

January 2000 Update

Five boys packed their meager belongings into backpacks and cardboard boxes and moved into the Micah Project this week. For us, it was an answer to many months of prayer as well as the beginning of a challenging new experience.

The boys folded their clothes into the chest-of-drawers and arranged stuffed animals and action-figures on their bookshelves. Each one arranged their blankets and towels and sheets a little differently on their beds to match their personal styles. Excitement and possibility were palpable as the Micah Project transformed from a house into a home.

Yet even from the first night, it was evident that the Micah Project is much more than beds and furnishings and a place to live. Before our first dinner, we gathered around the kitchen table holding hands. The boys thanked our Lord for bringing them into the project; at the same time, they prayed for their families and for the children who are still on the streets here in Honduras.



(Above: the Micah boys, along with Roger and Michael, in their new home!)

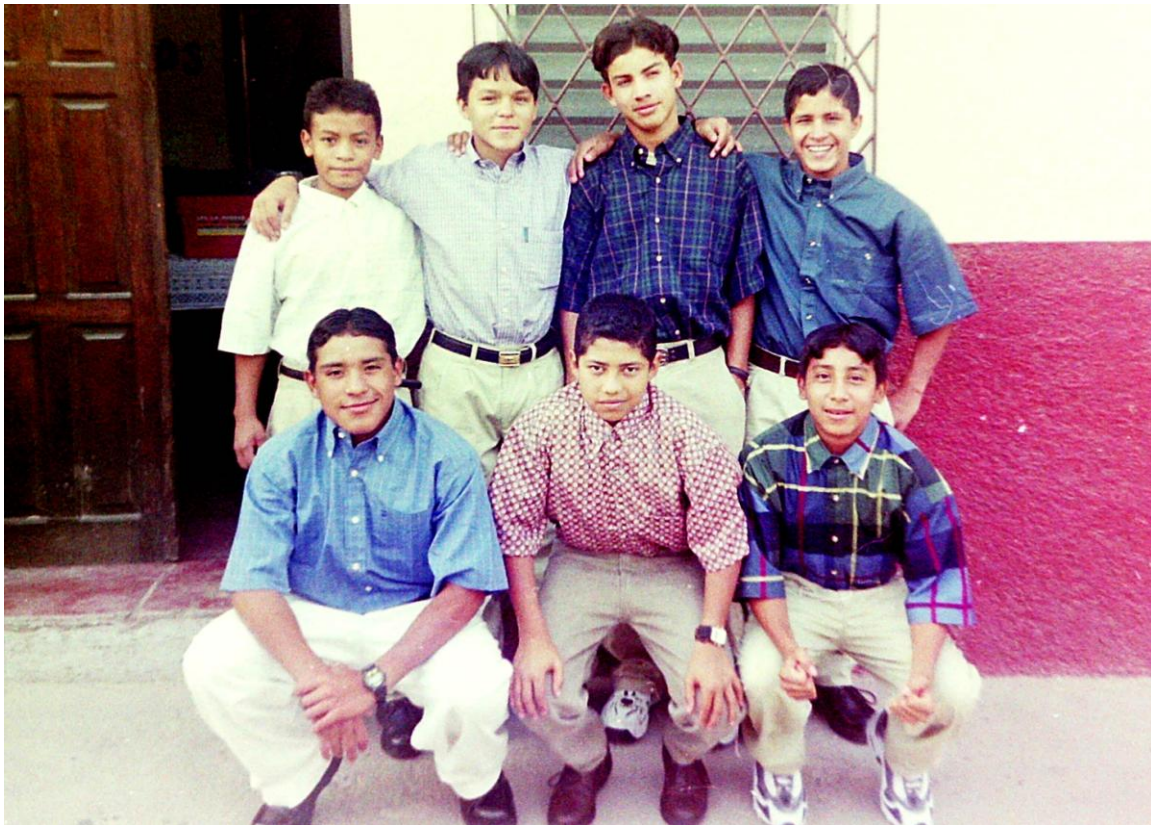
Between bites of beans and fried bananas, we began a tradition that we hope will last as long as the Micah Project itself--a daily time of reflection and discussion. This first time focused on the word "Emmanuel—God with us." We talked about the character of God and what it means to have the Holy Spirit indwelling within us. That led to a conversation about what it means to be light in this world. Marvin talked about a movie he saw recently about a gang member who became a Christian

and started a ministry to other gang members. Roger talked about the importance of asking forgiveness, both from God and from those whom we wrong. At that point, Cristino apologized to Marvin for taking his bike without permission and breaking the chain.

Finally, Jarvin began to talk about his younger brother, Darwin. He had found him on the street earlier in the day, high from sniffing glue. His foot had gotten infected from a cut that went unhealed. Jarvin brought him back to the Micah House and helped him bathe and bandage his foot. But after a few minutes, Darwin left back to the streets and back to his glue.

“I tried to be a light to my brother, but he doesn’t want to change,” said Jarvin with a downcast look. Roger suggested that, while we can try as hard as possible to be a light, sometimes the only way we can help our loved ones is through prayer. We bowed our heads once again and prayed for Jarvin’s brother—that the light of salvation would enter his heart and that he would leave the streets forever.

We ended the meal with a song. “United, in your name we are united. United, we will shine with your peace and love. We will go through this world, singing to our God, and your name will be resplendent in the earth.”



(Above: ready for the future!)

