The Little Children are Coming to Him

March 12, 2007

Charming little Angel

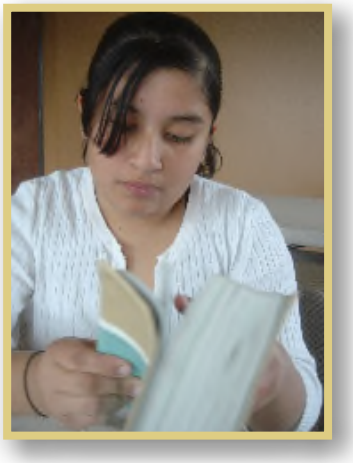
Almost immediately after getting to know him, it is clear to see that Angel is anything but angelic. With a strong will and a lot of energy, this eight year old boy often makes youth group and Sunday school much more interesting (and difficult). But Angel secretly has a soft heart. At first it seemed like our messages weren't getting through to him. When we talked in youth group or Sunday school about patience, pride, or obedience, instead of listening, Angel was consistently interrupting the class to share his insights with long stories about the movie he recently saw, or how he beat up the school bully. He tirelessly interrupts the discussions with talking, distracting movements and comments, and a lot of bathroom breaks! We are often times worn out by him. However, the other night after youth group, Maria*, Angel's mom, went up to Nathaniel and said, "thank you for what you share with Angel. I just want you to know that whatever you teach him to do, he tells me about it and then practices it all week. If you talk to him about obeying his parents, he does, and if you challenge him not to lie, he takes that very seriously and doesn't lie to us. Now, can you please tell him to clean his room!" Suddenly all of our efforts and frustrations melted away and we are now able to see that even though Angel doesn't always show it, we are getting through to him, but much more importantly, the gospel is reaching his heart and sinking in.

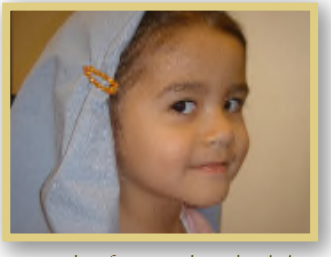
So much of what we do for Mision Vida Nueva is working with the children. Nathaniel leads Saturday night youth group, high school Sunday school, and is working on mentoring two of the high school boys. Alicia teaches Sunday school to the middle elementary aged children and is mentoring two of the jr. high girls, as well as one of the younger ones. Working with the children is not only training up Christian children, but helping to heal the wounds that so many of these families have.

Miguel* seems like a normal, well-adjusted teen-age boy. He is athletic, mildly shy, and keeps his hair a little long. At first glance, you would never guess that his home life is a living nightmare. On top of everything else, his father comes and goes at all hours of the day and night leaving his family wondering where he is, and on the rare occasion that he is home, he is emotionally absent. Miguel doesn't know what it means to have a man in his life who cares about him. His mother is faithful in bringing them to youth group where he is able to hear Nathaniel's messages and has been responding well to them. The two also get to play soccer together on Friday nights during their club games. The other night after getting Miguel's email address, Nathaniel came home late and tired, but shot him a quick email. Miguel immediately responded with, "I knew you would email me tonight!" Finally, someone in his life who isn't letting him down. Pray for Nathaniel as he is going to begin mentoring Miguel during these formative years and show him what it means to have a male role model.

Vivian*, like her two younger siblings, was born out of wedlock to teenage parents. Now ten years old, Vivian has yet to see her parents get married. They own a house, live together, and are on all outward appearances a happy family. But the fact that her Christian parents are not married has put a strain on the family, and the children often ask their dad when he will marry their mom. Alicia has been asked to mentor Vivian and another friend, specifically about purity. Vivian's mom, in seeing the desperation of their situation, wants her daughter to learn at a young age what it means to stay pure until marriage. Please pray for Vivian's parents that they will get married soon, and for Alicia that she would have the right words to say to Vivian and the other two girls she is mentoring. Please pray that their hearts would be soft and molded in the ways the Lord wants them to be.

For Sunday school, we have been using a communicant member's curriculum based on the shorter catechism. Often times when teaching this course both to the high school and elementary students, we feel frustrated and discouraged that these children are just not understanding the complexities of what is being taught. (Sometimes we even have a hard time understanding it!) But the other day, our pastor shared with us that he overheard his children, both of whom are in our classes, discussing the offices of Christ! These ten and twelve year olds were able to explain that Jesus is a prophet, priest, and king in a way that their father wasn't able to at their age. Once again we are able to see that even when we don't have faith that our words are being heard or understood, the Lord is working through our flawed mouths and using us to share the most important message to this generation of covenant children.





Dressed up for a Sunday school play!

We are truly honored to aid in these children's spiritual lives. It is a joy to watch them grow in their faith and understanding of who Jesus is as their savior. Thank you so much for allowing us to be here. We are so thankful for your support both in prayer and financially. We are confident that this is where the Lord has placed us, and you are helping to keep us here. Thank you for letting us bring the little children closer to Christ.

With great sincerity and thankfulness,

Nathaniel and Alicia Gutierrez
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*Out of respect for their privacy, the names in this letter have been changed.

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www.mtwla.org/people/ngutierrez.htm