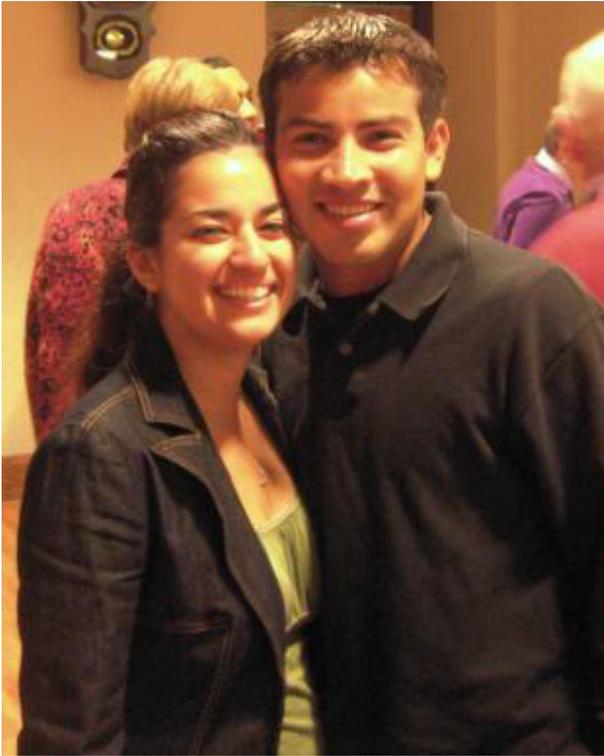


# A Tale of Three Marvins

The Micah Project Spring 2008 Update

Marvin Soto, Marvin Morazán and Marvin Cobán. We've had roughly three generations of boys join the Micah family, and each generation has had a Marvin. And while it would seem more likely to have repeat of a name like José (of which we have only had one!), for some reason, God keeps sending us Marvins! Giving you a quick snapshot of our three Marvins, who are 23, 19 and 13 years old, respectively, will also give you some good insight into where we are as a ministry in 2008.



On my trip to the United States earlier this year, Marvin Soto invited me out for a cup of coffee. Between a full load of classes at Missouri Baptist University and an on-campus job in the maintenance department, catching Marvin with a couple hours of free time is never easy! While we sat and chatted with his girlfriend by the fireplace in a busy café, I couldn't help but remember the little boy that I met selling packets of peanuts on the streets of Tegucigalpa way back in 1993 when I was a college student doing an internship in Honduras. Could this confident and well-spoken man sitting across from me be that same boy who spent his childhood earning a few cents on a street corner in Tegucigalpa?

Of course, that transformation was not automatic: this college junior can't point to one moment in his life in which he decided that he was no longer destined to be a street kid. Looking back, we can observe many factors that worked together to move Marvin towards success.

We can see many faith-filled people who have spoken

hope into his life through the Micah Project, both as long-term missionaries and as people who have come alongside the project to support him. We can look at the day-to-day environment at the Micah Project which constantly prods our young men forward, even if they are sometimes tempted to run in the opposite direction. We can speculate about some inner perseverance which was inherited from his grandmother, who at age 84 was still trying to convince her sons to give up alcohol and join her church.

But most importantly, we can judge his success as the result of His loving heavenly Father who guided Marvin through the whole, often difficult journey. Marvin can truly echo the words of King David in Psalm 139: "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast." (To see a short video interview with Marvin, go to our video collection on our website [www.micahcentral.org](http://www.micahcentral.org).)

While 23 year old Marvin Soto has a quiet and calm sense of who he is and where he is going, 19 year old Marvin Morazán tends to live life passionately with all of his emotions on his sleeve. He has an evangelist's heart; he truly believes that God has rescued him from a very dark place and he wants to share that story with the world. His favorite mode of sharing is through song and the recent album that he

put out with a few of the other Micah boys, called “In the process”, highlights very clearly what God has done in Marvin’s life since joining the Micah Project. On one of the songs on their new album “Comprendí” (I understood), Marvin sings these words:

*“Listen! I felt great hatred towards my parents, who abandoned me when I was six, who never gave me a hug or said “son, I love you!”. My shoulders bore the marks of the abuse my dad gave me. I wanted to grow up so that I could make him suffer the same abuse that he had given me. But I was wrong; the revenge in my soul was consuming me, and I didn’t know that another Father was watching me and calling me to move away from the darkness because He was waiting for me. I went to Him, and some time later I could finally see that I was a new creature! He offered me what my parents never could—that awesome love that I have always desired.” (Comprendí, from “En el proceso;” 2007).*



