksite. We enjoyed a picnic



lunch at the zoo then headed back to the camp to clean up for church.

Today the church celebrated 45 years of ministry in Belmopan and 25 year in this church building. Reverend Leslie shared a message to a full house about building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. What we build upon that foundation will be tested by fire and what stands the test receives the reward. She shared the parable of the talents where each of the three were not rewarded by the number of talents they received but solely by what they did with them. We are all responsible for doing something regardless of what and how many talents we have. The service went from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm. Reverend Cayetano had a laughable moment when he shared with the congregation that the District Superintendent Reverend David Geoff would be having surgery and needed our prayers. He went on to say he was having prostate surgery and that it was located in the loin area and was only a male issue. There were some back comments being made by Reverend Geoff that finally got Reverend Cayetano to stop discussing it then when Reverend Geoff got to the podium he explained what "TMI" meant. Too Much Information!

Following the service the church served sandwiches, chicken and cake. We fellowshiped for a while then headed back to camp. When we arrived the local villagers had all their wares set out for us to look at and buy. The selection ranged from carved bowls and platters to handmade book marks and bracelets, to woven baskets... These are the only ladies that Camalote Camp allows on the property as what they sell is good quality at fair prices. Some purchase were made then headed in to get ready for dinner.

After dinner we had our evening devotional time and Adam shared Romans 8:28; God calls us for His purpose. Last item on the agenda was to unpack the team bags and get the tools laid out and the balls we brought to play at Marla's house aired up. Sleep was a welcomed after a long day.

Monday March 14, 2016 by David Chadwick

The morning started as many mornings in Belize this time of the year with fog. We have always



been told by the locals that if the day starts off foggy it will be a hot day.

Right after our usual wonderful breakfast prepared by Ethel and her beautiful family, I lead the morning devotional about our need to remember that the mission was not about us and our needs or even about the work that we think must be accomplished, but about us doing what God asked us to do, rather than doing what we think is the most important thing that needs to be done. The verse Colossians 3:17.



We arrived at the school and listened to the devotional put on by the students. They called us to the front of the assembly and we introduced ourselves to the student body.

The team then broke up into small groups working with the full time construction workers. One group consisted of Mark, Austin, Tula and Tina to shovel sand through wire sieves for making cement. The rest went to the second floor to place cement squares under the rebar.

Fresh fruit break was at 10:30 in the church.

Chad and I went back to the camp looking for clamps and also brought some power tools back to screw forms together and to twist wire for frame support.

At 12:00 we broke for lunch that consisted of a chicken burrito, salad and a small bowl of chocolate ice cream.

Upon returning to the work site we all joined in on cutting and nailing wood to be used for cement framing. This lasted through the rest of the afternoon.



At 4:00 we went to Marla's to work and play with the kids until 5:30.

After returning to the camp we had a great dinner of spaghetti, garlic bread, salad and fresh fruit. Dessert was a wonderful homemade coconut pie.

Devotional was presented by Diane on the best things of the day and on the most challenging. We then closed with singing.

After the devotional Chad met with the member's that would be giving the devotional at the school on Wednesday.

Tuesday March 15, 2016 by Adam King



I woke up a little sore today, not used to this much physical labor anymore. I need to pace myself. It's foggy outside, more than normal. I overheard David talking to one of the workers, we might have Iguana at dinner tonight! This mornings breakfast was banana pancakes with pineapple syrup. They were great.

We left the camp just in time to find out we were late to do the devotional sessions with the children. It was not our fault though, they moved the time up 15 minutes from last year and we were not aware of that. So maybe we'll get to do it this afternoon during religion class.

Chad, Mark, Austin, Rich, Jessica, and myself started working on building more forms for the ceiling joists. Tula and Tina pulled and twisted and cut wire to go through the forms we were building. Diane continued to work on her Labyrinth out in the courtyard. Her explanation of a labyrinth and the journey you take to get some understanding from God finally let me make sense of the Muppet movie Labyrinth from the 80's, loved that movie. It is not too hot this morning, the fog left some cover to keep it cool for awhile. It is supposed to "be a scorcher today", I heard one of the workers say.