Does this sound like a typical mealtime shared with five teenage boys? As we have dreamed and planned this project over the past months, we have envisioned a place where the boys will grow in their faith daily. In fact, the first goal of the Micah Project reads: "Each project participant will develop a living, active relationship with their Savior Jesus Christ, and express the fruits of this relationship in their family, among their friends, and to those who are suffering and in need." Our first dinner-reflection time showed us that these are not only the goals of the Micah Project founders, but that the boys truly desire to live in this manner.

Last week, as we were preparing to open the house, the boys told us about a homeless man whom they had encountered on the street. They passed him for several days; he did not move from his spot. One day, the boys collected a pair of jeans a couple of shirts that they owned and took them to the man. They tried to talk to him, but he was uncommunicative.

The next day, the boys took the man a blanket and some food. They asked him where he was from, and the man replied that he had no family. After that, they boys took him food daily and tried their best to talk with him.

One day, as we were on an errand with Marvin, we passed the man. Marvin stopped, touched the man's arm, and asked him how he was doing. The man nodded in response, but said nothing. As we walked on, Marvin said to me: "Most people treat men like him as if they were trash. But they're just normal human beings, and God loves them as much as he loves us. Sometimes I wish I could give him all that I had and take his place there on the street."

The profound feeling that Marvin showed toward this man was humbling. Surely his own time on streets was the basis for his compassion to those in need. If his desire to serve is this strong at age fifteen, imagine what can we expect from Marvin as his faith matures!

The Micah Project is a place to foster the boys' developmental and spiritual maturity. It is a tremendous privilege to be a part of this process and to participate in the discipleship of these boys. There is no doubt that God has a special plan for each of these ex-street kids, and it is our belief that He will use the Micah Project to accomplish this plan.

Many of you have also been a part of this process, through your prayers and your financial and moral support of the Micah Project. As we continue to grow as a project, your prayers and support will remain an integral aspect.

Currently, we are in the final stages of purchasing the Micah home. This beautiful facility is truly a gift from our Lord. From the first moment we saw it, we knew that the space would be perfect. Having received approximately \$47,000, another \$19,000 is needed by February 15th in order to pay off the house and avoid paying interest.

We are also asking for support for our monthly operational expenses. These include, among other things, keeping a group of teenage boys clean, clothed, and fed. In February, the Honduran school year begins and we will be providing educational materials for the boys. Other activities are already underway such as soccer training, theater club, and guitar and piano lessons. Additionally, we will soon be planning service projects, workshops, and fieldtrips as part of the Christian leadership training that each boy will receive.

Over lunch today, the Micah staff was discussing how privileged we are to know these incredible kids and how much we wish that our supporters could meet and spend time with each one of them. In the coming weeks and months, we will introduce you to the boys through pictures, biographies, and personal letters.

Would you like to be a part of this exciting journey that we are just beginning to undertake with these boys? Your prayers are vital; they are the foundation of this project. Your financial support is also needed at this time.

If you would like to make a donation to the Micah Project in order to help purchase the home and to provide for operational and educational expenses, you may send a tax-exempt check written to the Central Presbyterian Church. On a separate note, indicate that the donation is for the Micah Project.

The address of the church is as follows:

The Central Presbyterian Church
c/o Randy Mayfield
7700 Davis Dr.
Clayton, MO 63130

You may call Randy Mayfield for more information at (314) 854-0133. You may also send us an e-mail at migsmil@hotmail.com.

Thank you for helping these boys to become the men that God wants them to be.

Dios les bendiga!

Michael Miller

February 2000 Update

The Micah Project's youngest boy, Miguel, is also our boy who is closest to the street and the terror it represents in the lives of thousands of street kids here in Honduras. At twelve, Miguel looks more like a nine or ten year-old, largely due to the malnutrition that comes with never knowing when you will eat your next meal. One would expect Miguel to be taking advantage of the wholesome meals we eat here. To our surprise, he has seemed hesitant to eat, preferring to save his food in the refrigerator, or opting to not serve his plate up at all.

One evening as we were chatting about things, he finally explained, "I don't like to eat. You see if I eat, I'll only get hungry again, but if I just skip eating all together, I don't get as hungry. I don't like to be hungry. It's better not to eat."

After lunch one day last week, Miguel stayed at the table after the others had gotten up and began to tell us about the tactics he used to survive on the streets. He told us about his older brother, who would take him to the "Mayoreo" a huge outdoor market. Here, the dilapidated "chicken buses" would arrive, coming in from the country carrying farmers and the products they sell in the city.

As they walked from stand to stand through the bustling market streets, Miguel would pick up an item and ask the vendor for its price; in the meantime, his brother would swipe items from behind the vendor's back. Miguel recounted that they often left the market as fast as their feet could carry them to avoid the wrath of a vendor who had discovered their scam!



Left: Miguel spent some time in the Covenant House crisis center before joining the Micah Project.

Behind his tough little exterior, we often catch in Miguel's eyes the ghosts of his past. We wonder what exactly it is that haunts his dreams when he goes to sleep every night. What was the abuse, or the neglect, or the extreme poverty that drove him from his home? All that he will tell us about his parents is that he has no desire to see them ever again. Whatever it is that haunts him, we're sure that the horrors through which he has lived in his young life are dark clouds which shade the events of his daily life.



Left: Miguel works on a project in our home-schooling program.

