

SermonIndex Announcements :: MISSION TRIP: Mexico Orphanages

MISSION TRIP: Mexico Orphanages - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/17 19:43

MISSION TRIP: Mexico Orphanages

I was blessed by God to be involved in an one-day mission trip to Mexico with some other brothers and sisters from the Calvary Chapel in Escondido (www.ccesco.com). We left at 4am in the morning and got back at 12pm the same night. Even though it was a long day it was well worth it and there was an supernatural amount of energy given to us to accomplish Gods work that He wanted to do.

We brought supplies and food to 2 orphanages. One orphanage we brought most of the food to and cooked lots of pancakes for all the small orphan boys that were there. I was able to play basketball with some of them and we played a big game of soccer afterwards in which the kids won of course.

It broke my heart to realize all these little boys didnt have any parents and to see the conditions of the facilities was sad because it was so run down. But so many of the boys were smiling I believe because of Gods love being shown to them and in them.

After serving at this location we went to eat at a neat little taco place and then took the hour drive to get to an orphanage for disabled children in the middle of the hills in a beautiful scenic valley.

But it totally broke my heart when I got there and was serving these severely disabled kids. We had to literally change their diapers.. walk them.. feed them.. they could barely do anything on their own and they were in their mid-teens and one was 26 years old! one year older then me.

I am still really letting this experience soak into my soul and I have learnt many spiritual lessons.. I will share some soon in the next few days as I meditate on it more.

You can see an whole collection of photos from the mission trip here!! enjoy (p.s. if you have any questions I would love to answer them).

Mission Trip Pictures

Re: MISSION TRIP: Mexico Orphanages - posted by Yodi (), on: 2005/1/17 20:57

FINALLY! I've been patiently waiting for Greg to start this topic so I could add just the awesome things God did and showed me personally.

Like Greg said, we first went to an all boy's orphanage. The place wasn't that much different from when I used to go several years ago when I was in high school. I tried brushing up on my Spanish the day before but... well, I wasn't able to communicate much. We made the boys pancakes for breakfast and then played futbol with them. Hanging out with the boys reminded me a bit of my trip to the Ukraine. It's crazy how there's orphans all over the world, and yet God cares for them all. We didn't seem to be there long and it was time to go. I made the mistake of making my way over to 2 boys I had met and saying, "Adios. Hasta luego." (Good-bye. So long.) I started walking away and they ran over to me and clung to me calling me mama. Oh man. That was hard. I wanted to say, "Not mom. I'm your sister." But the recent Russian I've been learning was invading my foreign language skills. I knew how to say sister in Russian, but not in Spanish. Greg helped peel the boys off me once, and then I had to get help again. I won't ever do that again. I'll just secretly leave next time, if there's a next time. The boys were cute.

But the ranch where the handicapped "kids" lived... that was definitely... heart breaking and pretty much life changing to an extent. I wish I got some pictures of the girls! Greg posted one up of a girl I got to feed. There's so many girls I met and so many stories I could tell, but the one that finally broke my heart was named Nilse. Jessica and I were told to go help put the "girls" to bed after dinner. So a volunteer took me into Nilse's room to change her diaper and get her into her pajamas. She had this huge black bump on her forehead that was a result of her constantly hitting her head on things. I wished so bad that we could get her a special helmet that would help her not damage her head further. She couldn't talk

. Just made noises. The volunteer gave me some instructions on what to do, and then left the room. Here I was, changing the diaper of a girl who I now realized was not a girl at all. She was a young lady; probably a teenager. That was so hard! I put myself in her position, thinking how I would feel, being that age, and having a complete stranger change my diaper and see me naked. That's a very vulnerable position. Even though it was just me and her, I pictured at that moment God looking down from heaven, watching how I was treating this girl. There I was cleaning her up and the verse that came to mind was, "What you do unto the least of these, you do unto Me." At that moment, that handicapped girl was transformed into Jesus Himself in my mind. It became a privilege at that moment to change her diaper and take care of her. I felt like I wasn't just doing this unto a person, but I was serving and loving God directly. I started thinking about "the least of these"; that God knows who they all are in this world. And He watches to see how we all treat them. We're all going to have to give an account to God on how we treated the helpless. I was so thankful that at this ranch, they were being cared for and loved.

I can't fully explain how humbling and heartwrenching it was to change the diaper of a couple disabled young women. It's something you almost would have to experience for yourself. You'd think the one doing the serving would be the one to be the example. But God used Nilse and Jenna to teach me a lesson in His heart and love for the neglected and forsaken in this world. He helped me see these precious human beings through His eyes. And He totally got me out of my comfort zone and softened my heart a bit more. It was emotional! The last thing that broke me like that was building relationships with the street kids in the Ukraine, and then hearing the hell they had to live through. It's just so sobering to see how some people have to live. But at the same time there's this supernatural comfort that God sees everything, and He's taking care of everyone. He has way more compassion and love than I experienced in those short moments. And He was so gracious to give me a glimpse of how He views and loves the world!

