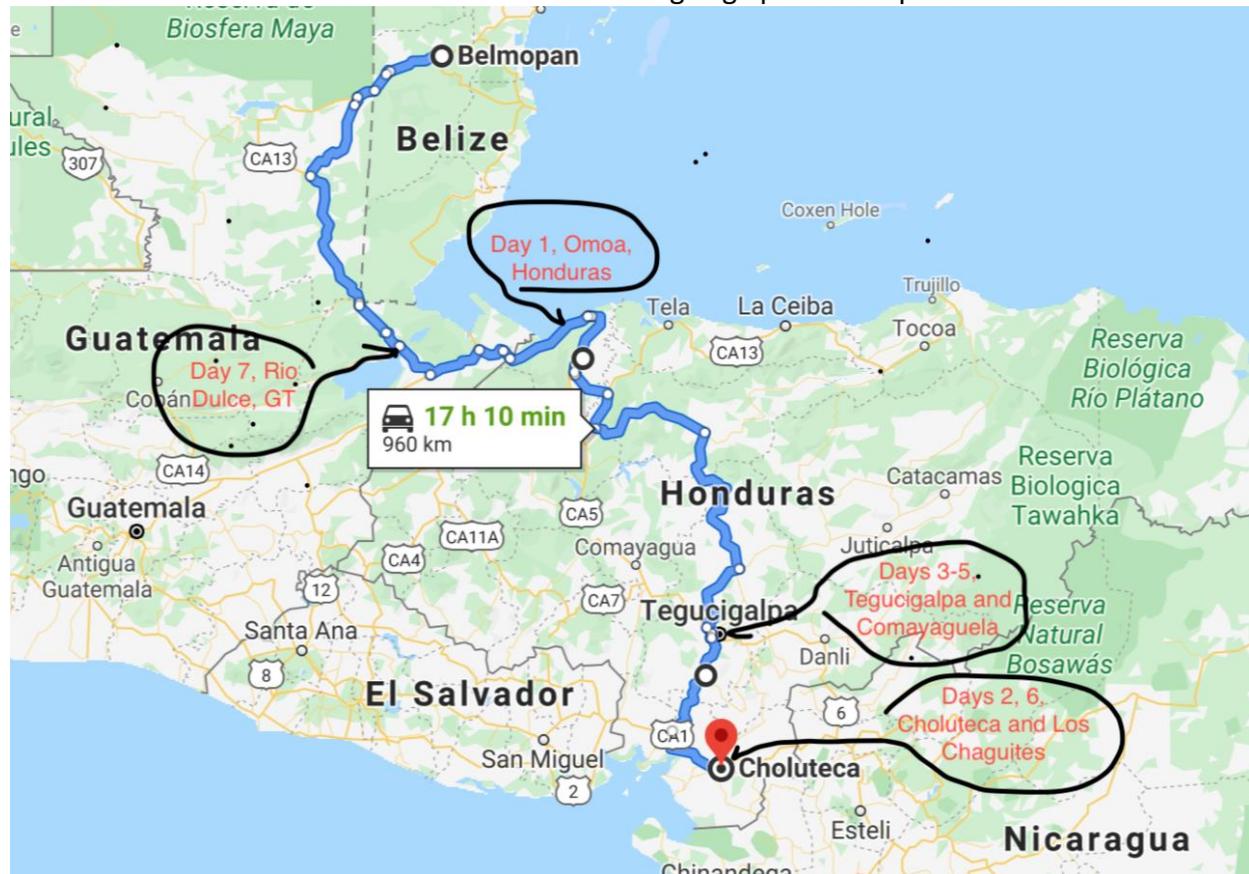


If I could Fly

As the crow flies, we live just 160 kilometers from Omoa, Honduras. Among my many gifts, God didn't give me wings, so when we go to visit the brothers in Honduras, we take a rather circuitous route. The road to Omoa is 497 kilometers long over two lane unpaved and paved roads that were normal in Nebraska when I was a child. Recently, Roldan Rios, his wife Ruth, and I traveled to Choluteca, Honduras JUST A LITTLE SHY OF 1000 kilometers to encourage a small congregation in Choluteca, drop Ruth off to visit her brother and relatives in San Lorenzo, and double back to attend the Honduras Foro in Tegucigalpa. The trip looked like this:



