



# INTO THE DEPTHS

An update from Oscar & Kathryn in Honduras

November 2024



## *All of Us Learning!*

My Kindergartener's eyes were large and full of concern as he asked me what was wrong. I had let out a yelp after inadvertently putting hand sanitizer on a cut on my hand. I explained what happened and said it hurt, but I would be okay. Without missing a beat, he told me that "by Jesus' wounds, we were healed," and that through Jesus' death, we are saved. The words just flowed out so naturally, innocently, and matter-of-factly from this little child. Without even trying, he had so succinctly presented me with the gospel. I later confirmed with his Mom that he had picked it up from a sermon aimed at adults and youth several nights prior. This little guy, who runs around and often doesn't seem like he's listening, picked up something important that night and applied it later in a context that made sense. It reminded me of many things... God's Word does not return void, but accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent; let the little children come to Jesus; we must all become like little children to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; always be ready to give a defense, preach the good news, and share with others; and gratitude for the many things that had to happen in order for that holy interaction to occur.



A week or two prior, one of my second graders reminded me that it had been a long time since we had shared something for which we were grateful, and then prayed. Unfortunately, it was true that after a change in schedule part way through the year, I had discontinued the ritual. In this interaction, too, I had been surprised that he 1) remembered the routine, 2) wanted to do it again, and 3) volunteered to pray! This was a student who had a lot of behavior challenges at the beginning of the year. He can still be a handful, but he's making progress!

This year, Oscar taught English, Bible, and Art to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders and I taught eight K – 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. It is neat to come home, exchange stories with Oscar, and share the frustrations and joys of being a part of these children's development! It can seem like we take a couple steps forward and then a step or two back, but the overall trend is progress. Thank you for your prayers! We are quite aware that often things happen better than we can take credit for, and we're so appreciative of your prayers.



It can be easy to be discouraged that some of my students still aren't where they need to be in reading and math, but I see progress. God is indeed working in lives here, and I know that He who began a good work in us will carry it on until the day of completion in Christ Jesus. I am thankful that although God's Word can come to us in some surprising ways, we don't have to be surprised by His unchanging Truth!

## Working

The trip to Balfate is roughly a four-hour drive (one-way), with about 45 minutes on pavement. Without our truck, the journey would be basically impossible with the school and bus schedules. We have had rain that prevented cars and trucks from crossing the river (and thus accessing the city or anywhere beyond two communities down the mountain), but for most of the time we've been crossing without problems. Although we still see people getting stuck in the middle, we are so thankful that we don't have to worry about that! (Though truth be told, I was a bit nervous those first couple of crossings.) Additionally, with the truck's tinted windows, I brought "D" and her housemom on an overnight excursion to our "new" home last year. It is rare for "D" to get away, even rarer overnight, and rarer still to eat at a restaurant, which she got to do.



Thank you to those who have contributed to assist us in this extra responsibility of vehicle ownership! We are still short of our goal amount, so if you are thinking about contributing by praying and/or providing finances, those would still be a big help!

## Cultural Dilemma

The young woman's eyes grew as big as saucers as she slowly shifted her gaze from me to Oscar and said, amazed, "Ella habla como nosotros!" ("She speaks like us!") When I'm introduced, people often comment that my Spanish is very good, but this was the best compliment I have ever received.

It reminded me of a book, "The Whole Language", and the importance of culture in language and in building relationships. The young woman and I got along well. One day, she asked if I could help her with her English class (she is finishing high school online). I said that I would be happy to, but asked if we could do it the following week. However, before the end of that same week, she came to my classroom in a panic, saying that her test was due that day! I was very busy with class work, grades, and notes for parent-teacher conferences. But, I helped her as best as I could considering she was right in the middle of a taking a test. Nevertheless, she was disappointed and said she thought I was going to help her. She has remained distant since that incident, despite my letting her know that I have more time now and we can work together toward the next test.

At first, I wondered if my US culture had clouded my perception of the situation. Was choosing to delay helping the wrong choice here? Although I still wonder a bit, Oscar's agreement with my decision helped me feel at peace. In the meantime, I will continue to be kind and offer help when I can, while giving her time and space.





