

## ***Incarnation***

### The Micah Project December 2009 Letter

*"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering."* Isaiah 53:3

One of our 13 year old boys killed a man while he lived on the streets. He didn't actually pull the trigger, but he was part of a juvenile gang that assaulted a taxi a couple of years ago. As the littlest boy of the group, his job was to act as bait. He ran out in front of the taxi, and when the driver slammed on the brakes to avoid hitting him, the older street kids surrounded the taxi and pulled a gun on the driver. When he resisted, they shot him. Our young man had not expected this: they were after money--a quick hit on an unsuspecting driver--but things went wrong fast. As the man's lifeless body slumped over the wheel of the car, the street boys fled into the night.

Is it any wonder that street kids try to deaden their souls through the constant high of yellow glue? It's partly to forget what has been done to them: this boy's father is in jail for murder and violent crime, after all. But it also erases, however briefly, the memories of what they have done while living in the sub-human state of desperation that is street life.

When we stepped into this boy's life last year, inviting him to come off the streets and join the Micah family, he was a pleasant, happy-go-lucky kid...surprisingly so. Many of the boys went through serious withdrawal symptoms in their first months with us, but we all commented on how quickly this young man adapted to life in the Micah House. He was the only one of our street kids to never go back; the others had their slip-ups, going back to the addictive fumes of yellow glue for a day or more at a time. But this boy never seemed to look back!



A year passed. We grew to love this young man and felt that he was an important part of the Micah family. But as his adolescent growth spurt hit, something else began to change as well. He began to have occasional outbursts of violent anger...episodes that began to escalate over time. I would gently tell him to do his morning chore, and he would fly into a rage in response. What happened to the sweet, funny boy that joined our family last year?

But, although it may seem backwards, we are beginning to see the outbursts of anger as a good sign. Not good behavior of course...but movement in the right direction. For the boy that we got to know last year had his heart safely walled-up behind a barrier that would allow nothing that could lead to more pain. He'd been in and out of state-run orphanages his whole life, and he knew how to keep his guard up until he figured out if it was a good place or not. Usually, he ran away after a few weeks and ended up back on the streets.

As he begins to trust us, he begins to allow the reality of his life to surface, defenses laid aside. And the darkness finally begins to bubble up, producing guilt, shame, rage...all responses to a life in which he has been both victim and perpetrator. This confused little boy begins to scream back at the violence of his past.

And that is where our work truly begins.

The gospels tell the story of our Savior's birth, a story that we have somehow converted into a yearly display of pretty gifts, sparkling Christmas trees and nostalgic carols. But the prophet

Isaiah fleshes out the incarnation of our Lord, explaining that the little baby in the manger came to be a man wholly *familiar with suffering*, who was born to be crushed because of our wrongdoing.

For us here at Micah, that's where the true meaning of Christmas comes alive. If He came to participate in our suffering and, ultimately, to relieve it, then, as His children, we are called to do the same. When this boy chooses to confront his darkness, we are called to walk into it with him, at the risk of becoming a target when the real reasons for the darkness are not accessible and he needs someone to point his rage at.

Really, it hurts sometimes. It's tough to get beaten down by the very ones that we love and are trying to help. But then we remember that our pain is only the tiniest microcosm of what He went through when all of humanity rejected His attempts at love and at fatherhood.



Thankfully, the Christmas story--the story of Incarnation--does not end with the experience of suffering. Isaiah presaged: *After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied* (Isaiah 53:11). His suffering paved the way for the joy of salvation that we sing so much about at Christmastime. And that is what we desire for this broken young man and all of the broken souls that pass through the doors of the Micah Project: wholeness in Christ as they walk into the light of life.

And as the Micah Project celebrates our tenth anniversary on January 10, we continue to look for new ways to be a more effective incarnational ministry here in Honduras. In 2010, our newest missionary, Brian Wiggs, will open the Micah Project technical school, to provide mechanical and carpentry skills to older street youth and other needy young men. We will continue to grow our ministry to our boys' families by providing sewing classes, microenterprise training and discipleship to our single moms. And our street ministry will continue to reach into the darkest corner of Tegucigalpa with His awesome light.

Truly, you all have been Emmanuel-bearers to the hurting and broken: showing them that God is with them through your visits, your prayers, and your support. You provide incarnate hope by being a part of their lives and part of the extended Micah family. And you give us courage to keep pointing our guys to the Light, even when the darkness threatens to overwhelm. In our next decade of ministry, we pray that you will continue to walk alongside of us as we walk with each of these precious souls.

From all of us: Becca, John, Michael, Jenna, David, Roger, Marlon, the Wiggs and the rest of the staff and boys, we wish you a very joyous celebration of the coming of Emmanuel.

Su hermano en Cristo,

Michael Miller  
Executive Director  
The Micah Project