

The NEW SOUTH FOCUS



**NEWSLETTER OF
THE NEW SOUTH CONFERENCE
OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH;
FOCUS 20; November 28, 2019
THANKSGIVING DAY**

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A HYMN OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1 Come, ye thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest home;
all is safely gathered in,
ere the winter storms begin.
God our Maker doth provide
for our wants to be supplied;
come to God's own temple, come,
raise the song of harvest home.

2 All the world is God's own field,
fruit as praise to God we yield;
wheat and tares together sown
are to joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear;
Lord of harvest, grant that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.

3 For the Lord our God shall come,
and shall take the harvest home;
from the field shall in that day
all offenses purge away,
giving angels charge at last

in the fire the tares to cast;
but the fruitful ears to store
in the garner evermore.

4 Even so, Lord, quickly come,
bring thy final harvest home;
gather thou thy people in,
free from sorrow, free from sin,
there, forever purified,
in thy presence to abide;
come, with all thine angels, come,
raise the glorious harvest home.

--Henry Alford

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DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT FROM REED WILBANKS,

Pastor of our, C180 FM church
Rock Hill, South Carolina

God is good, loving, holy and gracious. He calls us to be faithful and obedient. Jesus invites us to follow Him. Whether to an academically oriented, fairly religious, intergenerational, tightly knit yet transient context; a rural, traditional, mono-ethnic, family-styled, low tech context; a suburban, contemporary, loosely connected, non-denominationally minded, multi-ethnic context; or to some other people and place, the Holy Spirit leads us into the wilderness, through the valley and up the mountain. We charge ahead, hobble along, blaze new trails, veer off course. The sun warms and parches. The rain quenches and dampens. The Word nourishes and falls silent; rebukes and refreshes. And we marvel, ponder, wander and wonder. God is good, loving, holy and gracious. With much praise and many thanks, for his love endures forever.

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THOUGHTS FROM LOIS HUFF

--our conference missions coordinator

This report about Honduras from newly-appointed Latin America Area Director Dr.

Ricardo Gomez as he made his first trip there going with Brent Thompson (edited for length by Lois Huff) Many of us in the conference know both of these men.

I met Supt. Brent Thompson in San Pedro de Sula on Thursday afternoon, October 31, and we drove together to Loanchito. The five-hour trip was not for the faint of heart due to the condition of the roads and the fact that we arrived after dark and there were no streetlights.

The areas where our churches minister are in very poverty-stricken areas. If they aren't in abject poverty, then they are very close to it, and our churches are in the most desperate condition of any place we have visited in Latin America. There are a lot of at-risk children in these areas, and I think we need to join forces with ICCM and Terramica (a non-profit already working in the area) to help improve the condition of the people because the situation there is very sad and the poverty tangible.

About 80 people attended the meetings on Friday night and we ran out of food for dinner. Fifty people attended the other two days. A large delegation of nearly 24 people came from the town of Travesia (a nine-hour trip) with Pastora Daisy Arzu. On Sunday we celebrated the ordination of Pastor Manuel de Jesus Perez Hernandez, the pastor of the church where the meetings were held. This was a monumental meeting because we officially established Honduras as a Mission District. Pastora Daisy Arzu was named the Missions District leader due to her proven leadership skills, her ability to interact with the vision of the area, and her organizational and administrative skills. Her church is the largest and fastest growing church in the district. She has embraced community church planting and is making disciples and developing leaders. She is very committed to serving the Lord. We believe she can help organize the district with the help of the MEG/Administrative board that we established consisting of 3 lay persons and 3 elders.

Pastor Manuel Herrera was named the coordinator for CCP and pastoral formation. He and his son had to escape from where he was pastoring because a gang group threatened his life. They left with nothing and escaped to Olanchito where he has been training pastors in CCP and has started several groups. He has been very fruitful with no resources at all.

We talked a lot about creating an emergency fund to serve as medical insurance for the pastors. Right now, people raise money to cover medical expenses by stopping cars on the street. We need something a little more secure. Supt. Brent Thompson is going to see if he can raise some money for this fund with some churches in the USA.

In general, it was a great meeting. I think there is a bright future for this new mission district. The next meeting is scheduled for 29 October through 2 November 2020.

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Thanksgiving greetings! Growing up and living outside the USA, I was able to celebrate harvest festival. We brought the produce in from gardens and farms and lined the front of the church. We sang, "We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the ground." Later, the produce was given to the needy. In the years since, I have learned to enjoy the spirit of thanksgiving in all its aspects.

Please pray for our little granddaughter, Emily, who just turned 3 years old. She will have surgery on her neck and vertebrae next week. Pray that the surgeons will, with God's help, be able to meet her needs. Thank you!

*Dr. Timothy L. Thomas
Conference Administrator
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