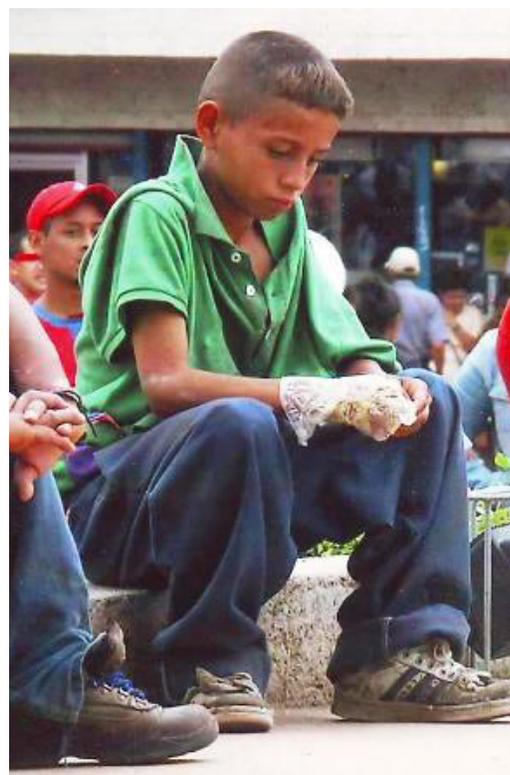
When Marvin Morazán graduates high school this November, he is thinking of joining Danilo in Monterrey, Mexico, for a two year program that will train him in music ministry. While he is already a missionary, sharing his message and testimony all over Honduras with the other guys in the Los Micah Boys group, it is easy to see that, with some biblical education and ministerial training, he can truly become a powerful witness here in Honduras.

It was during one of Marvin Morazán’s concerts that I first began to see little Marvin Coban’s true personality.

Although little Marvin (Marvincito in Spanish) has been with us for several months now, his true personality is still hidden amongst the survival techniques of street life and altered by

years of addiction to yellow glue. But the night that Marvin Morazán was singing, I saw little Marvin sitting on the ground directly beneath the microphone. His eyes were as round as saucers, and he was lip-synching every word that Marvin Morazán was singing. I could see hope being born. . . a new idea in this little street kid’s mind that, maybe, one day, that would be him up there with a microphone singing before a crowd.

We are reminded daily though that when a young boy has been forced to live his life on the streets, we have to keep looking in both directions: to help him unwind the damage done in the past even as we help sow new layers of hope that begin to build his future. Little Marvin has never known his dad, and his mom abandoned his family before disappearing to Guatemala when he was a little boy. Though he lived with an aunt for awhile, he was quickly absorbed into street life, especially into the highly addictive trap of yellow glue. Do you know what drugs do to an eleven year old’s brain? While addiction is destructive to anyone, it is especially damaging when it happens during one’s formative years--when one’s brain is still developing--when one’s body is calling out for nutrients to help it grow, and all it receives are the toxic fumes of shoe glue.



Yes, since finding Marvin under a bridge in Tegucigalpa and inviting him to join our family, daily life has been a balance of expunging the streets from his character while at the same time helping him to see possibilities for the future. Each day we see a little of the streets in him mixed in with a little of the boy that he can be. He can be an excited little boy who is memorizing Psalm 139 in our devotional time along with the rest of the guys and the next thing we know, he is pulling a knife out of the kitchen and going after one of the others who has slighted him in some way. He can talk all week about going to a park on Saturday, then get out of the van on the way back in a fit of rage and return to his old haunts in the market district to get high.

Even so, the progress he has been making is enough to keep pointing us towards the future. In his first couple of months with us, he would flinch anytime anyone would put their arm on his shoulder; now, he is accustomed to starting each morning with a hug. His flashes of anger are giving way more often to a quick wit and a willingness to please. His natural intelligence (he taught himself to read by sounding out words in newspapers that people were reading on the streets) has led him to test into the third and fourth grade level in our home schooling program. Although he has gone back to the streets (and the yellow glue) several times since joining the project, we have more hope now than we ever have that he will make the choice to leave them behind forever.



Sometimes it helps me, when little Marvin is having a bad day and the desire to get high is causing anxiety that he takes out on all around him, to remember that big Marvin—Marvin Soto, once went through the exact same things. It helps me to dream of little Marvin in big Marvin's shoes... a college junior with many accomplishments already in his past and big dreams for the future. Even as it is a daily struggle to help little Marvin leave his street personality behind, it helps to dream about where he might be in ten years, when he will be 23, just as Marvin Soto is now.

And that is the blessing of having a ministry that is now eight years old. We don't just have blind faith in God's power to transform these lives, as we had in the first year of the Micah Project's existence. We now have many, many experiences of how

God can take lives and begin to transform them in His image. Not all of the boys that have entered our doors have been able to escape the dark bonds of street life; a few over the years have made decisions that have caused them to slip back into those chains. Is it possible that little Marvin will follow their path? Of course, it is possible. But as we see Marvin Soto just a few courses away from graduating college, and as we listen to Marvin Morazán sing of his Father's love that freed him from those chains, it gives us the courage and perseverance to keep praying for little Marvin.

It is those prayers that we ask of you. I believe that God loves to hear a chorus of prayers—voices and hearts unified toward a common purpose. Join us in praying that God would continue to work in our three Marvin's... to prepare them for the purposes that He has called them to. Pray for courage in our staff and missionaries... to keep hoping even in the tough moments. Pray that God would continue to use the Micah Project to shine His light throughout Honduras and the world.

We are deeply grateful for the many ways that you have supported us and loved us in the past eight years!

Your brother in the journey,  
Michael Miller

