

# *Gutierrez ministry update*



*December 2008*

Every time I drove by him, I was thankful that I did not live his life. Sitting out in the hot sun day after day, trying to make a few dollars by selling some flowers was not my idea of a great career. But, he did have nice flowers, so through buying from him on occasion, Jorge and I struck up a friendship. What started out casually, turned into me bringing him biblical materials in Spanish, buying him an MP3 player so he could listen to the sermons and songs I loaded on there for him, and bringing him food and drinks on the particularly hot days, or giving him a sweatshirt on the cold ones. His face would light up and he would jump out of his seat whenever he saw my car pull up, eager for the Christian materials that I was bringing him. He proudly told other pastors that he already had a pastor, one who came to visit him at work, and refused to talk to other religious people who would try to woo him. I was thankful for the opportunity to be able to shine some light in his otherwise dark world, but had little faith that his heart was being transformed.

And then one day I got a phone call. It was Jorge calling to say good-bye. His boss decided to transfer him to a different city about 30 miles away from Escondido. Through a very heartfelt and sincere good-bye, Jorge thanked me again and again for the small ways that I had cared about him, and began to summarize the various sermons I had given him and how meaningful they had been to him. His tone was so sincere, in fact, that it was hard for me not to wonder if he was dying. But he assured me that he was alright, just very thankful. We said our good-byes, and as I hung up, I felt immensely encouraged. No, Jorge has never made a profession of faith, that I am aware of, but the seed is there. I don't know why the Lord picked me for this task, but I am grateful, and pray that whatever was planted in Jorge's heart will resurface later in life as a relationship with Christ.

A week or so after Jorge called to say good-bye, we got another phone call. This time it was from our foster children's social worker. It was the dreaded call, informing us that in a week, two of our foster children would leave us to be returned to their mother. With tears we remembered how seasoned foster parents had told us to be prepared never to see the children again. We thought back to the catechisms we had taught these children, the bible stories they now knew so well, and the prayers of our little 5 year old girl asking Jesus to be in her heart, calling him her "other daddy". What would become of this faith?



A few days later, I could not believe what I heard. Alicia called me so excited that I could barely understand her when she said, "I invited Anna to come to church and she said yes!" That Sunday, when we found ourselves sitting next to Anna and her two children in church, and later that afternoon having lunch all together, we could do nothing but praise the Lord for his mercy and generosity toward us. Since that day, we have seen Anna return to church again and invite a friend as well!

What started as a prayer request for us to be able to see these children once in a while has turned into us seeing them a few times a week, including Sundays at church. Anna is intentionally exposing her children to God's word, and hopefully gleaned from the services as well. On top of that, Anna and Alicia have created a wonderful friendship. Anna is very open about her life, her struggles, and her small victories, and Alicia is excited that she is able to share her life with Anna. It is hard not to notice how strange the circumstances were that brought these two together, but it is equally as hard not to see how much this was the Lord's doing and that it is His hand that is at work here. Please pray with us for Anna that she would come to know Christ as her savior, and that she would continue to do well and be able to raise her children as Christians.

Although neither of these people have been directly related to our church work, we have been able to use our church as a means of witnessing to both of them. Through giving Jorge the Mision Vida Nueva (MVN) sermons to listen to, and inviting Anna to MVN, we have seen how the Lord is using this church as a way of affecting the most unexpected people in our lives. Thank you for allowing us to be here in Escondido, not only working in MVN, but also reaching out to the community around us. Please continue to pray for us as we serve down here, and as our hearts and minds are starting to focus more and more on the work we have ahead of us in Peru.

We recently found out that our account is low, and we are asking you to consider raising your support, or begin giving and partnering with us financially. Through your generous gifts, we are able to continue serving at MVN, and helping other unexpected people be introduced to Christ. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas, and thank you again for your interest and investment in our ministry.

Gratefully,

Nathaniel and Alicia Gutierrez



P.S. We also wanted to update you on sweet Nadia, the young girl from Huanta, Peru with Leukemia. Although the doctors did all that they could, the Leukemia had taken over too much of her body, and Nadia went to be with her Lord on November 14th. Her young life, and her death, were a wonderful testimony to those around her, and many were touched by the memorial service held for her. Thank you for your prayers and financial gifts for Nadia. Please continue to pray for those who she left behind, and that her life of faithful service to her Father would lead others down the same path.

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