



## Mission Focus

### Las Casitas

Our first summer team came to us from Highland Church in Alabama. They came with an expression of God's kindness, speaking directly to places in us that needed a touch from the heart of the Good Father.

We held VBS in a place called Las Casitas. It is a very dark and dangerous place. There we were, each day, out on a dirt soccer field just on the edge of this neighborhood sharing the love of Christ in the middle of the wind and blowing dust. I am not sure how many kids live in this area, perhaps 1,000 to 2,000, but we had between 80-95 kids attend each day. On our last day about half of these kids stood and bowed their heads and prayed to receive Jesus in their hearts and lives. Oh how blessed to be part of reaching this next generation!

It all started, I believe, in the heart of our Father. Then, He put it in the hearts of several of our team members (including mine), to reach out to the people living in Las Casitas this year. It began with our last spring team when we held a health fair there. We witnessed 8 children that day say 'yes' to Jesus, led by one of our Bible students, Raquel. She has since begun offering VBS once a week for the children with about 100 children attending. I first remember Raquel from 13 years ago, my first summer here. She was 5 then. Her family was one of the first families to live in Las Casitas and in those early years we would hold VBS in their yard. Her mom, Sophia, an indigenous woman, works in a daycare in a migrant camp. She has been a faithful church member here at La Hermosa all these years. Now Raquel is 18, with a gift to share the heart of Jesus with children. Please keep her in your prayers.

With medical professionals on the team we were able to offer free clinical care for 4 days - 2 days in Las Casitas and 2 days in our village of Nueva Odisea.

We also showed a film in Camp Vergel for two nights. During ministry time, there were 10 souls who prayed to receive Christ into their hearts and lives!

This group of believers from Alabama was amazing as they sought the Presence of God, to move only with Him! They brought the Kindness of God to us. Each time I looked at them I saw a picture in my mind's eye. It was one of dripping. Something so saturated that it dripped. They were so saturated with the love and Presence of Christ that they dripped Him. Spilling out everywhere they went. What love! What kindness! To bring the moist Presence of Christ to this dry and dusty place!

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## Answered Prayer

We had a sprinkle of rain on July 9th. A promise of what is to come. On the 10th an actual rain came to feed our parched land. I believe this was in response to our first summer team's prayers for the heavens to open and bring rain to this dry place. These gentle refreshments came on the heels of an 18 hour power outage.

Iliana,  
Alaeden  
and I  
together  
again.



## Spiritual Sight

I believe I had a moment of seeing through God's eyes. I simply recognized an open heart. It began when Iliana sat next to me during film in Camp Vergel. She told me her baby was sick, that he had a fever and I asked if I could pray for him. I laid my hands on 14 month old Alaeden. I could feel his body burning with fever. I knew Jesus wanted to heal him, so I began to pray. I felt the heat begin to dissipate from his body and soon he was smiling. I was so aware of her open and soft heart.... so I asked her if she knew Jesus and she said 'no'. I asked if she would like to know Jesus and she said 'yes'. What a wonder it was to introduce her to Jesus, and pray with her as a new member of our family!

When I prayed with Iliana to receive Christ in her heart it was with her young son nursing at her breast. Those were beautiful moments to behold! How I thank the Lord for inviting me to be a part of His blessing. Moments like these, still amaze me and fill me with wonder!

The following night they sought me out with smiles and uplifted countenances. What joy to see them! Alaeden was completely well. Iliana was looking forward to meeting our van for a ride to our Wednesday service.

## Abundant Harvest

The Lord had been speaking to me and several others on our team at La Esperanza earlier this year about a great harvest coming this summer. Yet, I hadn't expected people to be so ready, with open and soft hearts.

Most of the people, that we have the honor to minister to, travel 2,000 miles to come to our area to work in the growing fields to bring in the harvest. I often wonder if they have any inkling that in God's eyes, they are the true harvest!

Every place we went this summer to love and minister there were people waiting and hungering to come to Jesus!

How blessed I am to partner with each of you to be here to witness these lives and hearts saying 'yes' to Jesus - to witness the lifting of countenances and seeing Jesus' light begin to shine in them and marveling at the joy in their eyes! Thank you for being here too through your love, prayers and support! You are each a vital part of the ministry here.



## Faces of Suffering

During play time at VBS, I was face painting a 5 year old boy, Juan (*name changed*), I noticed some purplish-black on the side of his neck and thought my hand must have brushed him and left some unwanted paint there. As I began to clean it up, I lifted his head and realized the color was not paint. It was left from an angry hand. I could clearly see that someone had put their hand around his neck and choked him hard. There was bruising on the sides of his neck of a clear thumb and fingers. They had dug deep into his skin with fingernails. I was taken aback when I first realized what I was seeing and I asked him what had happened. I asked if someone had grabbed his neck. He didn't answer, but got quiet. I could see in his eyes that the answer was yes. I asked him who put their hand on his neck, but I didn't press him to answer. I felt it important to acknowledge what I was seeing for his sake. I finished painting his face and when I was done, I told him I would like to give him a hug. He came to me and I put my arms around him and he just lingered there a while. I spoke to him of his value and worth and how he mattered and was special. I told him that his heart was important and he was important. Afterward, he ran off happily to play.