We had break at 10:15 as usual. After break we built more forms. The wood seems to be getting harder and the nails just got smaller.

At lunch I found my favorite granola bar at the table. I was so happy. I had the exact same kind 5 years ago when Jessica and I were here last. Still delicious. For lunch we had fried chicken and mac-n-cheese. There were lots of kids at the church today. Annually, with the anniversary, the church feeds 12 kids each from 5 of the surrounding schools in need. We got to sing and play for a little bit before they left and before we ate. Chad and Tina played hide-and-seek with a little girl after lunch. David drove the bus/van for the kids to return to their schools.

It was a long lunch, lasted until 2:00. Then we did the devotions with the kids in their religion classes. Jessica and I (really just her) did a class together. I think she did a great job. We stopped and watched the end of Austin's presentation after Jessica finished hers. He is really great with those kids and very good speaker.

Raquelle, one of the girls from Marla's House, came out to say hi to us during one of her breaks. I thought that was really neat. It was really nice to see Raquelle and Chelsea at the school, and have them both come say hi to us.



I really enjoy working with the people we have on our team, we seem to really work well together. And watching the development of Mark and Austin as they hone their hammer skills is pretty cool. Our 2 ½ hour lunch break led to minimal work in the afternoon. A lot less heat and stress today. We finished all the form boards and the other workers hung 4 of them over one of the trusses. We should do more hanging and securing tomorrow and the next day. Off to Marla's House.



Marla's House was quite a bit different today. I replaced the battery in a smoke detector and gave them the spare battery in case another went bad, I can't stand that beeping. We had just started getting outside to play when another mission group (this one from Canada) stopped by to tell the girls good-bye. Reuben, the youth leader, was wonderful with the kids. We kinda hung back and let them have their time. Chad played football with a couple of girls, Austin played volleyball with Anna. Then the girls put on a song and dance show for all of us. They sang and danced and got all the Montreal youth involved as well. We really enjoyed it. Everyone got in a circle and told our names and something we love- mine was ice-cream. Arlyn, Candy, and Chelsea told their stories of how and why they ended up where they are. It was all very touching and special.

Back at camp, we had no time to shower before dinner but that was OK. We had chicken and mashed potatoes and slaw AND Iguana w/eggs. Delicious! The eggs were a little odd, but good. And strawberry ice cream for dessert with chocolate syrup and sprinkles-- awesome! After and sort of during dinner, Joey the operator of Camalote Camp told us a very long and very inspirational story about where he is from and how God called him and his wife to come lead the camp. And how Heather and he were called to their daughter Sophia and the story behind her family. It was all really moving. It is amazing to hear how God has worked in their lives to transform their world and about all the lives they have touched along the way.

Gerald (the foreman at the jobsite) and his wife came to the campsite tonight. His wife gave massages to about six of the ten of us. Everyone said they loved it and how wonderful she was. And that's how we ended our day. And that' how I end this letter. With a simple good night and Thank You God.



Wednesday March 16, 2016 by Tula Chadwick

Wednesday morning started extra early, as we needed to be at the school before 8 am to get the 40 minute Devotion on the Butterfly Effect lined up before school began. Breakfast was homemade tortillas, sausage, laughing cow cheese, oatmeal, watermelon, and my favorite fresh pineapple. Ethel and her family always do a wonderful meal for us.



I did the morning devotional out of Max Lucado's book "Grace for the Moment." The devotion for March 16, was based on Hebrews 13:5 NIV "Never will I leave you: Never will I forsake you;" and Matt 28:20 which said "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." The last line of the devotion was "There is no chorus so loud that the voice of God cannot be heard . . . if we will but listen." The hymn Here I am Lord, I thought it was very appropriate, since each of us had heard a calling and we followed it and Chad to Belize. In all my years of going on Mission, this was the first time I had done a devotional. After we "loaded the bus", it was off to Belmopan we went. The kids were moving their desks around to set up for our

40 minute devotional.

