

Over the years, short-term mission trips have been a vital component in the life of The Rock. Since 2006, The Rock has formed a beautiful and strategic partnership with a church in *Choluteca, Honduras.*

Life

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Through the years, The Rock has sponsored many mission trips with hundreds of college students participating. More than 10 international and 20 domestic trips in 10 years have helped catalyze tremendous life change in these young men and women. There is nothing quite like leaving the confines of our comfortable lives in America to serve in poor places. As expected, these trips stir the soul. The Rock's mission statement of "making fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ" implies that we expose our young people to the rest of the world because "God so loved the world." We've found that giving students a vision for the world we live in is imperative to our mission. I can't describe the joy I find in seeing the impact of these trips. God uses the stretching experience of these trips to make them into something special and powerful.

John Drage

Recently, pastor John Drage wrote 11 guiding principles for dealing with and thinking about poverty, suffering and needs in the Third World.

Here are a couple of his principles:

■ *We must try to create positive, reproducing solutions to the problem.*

■ *We should try to love and help those who want to change and be helped.*

■ *The gospel and the church must be major components of our solutions.*

Iglesia Gran Comision



When The Rock established a partnership with Iglesia Gran Comision in Choluteca, Honduras, one of the goals was to join with God in the call to serve the poor and needy. They are part of a sister group of churches called Great Commission Latin America. This church is clearly on mission for Christ. "We deeply enjoy working alongside this church," John Drage said. "Through helping orphans, feeding the malnourished, building stable living conditions for the very poor, loving children, visiting those in prison and preaching the Good News everywhere we go, we assist students in becoming the most beautiful Christ followers they can be."

Presently, the church has been growing in attendance and in services to the community. Some weekends the church receives 300 or more people, but it fits only 250. The church is building an expansion to the auditorium where now 550 people will fit comfortably. Mizzou senior Brian Bowe said he was deeply affected by the church during his visit in 2007: "It was great hearing songs sung in Spanish and realizing that God is being worshiped all over the world. It was also exhilarating sharing a common vision for Christ and the Gospel and being able to work toward sharing it with people from different backgrounds."

outreach projects



Every trip we work and play with children at a **malnutrition clinic** and **day care** run by the church in a village called Limon.



In early 2007, the Casa Hogar Vida project established a **child sponsorship program** that many people from The Rock support.



Every trip involves us getting out of our comfort zones to **serve the poor and needy** in many practical, emotional and spiritual ways.



Since 2006, we've played a vital role in **Casa Hogar Vida**, a comprehensive project to help those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.



It has become tradition at The Rock for us to **collect shoes** prior to our trips, which we pack and distribute during our time in Honduras.



Whether it's puppet shows or visits to families, **evangelism** plays a vital role in our trips. For many, it's their first time sharing the gospel.



missionary life



Melissa Molder

September 2007 to January 2008

"Wow! What an amazing 5 months! I'm not the same Melissa I was before I left. I feel strongly that this has been a vital part of my life story and has impacted and changed me in great ways." (Jan. 2008)



Aimee Paule

September 2008 to December 2008

"It is hard here. It hurts. Somedays the pain and homesickness is so great. But you are doing something in me through this suffering that is far greater than gold. I am clinging to you." (Oct. 2008)



Tyler Shields

January 2009 to present

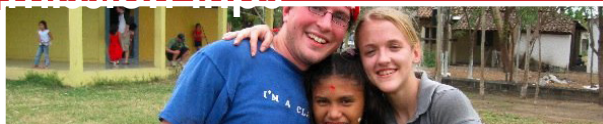
"I'm learning everyday how to draw closer to God and how to rely on Him. I'm taking my work day by day, but I love it. It can be very visibly rewarding, especially seeing the smiles on children's faces." (Jan. 2009)



God has really opened the door for an intimate bond to develop between The Rock and Iglesia Gran Comision in Choluteca. This is especially evident in the opportunity for some of our students and recent grads to go to Choluteca for extended periods. Melissa Molder was the first to go, Aimee Paule followed and Tyler Shields is there presently. All three went on multiple short-term trips and sensed God calling them back for a longer period of time. They raised support and were employed as interns with Great Commission Ministries. Their main responsibilities with the church included working with Casa Hogar Vida, the malnutrition clinic and the daycare and teaching at the school. "I loved that my daily life was serving and loving all sorts of people," Aimee said. In addition to the work, all three commented on how much they loved the relationships they formed with various people at the church. "I love being apart of this community of people, they are so loving and funny," Tyler said. "It's a lot of fun. I also love that I'm getting to live like a Honduran."

But for all the joys, there are many challenges. As Melissa said, "To be honest, my time in Honduras was one of the most amazing and growing experiences I've ever had, but it was also one of the most challenging and stretching times of my entire life." These challenges included culture shock, the language barrier, the daily contact with the reality and affects of poverty and HIV/AIDS. Yet, it often seemed like it was in these uncomfortable situations that God seemed to teach his lessons of how to be content, how to deal with fears, how to kill selfishness, how to draw nearer to God's perspective and heart, how to love. "While it was challenging, it was a great time for me to truly seek and depend on the Lord," Melissa said.

mission trips



January 9-17. Ten team members.

This team spent two days in a community called the Dove's Nest where the church has begun working. They gave away shoes and went in small teams to share the gospel. They also visited a village by the dump, bringing a pinata and candy for the kids. The rest of the time was filled with hard work and sweat, working at Casa Hogar Vida and the church expansion.



March 15-22. Ten team members.

This trip consisted of students from Central Methodist University in Fayette, MO. They cleared land at Casa Hogar Vida to prepare for building orphanage homes. They worked on the church expansion project. Every afternoon they visited different poor neighborhoods, interacting with families, sharing the gospel and giving away food provisions.



March 20-29. Nineteen team members.

Early in the trip, this team met the Ortez family. This is an extremely poor family with 12 people. Much of the week the team got to love and serve this family. They built a shower and water container for the family. The team poured 25 cubic yards of concrete at the church. The team also visited the dump, gave away shoes and evangelized at the local university.

- 2000** The Rock takes its first mission trip. Twelve people venture to Honduras.
- 2001** Eleven people to El Salvador
- 2002** The Rock's first dual trip year. Twelve to Honduras and 15 to Berlin, Germany.
- 2003** Three trips: 18 to Honduras, 10 to Poznan, Poland and 32 to Florida.
- 2004** First trip to Choluteca, 12 attend. First trip to SOS in Memphis, TN, about 40 attend. Fourteen to Poland.
- 2005** 11 to Honduras and 15 to Memphis, TN
- 2006** The Rock forms strategic partnerships with the church in Choluteca, Honduras, and SOS. Teams to both.
- 2007** A record international team of 24 go to Choluteca, plus a team of 11 go to Memphis.
- 2008** January trip to Choluteca with 24. Spring break trips to Choluteca and Memphis.
- 2009** See above.

"For myself not only was it immensely humbling and heart-breaking, but a time to rejoice in the power of my Lord Jesus Christ."
Joey Soto, one Choluteca trip

"God broke me of my pride. The pride that I can fix anything. He wanted to show me how to love and care for people."
Matt Carte, two Choluteca trips

"I saw so much need in Honduras. Yet the lesson I've learned is that there is also need at home, it's just a little more hidden."
Caitlin Palmer, two Choluteca trips

"I've been praying that God will fuel the desire in me that I had in Honduras and keep my eyes open to see the needs of my peers."
Brooke Alexander, two Choluteca trips

trip quotes

trip timeline