19 Feb: The Rios' left Orange Walk at 5:00 a.m. by bus. We picked them up, had breakfast, and left Banana Bank at 8:15. We drove through the Belize/Guatemala border at Benque Viejo, Belize/Melchor de Mencos, Guatemala. Immigration and customs clearance required 45 minutes. We followed Central American highways 13 and 9 to the Guatemala/Honduras border, stopping only for coffee and gas on the way. Immigration and customs clearance required more than an hour at the border. We arrived in Omoa at 5:00 p.m. as the sun was setting and found a hotel. (497 Kilometers traveled)

Thursday 20 Feb: We arose and left Omoa at 7:30 a.m. driving through San Pedro Sula before stopping for breakfast in Villanueva south of San Pedro Sula at 9:30. After breakfast, we continued south past Tegucigalpa, to arrive in Choluteca a 6:00 p.m. in time to shower, change, grab a bite and meet at 7:00 p.m. with Jesus the Redeemer congregation in Choluteca. (488 kilometers travel)

Friday 21 Feb: We made house calls in Choluteca and drove to San Lorenzo where friends served lunch. I grabbed a quick nap in the hammock while Roldan dropped Ruth off at her brothers. We left San Lorenzo at 2:00 p.m., driving to the hotel site for the Honduras Foro in Tegucigalpa, arriving at 5:30 p.m. Dinner was waiting by the time we parked, found our room and washed up. (164 kilometers, 3 ½ hours travel)

Saturday 22 Feb: Honduras Foro. Foro is the Spanish word for *forum*. We have 11 Foros in countries where we work as LCMS missionaries in Latin America and the Caribbean. There, districts, congregations and individuals meet to discuss strategy, progress in sharing the Gospel and ways ahead for continued growth of these missions. Our workers in Honduras continue to push ahead as we encourage and support them. GREAT MEETING!

Sunday 23 Feb: Worship at the Lutheran Mission in Comayagüela twin city to Tegucigalpa. I preached, Missionary Pastor Junior Martinez led worship. We celebrated two baptisms, lunch. GREAT CELEBRATION!

Monday 24 Feb: 9:00 a.m. Travel with FORO members by van to Los Chaguities to visit a church site missionaries started five years ago. It was placed on hold due to political developments in Nicaragua. Now the Lord is opening new doors as we work to annex a congregation in nearby Choluteca. We introduced our workers to their leaders...lots of instruction and prayer needed. Returned to our hotel in Tegucigalpa at 7:30 p.m. (375 kilometers, 7 hours on the road)

Tuesday 25 Feb; Breakfast and farewells to Foro members. 07:30 departure. Travel north to Puerto Cortez, crossing the Honduras/Guatemala border at 2:30 p.m. Continued drive to Rio Dulce, Guatemala, arriving 5:18 p.m (483 Kilometers) FOUND A WAY TO SKIRT AROUND SAN PEDRO SULA, SAVING MUCH TIME. GREAT HOTEL ON THE RIO DULCE.

Wednesday 26 Feb: Breakfast at hotel. Launch across river to parked car. Departed 9:10 a.m. early afternoon lunch at entrance to YAXHA Archeological site; crossed the Guatemala/Belize border at 3:30. NOTHING TO DECLARE. Quick crossing in ½ hour. Dropped Roldan and Ruth off at bus in Belmopan at 4:30 p.m. (357 kilometers, 7 ½ hours) HOME AGAIN!

If I could fly, it might be easier, but the Lord has given us good friends and a good vehicle to get us to our destination where we share the Gospel, plant Lutheran Churches and show mercy. Called to this task, we see the fields white for harvest and the workers remain few.