The devotional was on the Butterfly Effect; where Edward Lorenz in 1963 presented his thesis paper claiming that a butterfly could flap its wings on one side of the world and set molecules of air in motion that moved other molecules of air that would eventually move other molecules that could eventually cause a hurricane on the other side of the world. Chad began and was followed by Jessica, then Austin, Tina, Rich, Me, Austin again, then Diane. Each one of us told how the section could be used to further the reach each one of us has. I told the story of Tee, a young lady who had two children by the time she was 18, and how she worked to provide more for her boys than she had, and one was a professional basketball player and the other will soon graduate with a degree in computer science. This was the second devotional on the same day. I can only thank God for speaking through me.

Then off to worksite it was. We made 3 individual strands of wire into one very strong wire to use tying the forms together, so the cement would not separate them. Rebar was cut and some additional rebar was bent also. At 10:30 am, it was up to the Church to have our morning snack of fresh fruit and granola bars. Then back down to the worksite.

Lunch was prepared by Sharon from the church; it was sub sandwiches, potato salad, bananas, granola bars and Ice Cream. Then back to the worksite, making and cutting wire and work on the forms.

That afternoon, we went to Marla's House and played and talked with the girls, some of which go to Belmopan Methodist High School, which we were working on.

When we left Marla's, we went to the Anglican Church in Belmopan for their Lent Service. Reverend Cayetano spoke at the Service and the Anglican Minister did the readings and led us in several songs. It was dark when we came out of the Church.



We went back to Camp, washed our hands and went to dinner. Nelson had made Jambalaya with shrimp and chocolate cake for us and it was WONDERFUL!

We did not have night devotion, since we had gone to the Lent Service and it had been a long day!

Thursday March 17, 2016 by Rich Rudebock

This was our last day of work. We began with breakfast at 6:45am then a devotional. We arrived at the Belmopan High School in time to present devotionals at six different classrooms. Our day on the construction site included but was not limited to the following.

- Cutting rebar
- Drinking water
- Twisting wire
- Drinking water
- Working on top of seven-foot, shaky scaffolding
- Drinking water
- Drilling holes in the frames while on top of the seven-foot, shaky scaffolding
- Drinking water
- Pulling wire and attaching rebar on both sides of the wooden concrete frames while on top of the seven-foot, shaky scaffolding
- Drinking water
- Instructing students on how to walk the Labyrinth
- Drinking water – did I mention that it was hot?

We stopped about 3:30pm and went to Marla's House to play with the kids. We played volleyball, jump rope, Uno, and just hung out with them. This was our fourth day to be with them. Leaving was very hard and many tears were shed.



After dinner at Camalote Camp, Reverend Cayetano led the team and staff in a send-off in the camp sanctuary. It included singing, a message from the Reverend, and communion assisted by the one and only, Austin Leonard. It was a very meaningful experience.

After a full day, the shower and bed felt amazing!



Friday March 18, 2016 by Tina Meinkoth

We finished our work yesterday. So today was our exploring day. This year we went to surrounding towns/villages and to a Mayan ruin. We packed the 15 passenger van with 18 people (us and Ethel, Nelson, Betty and kids/grandkids Lea, Scarlett, Cameron, Christopher and Nelson's niece Shera). Heading out around 9:30 there was not much traffic. It seemed everyone was already at work or school. We drove past the worksite satisfied that we had worked hard and helped.

Our first stop was the market/town center called "Independence Plaza". It had all the government buildings situated around a small grass area. The buildings included the police dept, the government press office, ministries of health, agriculture, etc. On the outer area from this were buildings such as the Mexican embassy and the Belize prime ministers building.

Next to this was a huge parking lot filled with booths/tents- The town market. It was a lot like one of our farmer's markets... and more. The booths had anything you could imagine- vegetables, spices, honey, pastries, fish, chicken, clothes, shoes, furniture, jewelry and gifts. One area had several vegetable booths and the wonderful aroma like someone cooking a great vegetable soup. Then the spices caught your nose with several different wonderful exotic smells. They were all crammed together with little walking space or row arrangement. Sometimes you were walking over someone's vegetables to get to a nearby booth. The people running the booths were of all different cultures: Belizean (of course), Hispanic, Taiwanese, Amish/Mennonites, and Chinese.

