

SLIDE # 1

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

It is now 2015. While the US has sent missionaries across the globe for approximately the last 250 years it was not until after WWII that the US church became truly aware of the need around the globe.

- And it was not until some 25 years ago the short term mission trip was born. But it's been during the past 15 years that the US church has experienced an explosion in the interest to go to a foreign land to serve on a short term trip.
- These trips have shaped the church in the global south and they have transformed many lives inside the church in the global north at the same time.

The past 10 years have probably seen more change, for the good and bad, in the Global South.

Access to affordable cell phone and internet service on those phones has connected the entire world.

- While the global south has always known that life was better in the global north, they didn't "really know".
- Thanks to the telecommunications giant Digicel, a farmer in a remote village in Uganda, Haiti, or Honduras can follow international news and culture.

And they are doing just that.

- Thanks to Digicel, in rural villages throughout the globe you'll find small red satellite dishes stuck on the walls of mud huts, hooked to a car battery, and providing for less than \$10 per month cable TV.
- Now the entire world is able to enjoy our pop culture reality show phenomenon, including Honey Boo Boo and Duck Dynasty, conveniently dubbed by the The Learning Channel into French and Spanish.

Who would not want to leave the global south when what we're exporting across the globe as reality consists of an absurd country child beauty queen and a bearded family of camouflaged good ole boys.

- If I'm struggling to survive and to provide for my family, in the middle east, in the Africa, or in Latina American, then I want to be a part of the reality of "The West"

SLIDE # 2

SLIDE #3

Right now the world is receiving a wake up call to the dire need faced by millions in Africa.

- Only 46% of immigrants who'll enter Italy this year will qualify for protective status or asylum in Europe while the remainder 56%, over half, are economic refugees.

Due to the fact that the US is separated from Europe and Africa by an enormous body of water we're largely unaware of the severity of this crisis other than a 45 second spot on the evening news.

We too, however, are also facing a crisis of our own. We've seen an incredible influx of illegals aliens coming across our southern border in the past few years

- An estimated 90,000 unaccompanied children entered the US in 2014.
- That 4 times as much as in 2013. According to the Pew Research Center the overwhelming majority of those children coming from Honduras.
- In the summer of 2014 this crisis was on the evening news daily for many weeks. It was a wake up call to the nation that we have a real problem.
- It's not a problem that will be solved by **politicians, walls, border guards or special government aid programs, but** it is a problem that we as the church in the Global North can tackle.

SLIDE #4

When we read Christ's words in Luke 19 today I believe that they are not just as for the adulterer or the thief who does not know Him yet, but for the Believe who is also lost.

Because we've all had moments, even as believers, when we felt lost. Some of us to greater extremes than others, but lost all the same.

Because the Global South, with incredible numbers of believers, who's faith is an incredible testament to their relationship with Christ, often times feels very lost.

Over the past 15 years Mission Lazarus has focused on reaching the Lost, the one's who don't yet know Christ and the ones who know him yet they still feel lost.

We've done this through an emphasis on Sustainability.

But Sustainability is a big word with complex meanings when viewed through the lens of ministry.

Here's how we view Sustainability:

1. Local leadership development that is not dependent on American missionaries.

- Today Mission Lazarus Honduras has a staff of over 100 who are led by 10 passionate believers Central Americans who are leaders.
- And in Haiti we've been able to provide a framework with documented steps and procedures that will provide an environment for our new school there to thrive under local leadership.

2. Churches that are self governing and self propagating with leadership that believes in a vision to reach the lost with Grace and to collaborate with other like minded bodies of believers.

- To date we've planted nearly 30 churches in Honduras.
- This has not happened because Americans were there to preach.
- It has happened because the first few churches planted by Americans took that message to their neighboring villages and it has spread like wild fire.

3. And finally, financial sustainability. Mission Lazarus has been blessed with incredible resources that we strive to use to enable us to reach more lost.

Through our social enterprise endeavors including farming, ranching, timber production, and artisan leather goods to name a few we were able to generate over \$500,000 of income in 2014

Those funds are put directly back into the ministry while providing well paid employment in employment deprived communities.

Sustainability is what drives all of our efforts. In order to have sustainable churches they have to be comprised of Families with Sustainable income.

In Honduras a family will thrive on \$350 per month, the Government established minimum wage.

Even though this is the law there are very few businesses paying minimum wage, especially outside of the major cities.

- With \$350 no one is getting rich but many feel like they can provide for their families needs.
- By providing for basic needs they don't need to risk their lives traveling to the US in search of a better opportunity.
- \$350 does not seem like much but there are very few opportunities to earn this kind of money in rural Central America.

SLIDE #5

SLIDE # 6

Our vocational schools serve young men who've completed the 6th grade, that's what Honduras considers an education. They are with us for 3 years where they receive Bible training, complete their jr. high education, and learn a vocation.

- The skills of these young men to produce amazing leather goods is amazing.
- Now, graduates who work in our production facility are earning minimum wage, and at only 17 or 18 years old.
- That's more money than their parents have ever taken home in a month in their entire lives.

Through socially responsible businesses that in reality serve as ministry I believe that as American Church we can shape the world. I believe that we can reach the Lost with most of us never having to leave the state.

