



Reflections from Honduras - Keeping You In Touch

Faith and Works in Action for Those with Cancer - Meet Dr. Manuel Maldonado



Dr. Manuel Maldonado is a cancer surgeon. He is also the Vice President of FMI of Honduras.

Dr. Manuel Maldonado is a prestigious cancer surgeon from San Pedro Sula with a booming private practice in a large medical center. Yet, Dr. Maldonado always has time for those who would otherwise have nowhere to turn. In addition to his busy practice, Dr. Maldonado sees patients with cancer every day at the Cancer League in San Pedro Sula. He is acutely aware of the needs of the poor who find themselves with the devastating diagnosis of cancer.

Dr. Arnulfo Madrid (past president of FMI Honduras) and Dr. Manuel Maldonado first began their friendship during their year of social service on the Mosquito

Coast. Their friendship has endured to this day. Both are known for their charitable natures. How truly blessed was Fellow Man International of Honduras when Dr. Maldonado accepted the nomination for a seat on the organization's board of directors. Dr. Maldonado is currently serving a two year term on the board as Vice President.

During the last eleven years, Dr. Maldonado has donated countless surgeries and treatments to our patients. He attends to the poor in his private clinic and has never charged for his services. He has also donated many surgeries to remove diseased breasts, intestines, thyroids and prostates. In actuality, he never turns down a request for help. Dr. Maldonado uses his talents for



Here Dr. Maldonado performs exploratory surgery to remove the remnants of an ovarian germ cell tumor that threatened the life of this 11 year old patient.

the benefit of his own people. He often times will recruit other medical professionals when the need arises. His influence among the medical community in San Pedro Sula is substantial. Hondurans helping their fellow man! How fortunate we are to call him friend and partner of Fellow Man International.

She's Not Pregnant, It's a Tumor

Recently, Dr. Marvin Pineda, the mission's physician found himself with one of the worst cases of a child affected by cancer ever seen at the clinic. A worried mother brought her 11 year old daughter to the clinic because she thought her daughter was pregnant. Early teen pregnancies are not uncommon here, but this child had not even entered into puberty.

As soon as his hand was placed upon the patient it became clear this was no preg-

nancy, but instead a very large tumor occupying most of the child's abdomen.

Dr. Marvin referred the child to Dr. Maldonado who quickly called upon the pediatric oncologist at the public hospital. After two rounds of chemotherapy, the tumor was reduced in size by more than eighty percent. Last Monday, Dr. Maldonado performed an exploratory laparotomy hoping to remove the tumor. Despair has now been replaced by hope for this sweet little girl from a tiny mountain village in Honduras.



Spreading the Word - FMI Goes to Chicago for Global Activism Expo 2010



Shown here from left to right: Eileen Faut, Ted Rock, Valerie Rock, Thom Allen, Gene Faut and Julie Coyne. Julie is the founder of Education and Hope, an amazing organization that provides educational opportunities in Guatemala. She is a good friend of the Fauts and had a booth next to FMI. www.educationandhope.com

On the 17th of April, friends and members of the FMI Foundation headed to Chicago's Global Activism Expo created by Jerome McDonnell, host of NPR station WBEZ's World View. FMI was invited to participate along with more than eighty other organizations currently working on international development and human rights projects.

Gene and Eileen Faut, Ted and Valerie Rock, Thom Allen and Lisa Armstrong attended the event to promote awareness and recruit additional support for the Fellow Man International project. Thousands of visitors passed through the Expo during the one day event. At the FMI booth, visitors could watch a video about the project, they were given brochures and also had the opportunity to purchase Green Parrot Coffee and hand-made wooden plaques from a local artisan in Pinalajo.

It was a wonderful day of sharing. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Faut and Rock families for organizing FMI's participation in the event. Thank You!

There's Food in Them Hills - Leading by Example



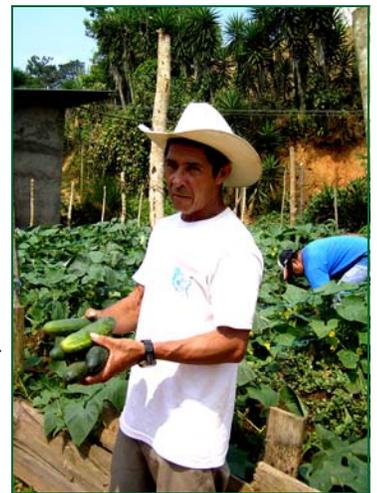
Shown here are the agriculture project's elevated gardens filled with cabbage and cucumbers.