Re: MISSION TRIP: Mexico Orphanages - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/1/18 4:14

Great pictures Greg, and two of them with you smiling!

A couple of questions.

1. are the children dictionary definition orphans; ie without mother or father, or are some abandoned or from parents who have given them up?
2. what percentage of the orphans have mental or physical disabilities?
3. is there any provision for the spiritual appetites of those with mental disability?

Yodi, if you have answers that Greg doesn't please chip in.

Re: - posted by Yodi (), on: 2005/1/18 14:06

Quote:

-----Yodi, if you have answers that Greg doesn't please chip in.

And that's exactly what I'll do !

Q: Are the children dictionary definition orphans?

A: Well, first of all, we went to 2 different places. The first was an all boy's orphanage, and the second was a ranch for the handicapped. I'm pretty sure that by definition, *most* of the boys we hung out with at the first place were orphans. But I did hear someone say that some of them are visited from time to time by their family. And the second place, the ranch for the handicapped, I think I asked how the "kids" got there, and one of the volunteers told me some of them were dropped off by their mothers. I think some of the handicapped kids *do* get visited from their parents occasionally.

Q: What percentage of the orphans have mental or physical disabilities?

A: Like I mentioned, we went to two different places, an orphanage and a ranch. The boys were normal at the orphanage. Though I did notice one boy who did seem to maybe be mentally handicapped. It didn't look like he had down syndrome necessarily, but he didn't seem completely normal. And at the ranch, 100% of the kids there have some sort of disability, whether mental or physical. Some can walk and talk, but their growth is stunted or they have the maturity level of someone younger than themselves. Others are confined to a wheelchair, and though their physical bodies have grown up, they have the mind of a baby and have to be taken care of just like a baby would.

Q: Is there any provision for the spiritual appetites of those with mental disability?

A: I'm not sure. I know at the orphanage that they had chapel. We even gathered the boys together for a little presentation of the gospel message and gave them an opportunity to receive the Lord if they hadn't already. A few boys did go u

p to say a prayer, and we wrote their names down so we could be praying for their spiritual growth. At the ranch... I know when Jessica and I went to go hang out with the "big girls", they had all been given a bag of treats, and there was a coloring book of Bible stories, and they were given little tract like pamphlets. The dining room looked like it was also used for a church. And in fact, later that night, another Calvary from LA was there worshiping, so we joined them... Actually, now that I think of it, I did hear one of the "big girls" mention going to church the next morning. So I think they are all taken to church.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/1/18 17:51

Thanks Yolanda

1. Are the orphanages part of the Calvary work or just being visited by Calvary teams?

I ought to explain my interest. For over 7 years I was a director of Prospects which is an evangelical charity working to support adults with learning disabilities (AWLD: the current UK euphemism for mental handicap). I have a daughter who is resident in one of their homes. The charity has a section called Causeway Prospects which also produces Christian materials specifically for AWLD. I have put the link above to this part of the charity's website. They do excellent work and it is a joy to see the responses among AWLD.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/18 19:30

Hi Ron, here are a few answers to your questions on points to clarify from my perspective:

Q: Are the children dictionary definition orphans?

As Yolanda said in the first place we went to most of the kids were actual orphans that did not have any parents or relatives to take them in. In the second place (ranch) where there were the handicapped children a lot of them the parents did not want to deal with and therefore dumped them off there. Even one mother comes to take care of her child 1 day every month but hasn't come by in awhile. The 4 boys I was with were a lot to deal with and really require almost 24 hour supervision by 1 person.

Q: What percentage of the orphans have mental or physical disabilities?

Yes, as Yolanda said the second place we went too EVERY kid had a problem. And the 4 boys I was with the whole day were SEREVERTLY handicapped. 1 boy was blind and all of them had to be in wheel chairs most of the time. None of them could verbally speak a word but made un-intelligible noises. All 4 of them had severe muscle and bone deformities because of neglect and other reasons. ALL of them could not take care of themselves at all and as far as I could discern their progress were all halting and there is an degeneration for most of them in mental and especially physical healing. I really have a heart for these kids and I wish that they had the attention and help they deserved. I KNOW that if one person took care of one of them full-time there could be improvement and change! I know it.

Q: Is there any provision for the spiritual appetites of those with mental disability?