It has been so rewarding to see my students growing in their faith and learning to base their prayers in God's word. One night, a student and his family were driving home and they had car trouble. The car stopped in the middle of the road on a culvert. The father left the car to walk back to the community to find a needed fluid, leaving the family to wait in the car. They were very scared that someone might hit them, and they started to pray. Meanwhile, Kathryn and I got a later start up the mountain than we were planning. We came upon the stopped car, and then realized it was our neighbors. We stayed with them until the Dad returned, and we followed them home. According to the amazed student, because they were praying with faith just as we had been talking about in class, God answered their prayers. Gloria a Dios!

In art, students are learning to be creative and enjoy things they haven't known they could do. They have made many crafts and explored new ideas about materials, processes, and that being artistic is not about the outcome.

On Friday nights, I am now the on-site coordinator for a new worship service. It came about because a church further down the mountain was praying about reaching out and expanding their ministry. They thought to go down the mountain, but someone suggested thinking about going up instead. Later, our school director was visiting friends who "happened" to go to that church. Our director expressed our need here and the church decided to commit to the hour drive (one-way) every week to lead a worship service for us. They are sacrificing a lot of time and effort, and it has been a real blessing to all of us.

Also, I continue to get calls from prosthetics patients. I refer and accompany them to a Honduran prosthetist and to talk to them about God. There is always work to be done for the Kingdom!



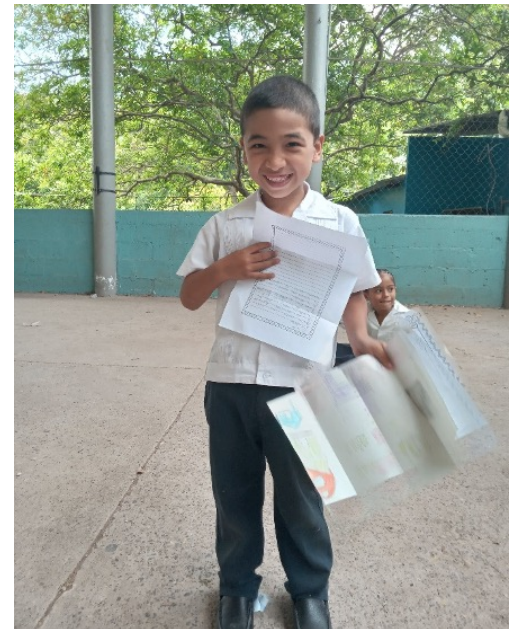
## From Kathryn

In January, I started encouraging and tutoring an 8<sup>th</sup> grader. She is quite bright (though not reflected in her grades), has a lovely smile, and just needs love, encouragement, and nudging in the right academic direction. Sometimes math is taught differently here than I'm familiar with. I must look things up and, using the few notes from her teacher, we figure things out together. When I was sick, this student kept a count of the days I missed.

Oscar and I had been healthy for months until the week before this school year started in February. Then he and I took turns being sick. All through March I was still fatigued through some combination of recuperation from illness, weather heating up, readjusting to being with challenging students, and travel up and down the mountain. I was getting worried. I was so worn out by Holy Week, and the school year was just getting started (February - November). Thankfully, my energy levels started returning to normal in April.



In the midst of and contributing to the fatigue, we still managed to make several trips down/up the mountain. Oscar and I also made several trips to Balfate to visit the school and friends there. They were such sweet opportunities to see changes, catch up with some older students who didn't know where I had gone, read to and visit with younger classes, and exchange pen pal letters between the first grade class there and my current first and second graders! The kids in both schools have loved drawing, writing, and exchanging letters! We celebrated the



birthday of our special friend, "D", and we were around the Loma de Luz Children's Center for the hard occasion of sending-off the directors and house-mom as they moved back to the capital city. Although we are not there every day, I am so thankful that with weekly phone calls, the internet, and occasional visits, we can be a continuing presence in the lives of those children and youth, and vice versa!

## Support

Yes! I would like to support Oscar and Kathryn in Honduras.

- I will pray for them faithfully.
- Enclosed is a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- Enclosed is a monthly gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

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