



YWAM MEDELLIN

April 2009

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A Note from Our Director: Difficult Times

One of the most common words we hear these days is CRISIS. It's a word that for some is a synonym for panic, desperation, fear, anguish, and it has robbed many of sleep. The media has kept it as a front-page headline around the world, but it has only been considered from an economic perspective.

The crisis should not be limited only to that point of view; the greatest crisis in the world is a moral crisis. It concerns the human heart. There are more moral problems than economic; there are more people with spiritual problems than there are naked or hungry, more desperate souls than peaceful, more depression than happiness, more dysfunctional families than healthy ones. The greatest crisis of humanity is that we are far from our GOD.

We are grateful to God that even in the face of this financial crisis, we are moving forward. I'm so happy to know that the kingdom of heaven is not in crisis; He is faithful, and every day we see his grace.

A New Vision for the Street

Hi, we're Andreas & Sarah, we just married last year in Switzerland, and have recently arrived in Medellin to start working with street children. I have been working with the ministry here in Medellin for several years, but my wife is just now getting to know it in person. Therefore we've decided to work here in the children's homes to gain more experience in working with Children at Risk.



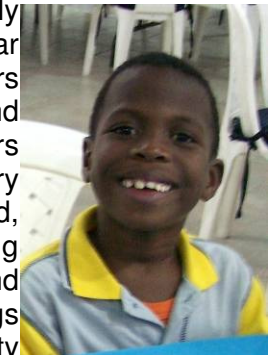
We also plan to do a short practicum with Stevan Bartel in Bogota, who has many years of experience in working with street-children. Next year (2010), we hope to start with an open house and then continue the process with the children in homes modeled on the family concept. We will open up our own home to start and we pray that God will bless us with many more families so that we can continue rescuing more children from the dangers of the streets.

Bethel Boys' Home

Luis Eduardo is the newest child in the ministry, having arrived last May. He was born in the Choco (northwestern Colombia), which has always been a very under-developed and oppressed area. A friend of ours found him two years ago, in total neglect and so malnourished that it took him a month in hospital and another month attending a nutritional clinic to recover.



He turns 8 this month, but is only about the size of a 4 or 5 year old. His cognitive and fine motors skills, as well as his social and emotional responses, are years behind. The things that every good parent does with their child, such as singing songs, playing little games, caressing and caring, disciplining in love, things that stimulate learning, dexterity and bonding, were neglected in Luis's early years.



We have begun the processes of socialization, education, counseling, discipline, and care. He can be rather aggressive, rude, or disconnected at times, but we also catch many glimpses of a little boy seeking affection and approval, looking to make us and others laugh, and establish friendships. We're happy to have him with us and we look forward to the ways that God will allow us to share his love and healing in Luis Eduardo's life.

Aura, a Special Girl

Aura is a young girl of 13 who we met two years ago during a health outreach in her town. Upon medical examination it was discovered that she had a large tumor that was invading the right side of her lower jaw which was further complicated by a blood-vessel disorder. She was living with her grandparents, so at the doctor's recommendation we asked their permission to bring her back with us to Medellin.



She came to live in the staff house while we looked into getting her treatment, a process which took the entire year. It was hard for her to be away from her family and friends, and it was frustrating for us that the hospitals wouldn't take her because of the delicacy of the surgery and problems with her identity papers, as her family had been displaced. We were grateful when, after much hard work by Alba, our girls' home director, Aura was admitted for the surgery in December.

Her Aunt came to Medellin to accompany and comfort her during the weeks of tests and surgeries. We could see in her face that it was a very difficult time for her, as the process was painful and involved a serious risk of haemorrhaging. But by God's grace the surgeries went smoothly and Aura was happy to be well and thrilled to finally return home.

Community Outreach, a Message of Forgiveness



From the 19-23 of February we held our first Medical & Community Outreach of the year in Uré, a town that has suffered greatly at the hands of the armed groups. We

had a fairly small team this time, but were blessed with health professionals attending almost a thousand patients total between medical consultations, dentistry, blood work, and pharmacy. Besides medicine, we also served the community with counseling, clothing, legal advice, agronomy, haircuts and lice treatment, workshops, etc. In meeting these needs, we had the opportunity to share God's love and gospel with them.

A key element of the outreach is to open a space for those dealing with loss, grief, and rage from the injustices they have suffered. We listen to their stories, share their hurt and tears, and invite them to begin the process of forgiveness. **One woman had lost a son, tortured and killed by an armed group**, who also beat his younger brother and left him handicapped. Between sobs she kept asking, "How can you forgive that? How can I forgive what they did to my sons?" All words feel like they ring so hollow. Another elderly woman had lost both parents and 6 siblings in a massacre when she was just 17, and had already chosen to forgive in her heart, but decided to make a public witness of it during a peace ceremony the final night.



In preparing some scriptures to share with the circle of victims who came, I was struck again by the close relation of divine love and forgiveness. Forgiveness can seem like a difficult and nearly offensive thing to preach. But this is certainly a key, recognizing that just as human love is incapable of loving an enemy, so our sense of forgiveness just isn't sufficient; we may be able to let go of some of the pain, free ourselves from the emotional chains, find joy again, but without drawing on God's grace I don't think we can ever come to know full peace and reconciliation. Our forgiveness is only possible by participating in Christ's forgiveness, and only in recognizing it as an expression of his love--even for our enemies.

I keep finding a deeper and deeper appreciation for the ways that God allows us to participate in his divine nature, and calls us to be his true sons and to be perfect, as he is perfect. If only we would enter into it more fully and more faithfully, and help the broken ones to receive it.

Donations - Please make your cheque out to "YWAM" and mail it to:

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