I think this part of it disturbed me the most. In the first orphanage it was great they had a chapel and the older boys had time in prayer a few times a week etc.. But in the second place there really wasn't any gospel stressed to the severely handicapped children. I would think it would be beneficial to have christian music in the background for them.. or large print pictures of Jesus etc.. They weren't prayed for individually with laying on of hands.. and it seemed the prime need was just to do the ascetic steps each day:

- change them
- brush teeth
- feed them
- walk them
- physical therapy
- change diapers
- wash them
- put them in a bed

Even though all those physical necessities are good I would think to really stress the spiritual component of those who are severely handicapped would be good. It's all very vexing to see and be a part of and I know those who work there are doing a great job.. it's just hard to see and something in me just wants better for them :oops:

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/18 19:33

1. Are the orphanages part of the Calvary work or just being visited by Calvary teams?

The first orphanage is run by mexican people and it really has no ties with Calvary Chapel as I could see. But the second ranch for the disabled children is run by the brother of Jon Courson who is a popular calvary chapel speaker: www.joncourson.com

I think the whole ranch is funded by calvary chapel. Its a great work and I will try and find more about it, ie how it started (I think the land was given to them). I am hoping to go again and do this on a regular basis. Brother Craig from Calvary Chapel Escondido wants to get people going one day every month from this fellowship to help the entire day.

Re: - posted by Yodi (), on: 2005/1/19 14:32

Quote:

-----**Q: Is there any provision for the spiritual appetites of those with mental disability?**

I think this part of it disturbed me the most. In the first orphanage it was great they had a chapel and the older boys had time in prayer a few times a week etc.. But in the second place there really wasn't any gospel stressed to the severely handicapped children.

I would have to agree to an extent, that I didn't see an obvious sharing and teaching of God to the handicapped, but then for only being there for an afternoon, I don't think it was sufficient enough time to access if there was a lack of gospel sharing or not. I honestly don't know what their everyday routine looks like; I, we, weren't there for a whole day.

Quote:

-----I would think it would be benifical to have christian music in the background for them... or large print pictures of Jesus etc...

I agree with this point; seeing this valid need. If these handicapped "kids" are treated like children because it's the mental state a lot of them are stuck in, probably for life, then why not treat them like you would your own children, raising them up in the ways of the Lord? I know that parents sing and talk to their babies, and that's not even knowing if the babies even actually comprehend or remember what they hear. But does that stop parents from doing that anyway? No. So why not read a Bible story to each "child" while putting them to bed, just like you would with your own child? Why not sing to them Christian songs throughout the day?

I know Greg, and I, and who knows, maybe others, have several ideas on how things could be improved for each of these "children". I know for things to improve, and having the suggestions and ideas I personally had for the girls, I would have to return. This is something I think I still need to pray about because it definitely takes an enabling from God as it's quite a traumatic experience taking care of these handicapped "children" and is emotionally trying. We'll see. It would definitely be a blessing and a privilege to continue to serve these precious "children" if the Lord leads.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/1/19 15:17

Quote:

-----I agree with this point; seeing this valid need. If these handicapped "kids" are treated like children because it's the mental state a lot of them are stuck in, probably for life, then why not treat them like you would your own children, raising them up in the ways of the Lord? I know that parents sing and talk to their babies, and that's not even knowing if the babies even actually comprehend or remember what they hear. But does that stop parents from doing that anyway? No. So why not read a Bible story to each "child" while putting them to bed, just like you would with your own child? Why not sing to them Christian songs throughout the day?

This is a little more complex that it might appear at first. Adults with mental handicap may only have a child's tools for communication but as they grow they will develop adult appetites.

The current philosophy over here with Christian organisations working with such folk, is to provide materials which are, as far as possible, age-appropriate but with much simpler structures. The organisation 'Prospects' has devotional material for those with lesser disabilities, including some in Makaton; a sign language. They also have songs which have 'grown

up' music but simple lyrics.

Re: - posted by Yodi (), on: 2005/1/19 18:42

Quote:
-----This is a little more complex than it might appear at first. Adults with mental handicap may only have a child's tools for communication but as they grow they will develop adult appetites.

I don't get that. What does that mean? I don't know how many of them, but there were "big girls" I met that didn't have fully developed brains. So... though they grow older according to years on earth, they're not the same as others their age. There was a girl I fed that was in her teens, but her physical state was that of a baby. She slept in a crib, sucked on a bottle, and could only make sounds, just like a baby. I don't get the age appropriate thing. Wouldn't it be "mental state appropriate"? The development of her outside body doesn't match the development of her mind.

These are teenagers and young adults according to years they lived here on earth, and having gone through puberty... but everything else is childlike. These were mostly severely disabled "kids". When you're missing brain cells, you're missing brain cells, and you can't get them back. Whether you had them to start with and lost them through an accident, or never got them in the first place. An example someone gave was if you get a limb amputated, that limb can't grow back. You can't tend to a limb that doesn't exist. So... with these "kids", wouldn't you tend to the brain cells they *do* have, and not try to work with the ones they would have for someone their age if they weren't disabled?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/21 14:17

Quote:
-----I don't get that. What does that mean? I don't know how many of them, but there were "big girls" I met that didn't have fully developed brains. So...

I think Ron is suggesting that even the severely handicapped children have an potential to grow and understand things in an adult fashion. I truly believe if there was more 1 on 1 support and attention given to each child that they could progress further in their development. I guess you are right in some cases there is such physical damage to the brain itself that progress is halted but for many there should be room for improvement. My prayers are with these boys and girls that God allows them to deepen their minds and hearts.