



The Micah Project

Forming Christian Leaders

December 2008

Holy Discontent

He came to us dirty and disheveled one cold night, a little boy dressed like an old street man. The grime caked on his feet and legs turned his brown limbs charcoal black. Wrapped in a smelly old coat that dragged practically to his ankles, he arrived at the Micah House simply to ask for a little food and maybe a warm place in which to eat it.

He never asks for much from us. He is content with the little plates of food that our street team takes to him a couple days a week. Content, as a twelve year old, with the little corner of the outdoor market in which he curls up every night to sleep. Especially, he's content with the bottle of yellow glue that he buys every day to feed his craving, to get high, to forget. His life may be meaningless, but he is happy enough to get up the next day in order to begin to forget all over again, inhaling the glue into his body until its warmth spreads all over. To him, it's a pleasant way to forget. He's content.

Hector's ragged appearance that night didn't surprise us. In the two years that we have known him through our street ministry, we have grown accustomed to seeing this little boy in the trappings of a street urchin. What is it about the human brain that allows us to grow accustomed to the sight of a child on the streets? Why is it that we are able create mental categories such as "urchin", "beggar", "vagrant" in order to find a tidy little way to understand and accept the plight of these children? *Of course Hector's dirty and smelly...he's a street urchin!*



A few weeks ago, God used a Saturday field trip to confuse my mental categories. Our street team had invited Hector to go to a park with the rest of the Micah boys. When he arrived at our house, one of our boys lent him a clean pair of shorts and a t-shirt. He spent a glorious day splashing around in the swimming pool, riding horses into the mountains, playing soccer with the other boys. His laughs and playful shouts reverberated through the park all day long.

Hector was allowed to be a little boy for almost a full day. And seeing him happily running from one little boy activity to the next produced a great discontent in my heart. This is what being a child should be about! Not holding the bottle of yellow glue between your teeth so that you can use both hands to dig through the dumpster. Hector was created to be a boy, not an urchin. The word urchin is necessitated by the fall, not by creation itself. No child should be doomed to this misfortune.

So when he showed up on our doorstep on that cold night, a few days later, we were no longer willing to accept the idea of a street urchin. When he asked for a little food, we were no longer able to let him live by bread alone. When we lent him some clean clothes,

we couldn't accept that changing his outward appearance was enough. And, when he wandered into my office later that night and whispered into my ear, "*Michael, can I live here forever?*" we were no longer willing to let him live on the streets another day.

In the end, discontent not a bad thing. Sure, it's an awesome thing that Hector has now completed his first month at the Micah House. But one of his fellow urchins, José Daniel, still comes to our door a couple of days a week, glue bottle in hand, asking for a little to eat. He is the new focus of our discontent, a holy discontent that moves us to restore these kids as God's children.

At the Micah Project, our discontent at the plight of children who live in the streets is seasoned with hope. This hope knows that the transformation from street urchin to child of God is not only possible; it is one of God's favorite ways of glorifying His name! Nine years into the Micah Project, we have the proof: Marvin and Tino are months away from their college degree, Oscar is getting ready to join YWAM for six months as a missionary, David is about to become a psychologist. Marvin Morazán is going to Mexico to study music and theology in January, joining Danilo who has already been there a year. There is great contentment...joy, really...in watching God transform these guys into His men—men of character and vision. Hearing their plans and dreams, I catch not only a desire for a better life, but also a better world...a world in which the word "urchin" is devoid of meaning.

Even as I write this letter though, reflecting on what God will do through our guys, I catch a glimpse of our security camera's image out of the corner of my eye. José Daniel is at the front door, looking for some food to eat. We invite him in, let him take a shower to wash the grime off, give him a clean shirt. He will play video games with the other Micah boys for a while and maybe some basketball. We will ask if he wants to stay, but he will make excuses in an hour or two and will head back to the streets. On his way out the door, he will round the corner of our house to dig his glue bottle out of the hole in which he has hidden it.

This is José Daniel's pattern, and it is the current disquiet in my heart. José Daniel still believes himself to be a street urchin. It will take many hours and months of work by the dedicated and gutsy Micah Project missionaries to convince him otherwise. It will take the prayers of many people to break through the chains of addiction that keep him on the street.

It is my prayer that the success of the older Micah boys will bring joy and hope to your hearts. But it is also my prayer that Jose Daniel will produce discontent, for he should not be living on the streets. It is my prayer that you will join us in moving from discontent into action on behalf of these young men.

That action can take many forms. You can go to our website, www.micahcentral.org and choose a boy from the biography page to pray for every day. You can write him letters or send emails to encourage him. You can come on a mission trip next year, and become a part of our boys' extended family. You can make a monthly commitment to support the Micah Project financially, in a year in which our income has been very low due to the current worldwide recession. You can provide the means for our older boys to graduate from college, and for us to take more boys like Hector and José Daniel off the streets.

This year, we have made it easier for you to help. On our website, you can click the "Donate Now" button to make an online donation. Or you can send a check to our new U.S. mailing address: "The Micah Project", P.O. Box 10098, Houston, TX 77206. Your support over the last nine years has already produced great fruit in many lives. As the Micah Project staff, we thank you for being a part of those victories, for giving generously and praying often for our young men.

And, with that same hopeful disquiet of heart, we will let you know just as soon as José Daniel becomes the next Micah boy.

Your brother in Christ,

Michael Miller

www.micahcentral.org