



Central America Mission Project Update



COCO RIVER, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES – PART 1 BY THE RUNNE FAMILY

Again and again, God has shown us the great need for missionary support in the communities of the Coco River. Consequently, we want to give you a glimpse of the challenges and opportunities in this field. As you can see on the map, the Coco River creates a natural division between Honduras and Nicaragua. It begins at Somoto Canyon National Monument and flows into Cabo Gracias a Dios in the Atlantic Ocean. Passing 523 miles through nature reserves, rapids, mountains, and the many communities on its banks.

Geographical Challenge

The Coco River is remote and difficult to access. The main form of transportation is a long boat made from a hollowed-out tree trunk, called a *batú* by the locals. During the summer drought, the river drops so low that passengers must walk

part of the journey under the intense sun, carrying their belongings and pushing the “water bus.” This makes the trip that usually takes hours extend into days. On the other hand, in the rainy season, the river becomes fierce and dangerous. In areas with strong rapids, passengers must get out and carry their things along the muddy riverbank, often under intense tropical downpours.

Economic Challenge

Because access to this remote region is so difficult, the cost of transportation, food, and lodging comes at a premium, often prohibitively expensive.

Communication Challenge

Cell phone signal and internet connectivity are weak and limited along the river. To overcome this challenge, people seek larger communities with internet connections to have a chance to talk on

their cell phones, but this also causes the service to become saturated. The early morning hours are often the only option to make their calls.

Insecurity

Due to the poor control of the area and easy movement from one country to another, the river has become a drug trafficking route. Also, spiritism is so strong that entire communities are suffering from what the Miskitos call “*crazy sickness*,” which is nothing more or less than people possessed by demons. Without knowing the situation, we suggested to one of our missionaries that he travel through one of those communities. Still, he replied fearfully, “It is very dangerous there! I don’t dare go through because the people are out of control there; they have ‘crazy sickness.’” After understanding the reason for his fear, we adjusted the route to a safer one, and he was greatly relieved.

At the beginning of 2024, we placed the Coco River mission in the hands of God, not knowing how it would be possible for us to effectively share the message of salvation. Providentially, He has opened opportunities for us to serve these remote communities. It was with great sacrifice that we initiated work in the upper Coco River. Starting in 2025, Lord willing, we will have a duo of missionaries advancing in the lower Coco River. We want to share our joy and gratitude to God, mainly for allowing us to be His hands, feet, ears, and voice to our beloved Miskitos. We want to thank you for your wonderful support. Without your prayers and provision, we couldn’t work among the natives spreading the gospel! Thank you very much, and we’ll see you in **Coco River, Challenges and Opportunities – part 2.**



**Your AWA Mission Family stationed at the
AWA Central America Mission Project:**



**Caleb Runne and Glenda Escudero,
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