The Micah Project will never be able to give back to these boys their childhood. In many ways, they were thrust into a kind of adulthood from the moment they hit the streets and had to fend for themselves. These boys discovered at a young age that, on the streets of Tegucigalpa, life is cheap, while survival is very, very costly--it is often bought with the price of one's soul.

While the Micah Project cannot erase the horrors that these boys have faced, our prayer is that our project can be a place where each boy finds healing and grace. We believe that the boys can give the dirt and grime of their past to our Savior Jesus Christ, and in return, He will give them a bright new raiment of salvation and peace. At the same time, we pray that the very darkness of their past lives will give each one of them an even greater desire to bring Light into this world.

We find that, day-by-day in the Micah House, these seven teenagers minister to us in special ways. After our worship service last Saturday, Jarvin came into our office.

He said that he was moved by the verses we read in Ephesians about putting away the things of the past, and he wanted us to pray that he would change and begin to live a new life. His desire to grow close to Jesus was an amazing testimony to us. On another occasion last week, we realized that our tennis shoes were missing. We finally discovered that Danilo had taken them, scrubbed them until they were sparkling, and left them on the roof to dry!

The Micah Project and its boys have taught us to find moments of grace in the mundane. Laughingly washing the dishes with the boys (when we end up wetter than the dishes!), going through the daily routine of getting up and getting breakfast made every morning at 5:30, or teaching a new song on the guitar--each activity for us has become a worshipful experience and a way to glorify God.

At other times, the future seems excitingly real in the routine of each day. Last week, we began "Instituto Miqueas" the home-schooling program that we have developed for the boys. The night before our first class, the boys ironed their uniforms with enthusiasm and got their school supplies ready. From the first day of school, they attacked each class with gusto, concentrating in all five hours of classes in a way that seems rare among modern students. In fact, when they finish one of their social studies, reading, English or Bible homework assignments early, they often ask for more homework!

This desire to study and prepare for the future also has its roots in the past. These boys know the consequences of not preparing for the future and are determined not to take the road that will lead them back to the streets. Danilo, who wants to be a pastor, told us after visiting his family last Christmas, "My mom says that I will be "number one" in our family and make everyone proud." We pray that he will achieve the calling that God has given him!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your partnership in this effort to create Christian leaders here in Honduras. Your prayers and support are a vital and integral part of this ministry. Please keep Miguel, Danilo, Jarvin, Olvin, Marvin, David, and Cristino in your daily prayers!

Also, please pray that God would provide the resources so that this ministry can continue to flourish and grow. Currently, we are looking for approximately \$15,000 to finish paying for our beautiful facility, which is almost 80% paid for, thanks to so many gracious donations that we have received. Additionally, we are looking for monthly commitments to cover our operational costs and educational expenses.

We would like to ask you to consider sharing these Micah updates with people who are not yet familiar with the project. We would love to send a project profile and video to those who would like to know more about the Micah Project. It would be a great blessing to us if you would let others know about this project and its boys!

For more information, or to make a donation to the Micah Project, you may contact Randy Mayfield, Missions Director at the Central Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

Mr. Randy Mayfield
The Central Presbyterian Church
7700 Davis Dr.
Clayton, MO 63105
(314) 854-0133 (rbmayf@aol.com)

If you would like to make a donation, please send a tax-exempt check written to The Micah Project, to the address above.

You may also contact us at migsmil@hotmail.com (for Michael) or aminah21@hotmail.com (Aminah). We would love to answer your questions, hear your suggestions, or to know that you are praying for the Micah Project!

It is a privilege to share with you about the work that our Lord is doing in the lives of the Micah Project boys. We hope that their lives will be a blessing to you just as they are a blessing to us.

Your brother in Christ,
Michael Miller

March/April 2000 Update

When he tapped me on the shoulder and asked me for permission to give his testimony to the large crowd, I was surprised. Noel had never before given his testimony in public, and Central Plaza in downtown Tegucigalpa is a daunting place for a debut.

The Parque Central is the heartbeat of any Latin American city. In most places, it contains an old Catholic Church and a statue of the nation's hero. In Tegucigalpa, the beautiful colonial cathedral and the rearing horse of Francisco Morazán give the centuries-old square an historic feel, while the Burger King and Little Ceasars on opposing sides of the cobblestone square lend a touch of modern globalization! Every day, thousands of people pass through the square: students on their way to school, businesspeople and laborers headed to or from work, and vendors selling a variety of wares.

Two weeks ago, the Micah boys took over the stage in the middle of Central Square along with forty enthusiastic Christians from the Central Presbyterian Church in St. Louis. The young people and their leaders came to share in a week of ministry with the Micah boys. Together, they spent the week leading evangelistic services in schools, orphanages, and jails. As we set up our sound equipment in the Central Plaza, people began to gather around the stage wondering what so many "gringos" were up to.



(Above: the boys perform their skit about street kids in the central plaza).

The St. Louis group attracted a growing crowd with their presentation of the gospel through skits, songs, and testimonies. Then, the Micah boys took the stage to perform their skit. Based on a song called "Child of the Street," the skit is a powerful enactment of what each one of our boys has suffered in his past life, complete with the familial abuse, the drugs, the anger and the loneliness that the kids feel. Jarvin, the lead mime, performed with tears rolling down his cheeks, as he undoubtedly thought of his younger brother Darwin and his friends who are still living on the streets of Tegucigalpa. At the same time, Marvin sang the chorus: "I don't need your money, I don't need your pity, what I need is your love."