Then we gathered up and they took us over to the juice booth. All kinds of flavors (all natural)- Orange with cilantro, carrot and ginger, beet juice, watermelon, and sorrel juice. They all tasted wonderful. Jennifer had found someone selling coconut juice/milk in little plastic bags. They poked a hole in it and you sucked the juice from the hole.

After the market we began driving out of town. As we got further away, there were less houses. The land was filled with rolling hills of native trees and shrubs like palm, banana, and hardwoods. The jungle like countryside had intermittent lodge/hotel buildings with groomed acres around them. After a few miles we come to more farmed type land. Some were acres of cleared land for grass where cows, sheep, and horses were grazing. Other areas were more agricultural with groves of crops. There were huge acreages of orange groves that went on for miles. The orange blossoms flooded the van with their sweet perfume.

The road started climbing and we came into San Elena, then crossed a river with the oldest wooden bridge and drove on into San Ignacio. It was a big city with hotels, restaurants, and tourist excursions among the regular city buildings. We turned onto one of the side roads in the city and came upon a dirt road that went straight up. At the top we popped



out at Cahal Pech Archaeological Reserve. It was discovered in 1950 and dated back around 1,000 BC to 650AD. It was huge and beautiful. Steps lead up the wall to a large plaza that had the rooms and buildings that looked like a large fortress all connected around a large grass/tree area. Small nooks and crannies took you around/through them to keep from having to come out and climb another set of huge stairs just to get to another area. We ate the packed lunch Ethel had brought at the parking area outside of the reserve.



After the ruins we drove to the Amish/Mennonite countryside at Spanish Lookout. Beautiful groomed pastures/fences and barns. Well-fed cows and horses. Once in a while we would pass one of their horse drawn wagons.

As we left the countryside we turned onto a dirt road that led down to the Old Belize River. The ferry to go across held 3 cars and some people. There was one guy cranking on a set of spooled wheels. IT was hard to believe he was the sole source of our movement. The ferry moved across the river nearly unperceptively and we drove on up the dirt road. Then all of a sudden a bit of heaven appeared before us!- the Mennonite Dairy. We pulled into a very modern looking glass building with the coolest air conditioning I had enjoyed since we arrived. It was huge. All different flavors of ice cream, Sundays, shakes etc. They even served pizza. We all had some ice cream and enjoyed the cool air.

As we drove back through the rolling hills of agriculture then back through the thick jungle like areas, it seemed all of a sudden we went over a hill and there was the sign for Camalote Camp. We were home!

Saturday March 19, 2016 by Jessica King

Well, this is our last morning in Belize. We started the day with breakfast at 8:30, sopapilla's, sausage, beans, fresh fruit, juices and coffee! We definitely never went hungry. Austin presented an awesome devotional from Luke 22:42 & Psalms 75:8, the message was about trust. We headed out from camp around 10 am. It was tough to leave the wonderful people. Luckily our drive to the airport was uneventful. The flights were smooth, mostly, some turbulence on the way to DFW, but not for too long. Once at DFW, we enjoyed dinner together, some had Fuddrucker's and others had BBQ. Our flight out of DFW was slightly delayed, apparently the plane lost power. We finally made it home with all of our belongings! It was a wonderful week, one I will not forget and one that I will always be grateful for. I am thankful for all of the people I met and worked with.

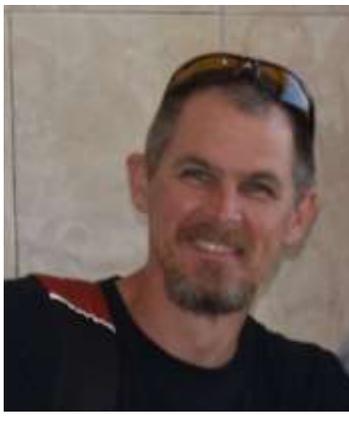


2016 Belize Mission Team

1. **Dr. David C. ...**
 2. **Dr. ...**
 3. **Dr. ...**
 4. **Dr. ...**



5. **Dr. ...**
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