Honduras is suffering from a drought. The UN predicts as many as 200,000 people could be affected by famine in the months to come. Not to be discouraged, the workers of FMI's agriculture project have placed the hoe to the grindstone so to speak, to produce food for the area. Augustin and Guayo have demonstrated to all that with a little sweat equity, the earth can be cajoled into producing in abundance.

As many of you have heard, the white fly can wreak havoc on cultivated crops. The fly transmits a virus that can cause entire fields of especially tomatoes or cucumbers to wither and die. One of the techniques used to combat the devastating effects of white fly infestation is to rotate crops. That is

precisely what Augustin and Guayo did. At this time, the project is enjoying an abundant harvest of cabbage and cucumbers. The elevated gardens are an example of how to make the most of limited space.

The Salina Noon Rotary has generously given \$1,000.00 for the purchase of gardening tools, seeds and fertilizers. As the season changes from dry to rainy, it will be the perfect time for the villagers of Buenos Aires to plant their gardens. Once the villagers are organized and the garden plots prepared for planting, FMI will distribute seeds, starter plants and gardening implements on an as needed basis. Teaching the villagers to take advantage of the resources they have available to them is part of increasing productivity and combating malnutrition. We will keep you posted as to our progress!



Don Augustin Melgar proudly shows off the abundance of cucumbers grown in the mission's gardens. Augustine takes great pleasure in a job well done.

Political Strife Far from Over for Honduras

The political crisis for Honduras is far from over. The devastating consequences of last year's coup has left many in Honduras wondering if the country can recover. With foreign investment down more than fifty percent, many important sources of factory work have dried up. This has left the young people of Honduras with very few options for making a living wage.

The debate over the legitimacy of the current Honduran government continues to manifest itself in many ways. While the international community is divided regarding the recognition and legitimacy of newly elected Porfilio Lobo, it merely reflects the division that exists within the Honduran population itself.

There is now a group in Honduras called the National Front of Popular Resistance. They continue to hold rallies and marches in the streets of major cities in Honduras in support of a constitutional referendum. (See photos to the right) On the other side of the issue, there have been several high profile events that have given homage to Roberto Micheletti for "saving the Honduran constitution and democracy".

Both sides of the issue have their solid arguments. One thing that is for sure however, is that Honduras sorely lacks legitimate sources of employment for its young people. When polled, foreign investors voiced concerns regarding three major issues: 1) A high incidence of violent crime 2) Lack of confidence in

the ability of the government to respect and enforce the laws which protect private holdings and 3) Political instability. These issues are not likely to be resolved any time soon.

One of the most devastating consequences of last year's political crisis was the loss of international aid monies that were designated for things such as the fight against drug trafficking and the construction of roadways and other improvements to Honduran infrastructure. Although the international community refused to go so far as to take away humanitarian aid and impose trade sanctions, certainly the tremendous decrease in jobs and lack of circulating currency have caused a great deal of frustration and worry.



On one of my trips to San Pedro Sula, I was surprised by this group's march down the main street of San Pedro Sula. With their red banners waving and pictures of Che Guevara, this group gives the impression that the socialist movement is alive and well within the democratic party. It also highlights the extreme polarity this political crisis has caused among the Honduran population.

I'll Stand With You - Resisting the Urge to Run Away...Far Away

My friend Bryan Sirchio sings a song called, "Stand With You". It's one of my favorites because it talks about our Christian obligation to stand with those who, in all forms are persecuted or mistreated. Since March 1, 2010, seven Honduran journalists have been murdered. The source of these targeted killings is still being investigated, but many point to the repetitive nature of Honduran human rights violations.

It seems Honduras is topping the charts for its murder rate these days. The state department warns that violent crime is endemic in Honduras. This is the reality with which all Hondurans must live daily. For this Kansas girl, the fear and subsequent stress of living in a violent environment takes its toll on my own sense of peace and tranquility. When I left for the United States in late October of last year, I remember the tremendous burden that was lifted from my shoulders as my children and I landed safely in Houston. "We are safe," I thought to myself. But now that we are back in Honduras and the daily newspapers are covered with gory, blood-covered pictures of the most recently murdered prominent figure, I can slowly feel the peaceful calm of the Kansas flint hills fade from memory. But in as much as the daily violent crime report is disturbing, there is something that burdens my soul much more. It is the anguish I see on the face of my Honduran friends...the people I call family.