After the stunning performance, Noel walked up to the microphone. His normally easy-going smile was replaced by a look of intensity that we had never seen in him before. "I was once a street kid in this very Central Plaza. I used drugs; I begged for money; I stole things from people in the square. But Jesus has given me a new life; he has forgiven me the things of my past and has made me new. He has allowed me the chance to get an education, and to live in a place where I can learn to serve Him."

Noel began to cry as he spoke to the crowd in Central Plaza. "I just want to say, if I hurt any of you out there, if I stole anything from you or scared you, that was before I knew Christ. I want to ask for your forgiveness--I hope you will find it in your hearts to forgive me."

The tears of the crowd bore witness to the impact that Noel's testimony had: a street kid publicly asking forgiveness?!? Many Hondurans view street kids as lost boys who are too far-gone in drugs to be helped. Even worse, others view street kids as vermin that litter downtown Tegucigalpa with their presence. But here was a glowing fifteen year-old ex-street kid, proclaiming that Jesus had given him new life, saying that he was deeply sorry for his past.

Last week, as we reflected on the week of service and evangelism, I soon realized that our boys were profoundly changed by the week's events. The boys shared that, as they led people to Christ and shared their testimonies, they felt God's power in their lives in new and amazing ways. Two boys mentioned that, at times, before performing their skit, they felt tired, sweaty and lethargic, but that God's energy and love filled them as soon as they began to minister.

The boys learned of God's power in ministry and expressed a desire to continue to be used by Him. They have decided to begin regular ministry at the juvenile prison, one of the places we visited with the St. Louis group. After our presentations at the prison, one of the incarcerated boys went up to a couple of Micah boys. The boys spoke intently with him for several minutes, and then prayed with him with their arms around him as the guards began to usher us out. Ministering to the juvenile offenders living in squalid and sub-human conditions at the prison (boys who came from very similar backgrounds as the Micah boys), truly created a passion in our boys to continue the work.

As directors of the Micah Project, we stand amazed by what God is doing in and through our boys. Though we try to dream big and pray hard for God to transform our boys and use them as his ministers, He continually surprises us in the ways he works in them!

We hope that you will keep the Micah Project and our boys in your prayers. Pray that God will continue to give them a thirst for ministry, and will open doors so that their ministry may expand. We are certain that your prayers are the underpinnings of the great work that the Lord is doing in the lives of our boys.

The Micah Project is funded solely by private donations. If you would like to make a tax-exempt donation, you may send a check written to the Central Presbyterian Church at the following address:

The Central Presbyterian Church
c/o Mr. Randy Mayfield, Missions Director
7700 Davis Dr.
Clayton, MO 63105
(314) 854-0133

On a separate note, please indicate that the donation is to support the Micah Project. While Central Church graciously accepts and administers donations to the Micah Project, they do not take any fee for this service; thus, 100% of your donation will come directly to the project.

We would like to thank each of you for being a part of the Micah Project team. Your faithfulness in prayer in support is a great encouragement to us. As we see God's ministry through the Micah Project expanding, we want you to know that you are an invaluable part of this work.

On behalf of Marvin, David, Olvin, Noel, Cristino, Danilo, Jarvin, and Miguel...God bless you!

Michael Miller

May 2000 Update

I saw him early on a Sunday morning two weeks ago. I was headed through downtown Tegucigalpa, eager to grab a cup of strong Honduran coffee before church. The normally busy streets were nearly deserted, since many people were sleeping off the traditional Saturday night drinking and partying.

That is why it was easy to spot Don Luis, the father of one of our Micah Project boys. His disheveled and dirty appearance made it obvious that he had spent yet another drunken night on the streets. As I passed two rifle-toting watchmen who were guarding a bank were making fun of the drunken and stumbling man as he vainly tried to communicate some point with them.

I have known Don Luis for six years, having worked with his son for that long, yet on that morning he lurched past me without recognition. Most likely, he was headed to the nearest alcohol vendor or out to beg enough change to buy some guaro, which is the local high potency alcohol.

This man's son was talking to me about his childhood one day in the kitchen of the Micah House. Now a handsome, athletic teenager, this Micah project participant fled his home when he was eight years old. As we talked, he described his father's drunken tirades. Don Luis used to tie him up and beat him bloody with a long pole or his belt. At other times, he burned his little boy's fingers on the skillet in which his grandmother was making tortillas. This usually happened when the father came home to their small wooden shack after a long day of selling wares in the streets. As the abuse became increasingly more drastic, the boy learned to dread the time of day when he could hear his father's footsteps come crunching up the dirt path.

After years of drunken abuse, the boy, along with his brothers and sisters, took to the streets of the capital city. While this teen, who is the youngest of his siblings, has survived his tortured childhood, his older brothers have not fared so well. Both of them are heavy drinkers and drug users, getting a young start to the repetitive cycle of family disintegration.

While I say that this boy has survived his childhood, it is not to say that he has overcome it. Part of our job here at the Micah Project is to help our boys seek healing from the painful scars of abuse and abandonment that only their Savior can bring to them. The scars of the past often surface as anger, self-hate, and, if they are not confronted head-on, a nihilism that gives the boys little hope for the future.

Don Luis' son is one of our most angry kids. It often takes very little for him to fly off the handle and he can stay angry for days over the slightest conflict. When he finally does get over his anger, he refuses to talk about it.