Not shape the world to make it look like the US.

But we can make sure that the world has their basic needs covered.

- The days of giving away aid as a ministry initiative are long gone. They don't work.
- The days of sharing the good news with a message of condemnation to get people to jump into a puddle of water are long gone, very few actually have a change of heart.
- The days of preaching the sermon on the mount without providing opportunities for the fulfillment of those promises are long gone.

We've been found out. Our wealth. Our comfort. Our opportunity is now known world wide and the world is coming for it.

A while back my children Sol and Levi were riding with me in Honduras. I was on the phone on hold and from the back seat I could hear them laughing. As I listened in on what they were saying I heard them say, "Mami and Papi are Americans, ha ha ha" How can it be that if Honduras is so bad that my children love their identity as Hondurans just as much as they do their identity as Americans. Because they've had a safe home, a loving family, food to eat, medical care and a chance to dream about their future.

- How can it be that my kids love their Honduran identity just as much if not more than their American identity if Honduras is such a horrible place.

Contrary to what some believe, no law, no wall, no armed guards will prevent the desperate from coming to find hope.

But we, the American Church, we can do something.

- Capitalism is a beautiful thing, it's one of the principles that has allowed our country to become what it is but capitalism left unchecked has devastating effects far beyond our borders, from beyond what we can see.

SLIDE # 7

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:23, All things are permitted." Yes, but not all things are beneficial.

- As a country we have a problem when textile manufacturing giants like Levi's and Hanes can lobby congress for the state department to pressure the Haitian government to not follow through with their new minimum wage of \$0.60 per hour.
 - They were successful and minimum wage was set only \$0.37 per hour.
 - Do you want to work and try to survive on \$0.37 per hour, \$3 per day?
 - Haitians may speak a different language and have a different culture but when it comes to providing for their families they're just like you and me.
 - You can't survive on \$0.37 per hour, not even a Haitian.

What Christian would not feel lost trying to not only survive but also provide for their family on \$0.37 per hour.

- Mission Lazarus used to provide jobs to nearly 100 workers when we were growing tomatoes. We had to quit growing tomatoes because we could not break even. Breakeven for us was \$0.12 per pound of Roma Tomatoes. Right now at Kroger those tomatoes are \$1 per pound. All we could get paid for \$0.06 per pound. But if we were willing to spend just \$0.06 more per pound in the US then we'd be able to employ hard working Hondurans who'd be able to not only survive but provide for their families.
- Just because a corporation or a ministry can hire people for miserable salaries and justify it by saying it's all we can do does not mean that it's right.

As Christians in America we can shape the world, starting right here in Houston.

- Not through more relief aid programs.
- Not through immigration reform.
- Not through traditional mission efforts.

But by using the entrepreneurial and business skills that our country is blessed with to:

- By making sure that the companies, businesses, corporations, and nonprofits that we lead are socially responsible, both here as well as in the global south.
- Track Effectiveness of initiatives.
- Set up a structure that invites transparency and accountability

- And by creating jobs that can be used as Business as Ministry and that are sustainable, profitable both here as well as overseas.

No one on staff at Mission Lazarus earns less than minimum wage, including ranch hands, maintenance guys, and our young artisans in our leather shop.

- They're not building 3,000 square foot homes or buying new cars or eating at Pappasitos for lunch, but the reality is they don't want that.
- **They want to provide a safe home for their family.**
- **They want to provide food for their family.**
- **They want to provide medical care for their family.**
- **They want to provide education for their family.**
- **They want to be active members of their churches with the ability to give back a tithe of what God has given them,**
- **And now they are doing all of that.**

You all remember when the Prodigal son was in the pig pen and he came to his senses? Do you remember what crossed his mind about his dad's farm?

- He remembered that even his dad's ranch hands had more than enough food on their tables.

Luke 15:17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!"

- The culture and the economy of the rural global south has not changed too much in the past 2,000 years.
 - It's actually quite remarkable how similar it is.
 - You will not find ranch hand, day laborers, and uneducated workers in the global south who have more food than their family can eat.
- Yet they pick the watermelons we eat.
- They pick the bananas we enjoy.
- They cut the avocados that we love.
- Indirectly, these laborers work for us.

These workers do not depend on some far off company for their well being, they depend on you and me.

They don't depend on a local minister to provide them hope in their lives, they depend on you and me.

These workers in all reality work for you and me.

SLIDE # 10

Mission Lazarus is transforming and growing the Kingdom in Honduras by combining:

- Sustainable Ministry Initiatives

With

- Sustainable Leadership Formation

And

- Sustainable Business Development

But I believe that there is more to be done.

I believe that what we're doing is only a drop in the bucket.

Here today we have community leaders, business owners, and ministry trail blazers.

Together we can seek and save the lost from right here in First Colony, TX throughout the world by how we look at and approach ministry.

And I believe that First Colony Church of Christ has the ideas to get it done.

I believe that First Colony Church of Christ has the people to get it done.

And I believe that First Colony Church of Christ has a commitment to excellence to get it done.

The Son of Man came to seek and save the Lost, He has called us, he has equipped us, and he has empowered us to see that mission through.

I invite you all to join us on this mission.