As we began the VBS program, Pastor Rafael invited Juan up to pray for us. His prayer was so beautiful. Later, he was the first to memorize the scripture for the day. I was so proud of him. I knew Jesus was keeping close to him.

Juan started coming to Saturday Kids Club about 2 years back. It has been amazing to watch him and his sister open up and relax with us. I have witnessed huge changes in them. I know they feel safe with us. It is amazing what love does!

As I am learning to face paint, I am loving the new level of connection it brings with each child whose face I paint. Yet, with this joy comes heartbreak as well because I see suffering in some of these faces. Another child was Leslie, 7, who has a long scar along the right side of her face. I can see at some point that her face had been torn open. And I wonder at the trauma this must have brought to her.

On another occasion we encountered a little girl, perhaps 3, in the large migrant camp. She was wandering and sobbing with tears streaming down her face. She had her shoes in her hand and sat down to put them on. Marta and I approached her to ask why she was crying. All she would say is 'Mama' and pointed to a far off place. So we decided to accompany her to help her find her mom. As Marta put her shoes onto the right feet, I put my arm around her to comfort her and she calmed some. Soon the camp guard approached us and we explained the situation. He told us that this is a problem in the camp, kids getting separated from their parents, but he helped us. We made our way through the whole camp asking people if they knew who the little girl was. She was wearing traditional indigenous clothing and some spoke to her in a dialect, but the little girl was not speaking or responding. Eventually, we found a young girl who recognized the little one and knew where she lived. We all walked her to her door, where a 4 year old brother answered to confirm that she lived there. We never did see her mom but the little girl stopped crying and went inside. I returned to my room that night with a heavy heart. There were probably over 2,000 people living in Camp Vergel, most of them children and many very young. Unless one can read, it would be very easy to get turned around among the dwelling spaces because they all look the same.

The guard's observation, about kids getting separated or lost from their parents being a recurring problem, really troubles me. Recently, I had been wondering how I lost touch with the sense of commitment I have carried for so long for the people here. And then I witness these suffering faces and the ache and pain run so deep in me for these folks living such a hard life. The problems can feel so big and heart-breaking that sometimes I just come back to my little room here in Mexico and just weep at how overwhelming it all feels. I see so many unguarded and unprotected children. Please join me in praying for these kids and these parents... My spirit wants to rise up and fight for these broken and marginalized and exploited people!

## Camp Vergel

Our largest team of the year, 55 beautiful souls, came from Fair Oaks to serve with us here in Mexico. Since we need so many workers to meet the needs of the children in Camp Vergel, this is the only time we take a team in for the full week. On the first of our 4 days there we had 133 kids. On the last day we would serve 298. It was an amazing week. We offered VBS on the first 3 days and held an educational health fair on the last day. We provided information in areas of health, nutrition, hydration, exercise, oral care, hand-washing, saying 'no' to drugs and bad choices, and most importantly - spiritual health where we shared the gospel and invited children to come to Jesus. We offered fun games to reinforce the teachings. Then each child went home with an orange and a bag of hygiene items.

We also returned to Vergel 2 evenings. On Monday night when we returned to share a Jesus film, the camp guards would not let us in. They were under new orders of what time visitors would be allowed in. The Lord had been bringing such a great harvest of new believers to himself during these evening ministries. We were crushed at being denied access.

The Lord woke me during the night to intercede for the people in camp. I felt him take me there in the spirit during those hours of 12:17pm to 2:30am. Furthermore, this time of intercession gave me the assurance that He was there with all who lived in the camp. This gave me peace.

After much discussion with the leadership there the following day and the Lord softening hearts and opening doors, it was decided that we could enter at 6:30pm on Tuesday evening as long as we left by 8:30pm. This would not allow us time for ministry after showing a film, so we put our heads together and decided to do a drama instead. This was very powerful. Children and adults alike were enthralled with the story of a young man in chains looking and hoping for freedom. He was crying out for help and the devil shows up to tempt him with all kinds of worldly things. One by one, the young man resists them all. Then he sees Jesus who comes and breaks his chains and frees him. They hug and dance a victory dance together.

It is amazing how need can cause us to dig deep and be creative. This drama drew so many people from the camp out. It told a story that adults in camp have lived and a story that the kids have seen family members experience. Ministry time was rich that evening.



Six team members from Fair Oaks were baptized in our ocean before they headed home.



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Ps 46:10 Be still  
and know  
that I am God.

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