Through much prayer and patience, this boy is beginning to come out of his anger. One day after our classes, I walked into my office to arrange the boys' school papers and found him waiting for me. Having just completed a wonderful day of classes, I was surprised to see him so sullen.

"I don't know what's going on inside me," he lamented. "I feel bored and nervous angry all at the same time."

For years I had prayed for this boy to open up; I now began to pray silently that God would use this talk to begin the healing process.

Carefully, he began to open up about his past. For the first time in the years that I have known him, he admitted his anger toward his father for the drinking, the abuse, and the neglect. He also admitted that he was angry with his mother for leaving his family when he was just a toddler. Tears began to flow as he struggled for words to explain that he was angry with them and yet he loved them--he didn't know what to feel.



Left: the Micah boys work hard during their computer class!

As we talked, it became clear that, for this boy to fully relinquish his anger, he needed to forgive his father and his mother. When I asked him if he was ready to do this, he nodded. Through his tears, he began to pray that God would help him to forgive his parents. With our heads bowed, we also asked God to help this boy accept God's forgiveness in his own life.

A huge burden lifted as we prayed. The boy's countenance was different when we opened our eyes. He looked as if he had just wrestled a giant; at the same time, he looked joyful. I gently told him that this was a beginning. Since we are human, we are not able to forgive in one act, as Jesus forgave us through his sacrifice. This boy will probably have to forgive his parents over and over again, until he can fully conquer the pain and anger that have been a part of his life for so long.

I know that many of you are praying for the Micah Project and our boys. Please know that your prayers are responsible for leading this boy to the point in which he is willing to accept forgiveness and to forgive; to accept the liberation that forgiveness brings to the sons and daughters of God. Your prayers are powerful and effective!

Please keep praying. While the Micah Project consists of school, sports, service opportunities, and an active home life at the project site, it is also so much more. It is the center of a spiritual war--a war between Light and Dark, fought on the battlefield of these boys' souls. Your prayers are pushing the Dark back, and letting the Light enter in.

Three days ago, our youngest boy, who also harbors a lot of seething anger, went to visit his brother, who shines shoes downtown. His brother had exciting news--he had found their father! They went to visit the man, whom our participant had not seen since he was two years old. When they arrived at his house, in which the man was raising a second family, the boy's father was drunk--are you beginning to see why these kids are driven to the streets? It was his first time to see his youngest son from his first family in ten years. It is likely that he did not even remember the next day.

Will the reunion help this thirteen year-old begin to deal with his past? Will it spur him to more anger or to healing? Part of me wants to say, "No! Don't go back there just to be abandoned and rejected all over again!" And yet, another part of me knows that it is only by knowing and naming our brokenness and sin that we can accept our Lord's freedom from it.

"Oh Lord, help this boy on his path to your liberation. And give us the wisdom to know how to help him."

Your prayers will be a part of this boy's victory!

Thank you for joining us in the battle,

Michael Miller
The Micah Project

Post Script: The Micah Project is funded entirely by you! Just as we need your prayers, we also need your financial support in order to help this ministry thrive! Please consider a one-time or ongoing commitment to the Micah Project. You may mail your tax-exempt check to: "The Central Presbyterian Church, c/o Mr. Randy Mayfield, 7700 Davis Dr., Clayton, MO 63105. For more information, contact Randy at (314) 854-0133, or, write me back!

Summer, 2000

165 tough-looking teenagers awaited us as we entered the Honduran national juvenile penitentiary on Easter Sunday. Of all the schools, orphanages, churches, and other sites to which we have traveled for ministry, the eight Micah Boys were most impacted by the juvenile prison. After our first visit, they asked to return on an ongoing basis. Assuredly, our boys see themselves in the incarcerated teens; they must remember their days on the streets using drugs, stealing, and surviving by whatever means possible. They must know that they could have just as easily ended up in the juvenile prison as in the Micah Project.

On Easter Sunday, they did not enter the squalid and inhumane prison to serve time, but rather to preach freedom--the freedom from sin bought so dearly through our Savior's sacrifice. Through powerful dramas and testimonies of how God rescued them from the streets, our boys proclaimed the truth to the hardened young prisoners. And because the boys in the jail also saw themselves in our boys, they saw hope, many of them for the first time, and they listened to our boys with undivided attention. After the presentations, the juveniles approached the Micah boys with many questions. One of them even asked one of our boys to pray with him, which they did, arm-in-arm.



(Above: the Micah guys practice their passion play in the Micah House.)

Is it possible for a street kid, a drug user, a thief, to become a leader in ministry in God's kingdom? That is the miracle that we are seeing in the Micah Project! In Ephesians, Paul writes about "him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." God has shown us the truth of this verse through the Micah Project; although we thought we were dreaming big as we planned the project last year, God has accomplished so much more through the project than we have ever dreamed!

In January of this year, we opened the Micah Project in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in order to provide a Christian residential program for rehabilitated street kids. While there are many orphanages and other programs for street kids in Honduras, we wanted to create a place where the boys could develop the calling that God has placed in their hearts.

Through the faithful support of many friends, God provided us with a beautiful facility in Tegucigalpa that has ample space for all aspects of the Micah Project. It includes a residential area where the boys and the staff live, and an educational area that we use for classes, ministry, and recreational purposes! He also brought to us four Christian Honduran staff members who love the Micah boys as much as we do and are sacrificing much to help raise them.

