CrossWay International

September 2016

Softening Hearts in the Hospital

One of the highlights of our last trip to Nicaragua with the team from Chantilly Bible Church was our visit to the hospital. No, not because someone on the team was hurt, but because we had the privilege to visit those in need. We were warmly welcomed by the staff and patients, as on our earlier visits. It was difficult for us to see the physical needs of the hospital and patients, but we were there to give comfort and to help address the spiritual needs. (We were able to go to these hospitals also because of the care that our Field Director, Francisco, and Pastor Urrutia have already been giving.)

In the first hospital room our team entered, for instance, we saw an I.V. bag, that was hanging from a light fixture on a clothes hanger above one of the patients. The room lacked the kind of equipment commonly found in hospitals we would see here in the USA. But in spite of this lack, the hospital staff was dedicated to the patients' care.

My small group (we had divided into 4 teams) had Francisco to interpret, my son, Jason, to teach a short easy song in Spanish, and a couple of others from our team to silently pray. After the song, I took a few minutes to share the gospel and clearly laid out what God was asking them to do to go to heaven or have eternal life . I led them in a short conversation with the Lord and then asked, "If, today, this is the first time you have heard or understood this message, that going to heaven is a free gift and only through faith in Christ, and not by a religion or our good works, let me ask you to respond by putting your hand up and then putting it down." That night, eight of those present indicated they had trusted in Christ alone in that room.

Before leaving this room, an older patient, who was yellow from jaundice and with a mouth full of blood, asked me to pray for him before leaving. I was told he did not have long to live. He confirmed that he had trusted in Christ that night, with a big smile on his face, and I did what I could to comfort his fears and reassure him he would see Jesus soon, where there is no pain or tears. Again, he smiled broadly and nodded. His wife was with him and all were filled with the comfort and joy that only God can give.

The next room we went to was the ICU room with several patients in a coma. Again, their family members sat or stood nearby. We went through our normal presentation and this time, 4 of the 6 family members who were present, responded to the gospel. I felt that maybe the other two may not have understood clearly what was said, so I gave again a short invitation and said, "Are you sure there is no one else tonight that would like to trust in Christ alone for the forgiveness of all their sins?" And behind me, I heard a voice in the hall, a man who had been listening in, who said with enthusiasm, "Yes, I do, I do."

This was just one successful evangelistic event for our team from Virginia. Showing love to those who are truly hurting is an easy way to soften hearts for the Gospel … and it works well. All in all, from the various activities of this mission trip, we had many who heard and responded to the gospel of grace and indicated they had trusted in Christ alone for their salvation. Working as a net, and casting it widely, God provided a boatload of fish through His grace and our team's efforts. Thank you, too, for your vital prayers and support.

Dean Chollar

Dean and Francisco giving words of comfort

Softening Hearts for the Gospel

The team from Virginia that came on this mission trip numbered 11 members. With my son, Jason, and Don, a friend with a law enforcement background, (and me), we all totaled 14.

It was the first time we had taken such a large number to stay at our recently finished Training Center in the picturesque area of Laguna de Apoya. (Since I'm blind, I have to take the word of those around me that it's picturesque. ☺) The mango trees were bearing their fruit, the Mombacho volcano was clearly visible off of the balcony, and you would awake to the singing of exotic birds in the morning.

John Ramira, who headed up the Virginia team, had prepared his team well to help soften hearts for the Gospel. They had brought a ton of sports equipment to engage the young people, and prepared their skits and testimonies to share, and songs to sing in Spanish. And we had hot dogs to eat for each full day of activities for the week. We were able to share this presentation in 5 communities.

John's slack-rope illustration was always a big hit. He would walk on a 2 inch band of material suspended 3 feet off the ground, and give an illustration of how each person had to trust in Christ to be saved. And the singing was always a big hit with the Latin culture. After all these various activities, the time came to persuade those present to respond to the Gospel invitation. This normally fell on my shoulders, but since my son, Jason was there, he did this several times in my place. All in all, we had just over 180 who responded to the Gospel on this mission trip.

It all worked beautifully. The strategy was simple. The team showed love and softened hearts by engaging the young people and their parents in various ways. And then we would share clearly the Gospel and invite them to trust in Christ alone for their salvation, a message that most had never heard before. Well done, team from Virginia!

The Ministry Team - Nicaragua

Enjoying the beauty of Nicaragua from the Training Center

Skits catch attention and tell of the Gospel in fun ways

John Ramira illustrates trusting in Christ with the Slack-Rope

Kids enjoy trying the Slack-Rope

Music, Dancing and Games were always a hit with the kids in Nicaragua

Praise

- The many who heard the Gospel and trusted in Christ in Nicaragua
- Many of our ministries moving to a self-sustaining position
- The completion of several water projects in Kenya in the last few months

Prayer

- More Bibles to take to the mission field (We can provide these for $5 each.)
- Wisdom to discern God's leading in some difficult decisions
- More faith to make concrete steps to move forward in all of our active countries

Softening Hearts with Handcuffs?

Don MacDiarmid, an old childhood friend of mine, also made this trip. Don says of himself, "I was the kind of kid that most parents didn't want their children to hang around with." But he later in life came to believe in Christ and is now walking with the Lord. He also has a law enforcement background and came on this trip to investigate possibilities of teaching Training Sessions to police officers in Nicaragua. While on this trip, he visited the police station with Francisco, and shared the Gospel with several officers, who then trusted in Christ. They also discussed with the officials the possibility of returning to do some training. The officials were very open to this, and we plan to return on another mission trip. Besides purchasing and giving out some badly needed handcuffs to some of the officers, Don also provided some oversight for the safety of our team. And I, myself, really enjoyed all of his personal help and attention. It was very reassuring having him along.

- Dean

Don MacDiarmid and New Believer

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