It's not hard to understand their justifiable worry regarding their children's future. As the teachers continue to strike in favor of Mel Zelaya's return and the drug runners increase in number through the streets of our once quaint little village of Pinalejo, the daily preoccupation with the Honduran situation becomes acutely personal for these people. Hunger is becoming the ever present white elephant on the dinner table and not just for the poor, but for the middle class as well.

But how to stand with the Honduran people... **all Honduran people** despite differing political views, when every fiber in my being wants to run away...far away to relative safety? The answer for me is the following...hope. The Honduran people have always hoped in the face of all kinds of adversity. They have placed their hope in God and the Fellow Man project to provide for their medical needs, most especially when they cannot provide for themselves. How could I not stand with them especially when their need is greatest? The answer for me can be found in the words to a song.

I'll stand with you, whenever you're excluded

I'll stand with you, when you can't stand on your own

I'll stand with you, when you're put down or wounded

'Cause that's what I know that Jesus would do - Bryan Sirchio

*Bryan's music is now available on iTunes for download or see <http://www.bryansirchio.com>

The Things I Live Through Fellow Man International



What is life, if not to serve? What use is it to work if what you do is not recognized by others? I was raised during my youth to find in the service of others, an opportunity to contribute to those whom God so designates and to discover in that service internal happiness. Here in Honduras, the medical profession does not always allow for the opportunity to achieve such a goal,

especially because of the nature of human ambition. Many physicians lose their perspective and their true mission.

From the moment I was called to Fellow Man International, I was sure I would find the right environment that would provide the opportunity to complete a mission of service. After a year and a half of continuous service with Fellow Man International, I can say with all certainty that it has been a blessing in my life not only personal, but professional as well. To climb the mountain every day, observe nature always so alive, to breathe the fresh air and to work with the patients who find their way here daily hoping to reestablish their health are the things that provide the impetus to be better.

This medical center allows us to recognize with every patient we attend, that no one is above anyone else. It gives us the satisfaction of service in something as important as health. To enjoy life in this way, such a distinct and uncommon way, allows for a medical professional such as myself to place spiritual satisfaction above the material wealth of a salary. It allows me to work hard through service to solve real problems.

This medical center counts on basic elements which offer solutions to the problem of providing quality health care. I am sure we have achieved among other things, a reduction in the maternal/infant death rate, which generally in our country is relatively high. We have been able to achieve this through proper pre and postnatal care. Patients with chronic illnesses have found much relief especially in the cases of hypertension and diabetes, not only because of the medical care they receive, but also because the correct medications they so desperately need are found here. They do not have to purchase

their medications outside of this medical center. If it were not for the mission, the patients would not have access to their medications because the prices would be beyond their reach. We have managed to ensure that patients with chronic illnesses do not become further complicated due to lack of medication or appropriate medical services.

Additionally, we should also keep in mind that the primary reason many come to the clinic is for respiratory illnesses. We can count on always having the appropriate antibiotics and analgesics for every case. Asthmatic patients many times require immediate medical attention to find relief. In an area such as this, were it not for the mission, those patients would not find a place close by where they could receive the necessary care. Remember this medical center is the only one within many kilometers that has electricity. Our medical center resolves many other cases that would otherwise require the patients to travel long distances to find medical help. State health care is not always the quality one would hope for and the public medical centers often times are quite congested by large numbers of patients. In the end, I can say that we are making a huge contribution to the people's well-being through this project. The population at large also assures us of the same. The nursing staff is well-trained for their work and attend to the patients with joy and kindness. This also contributes to the patient's ability to heal.

We could do even more! We could improve the aspects of our preventative medicine program, for example, but it would require a distinct plan. There are a few diagnostic medical devices such as an ultrasound that are still part of the project's plan but I think we need a little bit more time to be able to see these kinds of advances. Still, we are happy to belong to this institution. I am profoundly thankful to all who have contributed economically in one way or another so this project could become a reality. I should not forget to mention without the coordination of Lisa Armstrong, it would be difficult to achieve our goals. Her example of sheer will, enthusiasm and help to Fellow Man International pushes us every day to be our best and never forget our mission.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marvin Pineda

Director of the Medical Program FMI Honduras