One of the Micah Project's goals is to provide these boys with the best formal education possible. We have classes every day in the project, in which we integrate Biblical studies with a full academic curriculum. In addition to formal education, we have implemented a Christian leadership program, in which the boys can learn to be servant-leaders through study, reflection, and service opportunities. The prison outreach is one of the early fruits of this program.

Whatever profession or ministry that our boys may choose in the future, it is our goal that they use their talents and skills to glorify God and become leaders in His Kingdom. This is the work of the Micah Project!

God has also been our Provider in the financial aspects of the project as well. While we have little institutional financial support and while we spend very little time fundraising (it is too much fun spending time with the boys!), He has faithfully provided us with the financing we need to run the project in these first months. We would like to thank all of you who have been supporting us both financially and in prayer! You are helping to fertilize a powerful work here in Honduras.

We would also like to ask you to consider supporting the Micah Project on a monthly basis. We have a monthly budget of \$4,000 which includes staff, house upkeep, the boys' living expenses (clothing, food, medicine, etc.), education, activities, service and outreach ministries, our leadership training program and scholarship fund.

Would you like to take an on-going part in this work that God is doing? If so, please fill out the form on the enclosed brochure and send it back to us.

One of our favorite activities is writing about our boys. We will send your stories of the triumphs, of the growing pains, and of the way our Lord is moving in these boys. We think they will be a blessing to you just as they are a blessing to us!

On behalf of the Micah boys and of those whom they will impact here in Honduras, muchas gracias!

Michael Miller
Aminah Al-Attas

August 2000 Update

Two weekends ago, the Micah boys went out into the rugged and sparse terrain of eastern Honduras, a frontier-like land that is famous for knife fights between drunken cowboys. The boys had been invited by a village called Catacamas to hold a vigilia, which is an all-night praise and prayer service. When they got to the village, they began to go door-to-door through the streets, inviting people to the town square for the vigilia.

The boys led the worship for hours that night. Through drama, testimony, and song, they presented the message of Jesus to these people who live their lives in the fields and mountains. At one point on that starry night, as Marvin, our resident singer, was singing about the love of Christ that took him to the cross, a transformation came over him, and he sang more powerfully than ever before. In that moment, many of the weathered faces of the people participating had tears running down their faces.

That night, three people accepted Christ as their Savior. The boys, after the night of worship and praise, and after a five-hour bus drive, came back to Tegucigalpa, tired but excited. Instead of going straight to bed, the boys sat around the table and talked about the event and the people who were saved. They all agreed that the Holy Spirit moved in amazing ways that night.

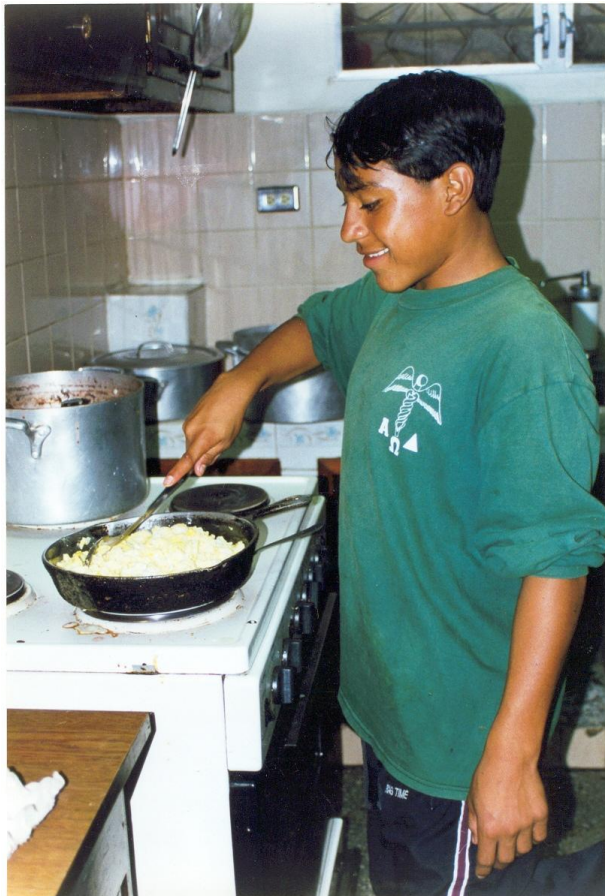
As the boys begin to see evidence of God's power in them and through them, they begin to take steps of incredible growth in their Christian lives. From a new intensity in the study of God words, to seeking forgiveness among each other, to reaching out to neighborhood boys who are not Christians, our boys are bearing fruit in awe-inspiring ways.

The love of God is blooming in the hearts of these eight boys. And, rather than expressing this love in words only, they are developing a sense of compassion that is rare in those who are so young, and, in fact, rare at any age. A couple of weeks ago, two mentally-retarded brothers named Walter and William showed up at our door. They had been in the same organization that most of our boys came from, but had to leave when it closed its group homes. After staying home for a couple of months, both teens took back to the streets. When our boys saw them, they brought them into the house. After feeding and bathing Walter and William, a couple of the Micah boys went to their rooms and came back with their own shoes, pants, and shirts and gave them to the boys so that they could wear them back home.

