



## The Battle Belongs to the Lord Micah Project October 2010 Update

If there was ever a time that I've understood what the apostle Paul meant when he writes about being "hard pressed on every side," it would be the last few months of ministry here in Tegucigalpa. As missionaries who have been called to minister to very broken lives, we expect our share of battles...but sometimes they threaten to overwhelm us! Lately those battles have been both outside and within the walls of the Micah Project. Outside our walls, we have witnessed a murder and heard about several others just blocks from the Micah House. We have been robbed (most recently at gunpoint on the steps of our apartment building), and our barrio has gotten to the point that whenever we step out of the door of the Micah House we fear for our safety.



Inside the Micah House, it has been a tough few months of ministry as well. Half of the boys that currently live in the Micah House have been off the streets for less than two years, and all of the spiritual, emotional and physical degradation that they lived on the streets still comes back to haunt them. One Sunday in early October, when our on-duty person was still sleeping, someone inadvertently left the front door of the Micah House unlocked. Four of our youngest and most addicted boys used that opportunity to slip out of the Micah House and, within thirty minutes, they were inhaling yellow glue in the outdoor market.

Instead of going to church that morning, we found ourselves in a dark alleyway in the market, convincing them to leave their glue bottles behind and come back to the house...which they all thankfully did. One of our little ones sometimes has periods of rage or anguish so intense that they give him epileptic-like seizures. He is a boy that can be incredibly sweet and loving, but can also make our whole house miserable and on-edge when he has a bad day. Perhaps the hardest part of the last couple months, though, is that two of our young men that left the house have not come back: they let addiction and the temptations of street life consume them once again.

Sometimes in the midst of all these battles it seems to us that evil is winning wherever our eyes can see. Recently, this sensation was so strong that I spent a whole day crying the words of Psalm 10:

*Why, Oh Lord, do you stand far off?*

*Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? (vs. 1)*

*In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,*

*who are caught in the schemes he devises. (vs. 2)*

*He lies in wait like a lion in cover;*

*he lies in wait to catch the helpless;*

*he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net. (vs 9)*

*His victims are crushed, they collapse;*

*they fall under his strength. (vs 10)*

*He says to himself, "God has forgotten;*

*he covers his face and never sees." (vs 11)*

When the evil one who prowls like a roaring lion seems to be winning too many victories, I admit that sometimes I let a spirit of discouragement take over in my life. When Axel walks out of our front door for the third time in a year, choosing the garbage of street life over the abundant life we offer, we wonder if what we are doing is really making any difference at all. We let the

discouragement trick us into thinking: why is *my* ministry not producing fruit, why do *I* have to suffer so much, why aren't *my* boys thriving? In these times, it becomes about me and my anger that my ministry isn't living up to my expectations. And when that happens, I forget to cry with the composer of Psalm 10, "*Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless.*" (vs 12)

Thankfully, our patient heavenly Father reminds me again and again that these are His boys, this is His ministry, and, as David said to Goliath, "the battle is the LORD'S". Only when I realize that this is about Him, not me, can I open my clenched hands and give this entire ministry...both the good and the bad moments...to Him. We can preach, teach and live out the gospel of salvation before them on a daily basis, but only He can save them.

This past Sunday, our heavenly Father reminded us in a powerful way that these are His boys. After church, we gathered with some of our church members around a little stone pool on a mountaintop just outside of Tegucigalpa. Six of our boys lined up by the pool...Yeison, Joel, Miguel, Nelson, Axelito and Miguelito (followed later by Luis and Maicol Coban, twins that spend most of their days at Micah).



One-by-one, they entered the water and took the hand of the pastor of the church. To each one, he asked, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ, the son of God, died on the cross to save your sins and rose from the grave three days later?" Each one of them looked at the pastor and answered "yes." He lowered them into the water, burying them with Jesus through baptism into death, and raising them to new and eternal life in Christ! Each time they came out of the water, the witnesses standing around the stone pool broke into songs of praise. "*You are stronger, You are stronger, sin is broken, You have saved me...it is written, Christ is risen...Jesus you are Lord of all...*" This is the song we sang as the pastor lifted Nelson out of the water.

Yes, He *is* stronger! He may wage the battle in a manner and time frame that we are not comfortable with, but in the end, He is the true champion! Our two smallest, most addicted young men, Miguel Angel and Axelito, who have only been off the streets since March, recently reminded me of this incredible truth. One of our high school seniors, Bryan Chavez, took them down to the Timothy House a few weeks ago to help them record a new song. They worked on it for hours, tweaking the lyrics and recording them over their favorite beat. They raced back up to the Micah House when they were finished to share the new song with us. It is called *Juntos Podemos...Together we can do it.*

*Together we can do it...all of us as brothers must reach out our hands, because together we can do it.  
I know it's not easy...drugs want to destroy me  
The Enemy wants to see me fall...wants to see me move backwards and downwards.  
But I have asked the Lord that He work in my heart and deliver me from temptation.  
Listen to my cry, I ask of you Lord  
Guide my life on your path...you are my destiny.*



One of the authors of this song, little Miguel Angel, came into my office just after waking up this Tuesday, only two days after his baptism. "I had a strange dream last night, Michael. I dreamed that I escaped back out to the streets, and you found me in the market using yellow glue. You told me that if I didn't come back to the Micah House, I would lose the blessing of my baptism." While

the theology of this new little Christian is a bit suspect, I was so glad that he was already beginning to make the mental separation between his old life on the streets and his new life in Christ!

I have to admit that, seeing so many of our boys make a commitment to Christ, and making a public testimony to that commitment through their baptism, has had me walking about ten feet off the ground all week long! It has been a huge encouragement and blessing. All of us who work at Micah realize that the baptism of our boys on Sunday was not the end, though: not the final victory in their lives. There will be more hard days...more periods of discouragement when the enemy sneers at us in glee as he says "nothing will shake me" (Psalm 10:6). But when we witness these boys...these boys that have been broken and trampled upon by so much evil...claim salvation as their own, we remember in our hearts that "victory rests with the Lord" (Proverbs 21:31).

In the midst of battles lost and won, we are so thankful for you all who are a constant source of encouragement to us. Last week, Sue Hays, one of our sisters in Christ from Central Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, sent me an email in which all the ladies in her discipleship group, the Elizabeth circle, sent us words of encouragement. One of them wrote: "Dear one, our love and thoughts are with you. God loves and cares for you so much. His arms enfold you and hug you." Emails like that encourage us, inspire us, and renew our strength on the days when our courage flags.

Even as you all bless with us with your love, your words of encouragement, your financial support, and your visits to Honduras, we pray that the baptism of our boys this Sunday would be a blessing to you! God is answering your prayers for these young lives. He is using you to accomplish His purposes here in Honduras!

Muchas gracias!

Su hermano en Cristo,

Michael