The fruits of growing faith are not only being expressed on the outside, however. In one or two of our daily Bible studies, we have reflected on the fact that it is hardest to have compassion for the people we live with. And often in the Micah house, there are small conflicts between the boys that grow into bigger ones. One Monday evening, we decided to have a small reflection time to clear the air of a few small conflicts. I told the boys that it would only last an hour. But as we went around the

circle each one opening up any bitterness that he harbored toward the other. One-after-another, we were convicted of things we were doing to hurt others, and one after one we asked and received forgiveness (I say "we" because all of the Micah staff was involved as well!)

That night, not only small conflicts in the house were resolved, but profound healing took place, healing that touched the wells of pain that were dug in the years of household abuse and the years of life on the streets.



Left: David cooks breakfast for the other boys.

Especially powerful was the change in David. Whatever the terror that David had suffered as a child, it had completely bottled him up emotionally. He was not able to cry, to laugh, to get angry, or to love. Whenever something painful would happen, David would only giggle nervously and pretend it wasn't happening. Likewise, whenever one tried to complement David or talk to him about his life, he would shrug off the attempt with a joke or a nervous laugh. If any of our boys needed to feel God's love, it was broken-hearted David.

On this night, several of the boys apologized to David for making him the brunt of their jokes. As we told David how much we appreciated him, he put his head in his hands and began to weep. For the first time in the three years that I have known David, I saw his true person come out, breaking through the solid barrier that he

had constructed to keep the pain safely locked away. When I saw David weep, I knew that our God truly is a God of miracles!

I can honestly say that on that night, I saw the Holy Spirit move in ways that I have never seen before. Our one hour reflection time spanned more than three hours, but none of us were aware of the time. As we prayed, arm-in-arm to end the evening, a power coursed through our bodies and our souls that I personally have never felt before. I admit, that, though I have been a Christian for a long time, the way the Holy Spirit works in our lives is still a mystery to me. Yet I can attest that, on that night in the Micah Project living room, he presented himself in power and in love, and wrought a beautiful new work in our lives.

It is impossible to live and work with these boys and not be changed by them. As I see them read the Bible for the first time, it is igniting in me a new period of growth as well. As I see the Spirit reach out through them to those who do not know Him, it is expanding my own faith in the miraculous ways that he works in his people. I count myself very fortunate to be in the position to be used by God in these boys lives at this time!

At the same time, I feel a tremendous responsibility to share with you what is happening here so that you may also be a part of this profound time of growth. Here at the Micah Project, we know that many of you are giving a part of yourselves to the boys and to the project--through your prayers, through your financial support, and occasionally through visits! It is hard for me to put into words the miracles that I have seen and been a part of through the Micah Project. It is my prayer that God would communicate through these poor lines I write to help you to be a part of what is happening!

People who have visited the Micah house often remark that they feel incredibly comfortable and at home in the house and around the boys. One young man from the diplomatic corps of the American embassy turned to me after spending the evening at the Micah house and said, "you are one lucky man!"

I wish all of you could spend a couple of days with the Micah boys. At the same time, even if you can't be here physically, please know that you are a part of this miracle. We know that through prayer, Christ unites us, and through prayer, mountains are moved. Your prayers are moving mountains here in Honduras!

We would also like to thank you for your financial support that is giving us the physical place and materials where we can undertake this profound spiritual work. You have put food on the table, books on the shelves, sheets on the beds, and clothes on the boys. More importantly, your support allows us to travel all over the country in ministry, and allows us to do all that we need to do to minister to the boys.

You may send future support to the following address:

"The Micah Project"

c/o Mr. Randy Mayfield, Missions Director
The Central Presbyterian Church
St. Louis, MO 63105

For more information, you can contact Randy Mayfield at (314) 854-0133. We would also appreciate your e-mail down here in Honduras. Our e-mail address is migsmil@hotmail.com.

Thank you for sharing this mission with us!

Sincerely,

Michael Miller
The Micah Project.

"He has shown you, oh man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? But to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

September 2000 Update

Harvin is the Micah Project's resident actor. A serious fifteen year-old with a penchant for long, reflective talks about life, Harvin has been in acting classes for four years. Two weeks ago, he won "best actor" in an exposition at the cultural center where he studies acting. Those of you who have visited the Micah Project here in Honduras have surely been regaled by the death scene from Romeo and Juliet or a monologue from Othello (his current favorite is Hamlet!).

It's not hard to understand why Harvin prefers tragedy over comedy in his budding dramatic career. Before he was ten, he had lived more tragedy than the Prince of Denmark and the young Montague combined. I learned of his tragic past more profoundly last week when I took him to northern Honduras to find his parents in order to get their permission to bring him with me to the United States in October for a two-week trip.



(Jarvin acts in a scene about street kids in the Central Plaza of Tegucigalpa.)

During the five hour bus trip, Harvin told me how he had come to Tegucigalpa in the first place. When he was seven, his father decided to start a new family (his third), leaving his mother to fend for herself. A poor, uneducated woman, she moved her five children from hotel-to-hotel in the red light district of San Pedro Sula, Honduras' second-largest city. In these run-down hotels, home to San Pedro's sex and drug industry, Harvin's mom, Yolanda, began to use and peddle drugs herself.

After a couple of years in this environment, Harvin and his younger brother, Darwin, ran away one night and hitchhiked to Tegucigalpa. Quickly absorbed into street life, they begged and robbed to survive, finding cheap solace in yellow glue, which dulls all pain, whether physical or emotional. After living on the streets for many months, Harvin found his way into a center for street children and gave up street life once and for all.



(Above: Harvin (red shirt) stands with his mom before leaving for the streets as a young child.)

Darwin, however, bounced from center-to-center, never staying anywhere for more than a month before heading back out to the streets and to the irresistible fumes of the deadly yellow glue. As our bus pulled into San Pedro Sula last week, Harvin was saying how happy he was that Darwin had been in a drug rehabilitation center for more than a month, and seemed to have given up the yellow glue.

San Pedro Sula is a steamy, sultry city, close enough to the Caribbean coast to receive the full effects of its tropical humidity, but too far away to enjoy its sea breezes. As we walked through the litter-strewn streets of the red-light district to Harvin's mom's most recent hotel, the stench of the sun-baked trash was almost too much to bear. When we finally found the correct hotel, the manager told us that Yolanda was visiting Harvin's younger sister in her orphanage.

On our way to the orphanage, Harvin told me that his mom was jailed for six months last year for selling drugs and, because of the jail time, the government took his two younger sisters away from her. She is allowed to visit them at the orphanage, run by strict nuns, every other Sunday for an hour or two. At the gates of the orphanage, a nun escorted Yolanda and her young daughters to see us. Harvin hugged his mom, a hug which she returned somewhat self-consciously. His sister shook his hand timidly; she was so young when he left home that she barely remembered him.

Harvin talked to his mom about his upcoming trip to the U.S. and counseled his sister to study hard and to pray every day. He told them that thirteen year-old Darwin had given up drugs for several weeks now and was doing well. As we left, his mom pulled a cheap, imitation silver ring off her finger and gave it to Harvin. He began to cry a little as we walked down the street to take a bus to his dad's house. He said he wanted to do something to help his mom, but he didn't know what he could do.

If Harvin's visit with his mom was sad, the five minutes we spent with his dad were angering. His dad stood at the door of his small home while we explained about Harvin's trip. After his dad signed the permission to leave the country, we stood there uncomfortably, wondering what to say. The only information that Harvin's dad volunteered was that Harvin's older brother had disappeared several months ago and the rumor is that he died of AIDS, since several of his "women" had died or were dying of that epidemic. Finally, after another minute of silence, Harvin's dad told us that we had better go, since his neighborhood got deadly after dark. He stiffly shook his son's hand and closed the door.

As we headed back to Tegucigalpa the next day, I marveled at Harvin's strength. I realized that for our boys, their tragedy did not end when they were rescued from the street. For most of them, they can only stand as witnesses while poverty continues to buffet their families with blow-after-blow. It is easy to understand why most of them go through times of sadness and depression and anger. They are dealing with so many issues, not only about the past, but about present pain and suffering.

I consider it a miracle that God has done so much in our boys' lives despite their situations. The majority of them that they are not only surviving, but are growing so much in their faith that they are able to reach out to others who are hurting. They are learning how to minister in our frequent outings to churches, orphanages, and schools, but more importantly they are witnessing on a daily basis in own

neighborhood and among their friends. Harvin and the other boys in the Micah Project are using the healing that God has brought them as the foundation of their blossoming ministry.

That is not to say that they have stopped hurting. When we got off the bus after a long day's trip back to Tegucigalpa from San Pedro Sula, we ran into Harvin's brother Darwin. He was with a group of other street kids, and he was so high on yellow glue that I don't even think he recognized Harvin. Harvin told Darwin that he had just told their mom that he was off the streets and off drugs. Darwin, with a heavy-lidded and sheepish shrug, just took another deep breath in his little bottle of glue.

When Harvin goes to the United States in October, many of you will see him perform a drama called Niños de la Calle, "Street Kids." This tragic drama is more autobiographical and perhaps much harder to perform for Harvin than any work by Shakespeare. If you see tears rolling down Harvin's face, be assured that it is no dramatic effect learned in theater classes; the tears are real tears for his past, for his brother Darwin who is slowly killing himself on the streets, for his mom Yolanda, for his sisters who are locked away in the orphanage, and for the lack of love shown by his distant father.

I hope many of you will get to meet Harvin, Marvin, and German when we are in the States. We will be in Houston from October 1 through October 6 and in St. Louis from the 6th to the 20th (with a possible weekend in Chicago.) We will be at the Missions Conference of the Central Presbyterian Church on the weekend of October 15-16. Harvin and Marvin are prepared to share about the miraculous first year of the Micah Project, as well as their goals for the future. You won't want to miss it!

We are so grateful for your ongoing support of the Micah Project. God is beginning to expand our vision for ministry here in Honduras and to open new doors. In November, which is the first month of "summer" vacation for Honduran schools, the Micah boys will begin a three month service project in an orphanage, church, or other project providing service to those in need. We are praying that this opportunity to serve on a long-term basis in a project will continue to grow fruits of compassion, service, sacrifice, and leadership in the boys hearts. We also pray that there witness will be powerful to all those to whom they reach out in these ministries.

We hope and pray that you will continue to walk with us as we work for the advancement of our Lord's kingdom here in Honduras. If you would like to help the Micah Project meet our \$4,000 monthly budget, you may write a check to "The Micah Project". Please send it to the following address:

The Central Presbyterian Church
c/o Mr. Randy Mayfield,
Director, World Missions and Outreach

7700 Davis Dr.
Clayton, MO 63105

To contact Randy, please call (314) 854-0133.

We hope to see many of you in October!

May God richly bless you! Please know that we pray for you often at the Micah Project!

Your brother in our Lord,
Michael Miller