

Abounding Love... a missions journey

Colombia Missions Trip – September 2016

By: Lora Rozkowski

May the LORD make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else... 1 Thess. 3:12



The team with: German & Family, Darren & Family

Our trip was anything but...typical. Amigos (friends) your prayers carried us through, Dios (God) was with us!

Leaving from Tampa Florida on a stormy day was fairly typical for Gary & I, we often travel in hurricane season and we definitely left in a whirlwind. The missions' team arrived at Miami International Airport on a delayed flight, only to find chaos due to the tropical system moving through the area. As team leaders Gary & I negotiated with 3 separate airlines and finally got the team on a red-eye flight (4am), bound for Bogotá.

We made it! As we came into Colombia, we had to first report a missing suitcase and hope it would be delivered in time to Germans (pronounced Herman) casa (home) for the school outreach in the mountains. It was packed full of socks for the ninos (children)! Our church had prayed over those socks, we stood on faith that they would arrive on time...a couple of days later (3 to be exact) Germans family told us the socks had arrived, Hallelujah!

As many of you already know...the team hit the ground running. The drive to Chiquinquirá was 3 hours away and was our destination for the first part of the trip. Our precious interpreters traveled with us and upon meeting them we all became instant friends. In a caravan we took a side trip to the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá, it is a huge church built deep inside a cavern that the early Colombians (pre-Colombian era) had mined for salt which was a necessity at that time. It was refreshing and an amazing site to see! (NOTE: Colombians only serve salt as a condiment with the meal and never pepper)

Chiquinquirá and Susa are quaint cities which are basically farming communities nestled in the Andes Mountains...and just gorgeous!

We settled into our accommodations and were up and ready early for a full day at the 2 sister churches and the boys' home the following day. But wait...what about the Colombian coffee?? Oh yes, here is a typical conversation I would have at the local bakery each morning;

- *ME: Hola, grande tinto café, señora, por favor.*
- *Waitress: No leche señora?*
- *Me: No gracias, negro (smile)*
- *ME: Hello, large black coffee please, madam. WAITRESS: No milk madam? ME: No thanks, black.*

It was a big deal about my coffee because in Colombia they serve it with leche (warm milk) in a small cup and it is unusual that someone would want it tinto (black) and in a large cup. Let me mention here, the bakeries are divine.....

The team was split up between 2 sister churches on Sunday morning. Gary & I were in Susa with Pastor Carlos' (precious man of God!). After Gary had preached/taught about; Costly Love – Is Jesus worth it, he gave an altar call and the entire church came forward. The team laid hands on everyone, prayed and anointed their hands for serving the King. It was powerful. Pastor Carlos asked us; when will you be coming back? Praise Dios (God)!

Sunday afternoon we went to the boys' home for our first initial visit and were greeted by Wilson and his captivating smile. We spent time with the boys, getting to know them, taking FB photos and playing volley ball. We all had a great time and the team ordered pizza for everyone...Colombian pizza...yummy! The following 3 days were spent on the painting project at the boys' home. The outside walls were all painted; several rooms on the inside were spackled, sanded and repainted. Tile was being laid by a local tile company, an improvement to say the least. The living conditions for these boys are deplorable! All 30 of them come from dysfunctional backgrounds such as; no fathers, mothers in jail or on drugs, living in the streets, not attending school and delinquent behavior.



Wilson – 11 years old

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18

In spite of the circumstances Dios (God) used the team to touch the hearts of the boys. Each team member has their own testimonies; I'm going to share a couple of mine with you.

- **JONATHAN: THE ATHEIST**- I had the privilege of chatting with this young man through our interpreters. He is amazing and has a very sharp mind. He said he was very observant and noticed that the missionary team was like a family. He was baffled by the team and said to me; "Why would you come from so far away to this horrible place?" I told him that Dios (God) had sent us to share His love with all the boys at the home

including him. He pondered for a long time and then said; “I would like to go to college and study Theology.” I smiled and said; “You told me you were an atheist, why would you want to take a course on Dios (God)? He said; “To prove to everyone there is no God.” I said, “No, you must be mistaken, you want to study science to prove that God does not exist!” He said “No, I want to study Theology” I finally said” GOOD! I will pray that as you study God, (Theo=God / Ology=study of) that you will meet Him and know Him as your LORD and Savior.” On the last day that the team was there, Jonathan made sure he was upstairs so he could say good-bye. I gave him a big hug and told him he will be in my prayers. **Amigo, (friend) Please pray for Jonathan...**



CAMILO: THE TATTOOED KID - I hadn't noticed Camilo's tattoos at first but we had a chance to sit down and chat; his sleeves were raised up to his elbows so I asked him about his tats. He gave me a very bleak story about family members that had died and that the grim reaper would be coming for him someday soon. He did say he wanted to leave something behind (like a legacy) and so our conversation began. I saw that he had a tree at the very end of his tats and told him about the tree of life, I spoke about how much God loves

him, as well as the other young men at the table listening and that God will give abundant life right now to them. I also said that they can receive Jesus Cristo (Christ) into their heart and He will comfort and guide them by His Spirit. Jesus will come and live on the inside of you, in your heart. I asked Camilo, “Would you like to pray with me and accept Jesus as your LORD and Savior right now?” He said, “Yes.” We all grabbed hands and I began to pray for these special treasures of God right then and there to accept Jesus...and they did.

Let me note here that one of the other young men is a cutter, he didn't have tattoos but instead he had little slices in his forearm from wrist to elbow, there were so many I had to keep myself from being obvious at staring at them!



Camilo has the green hat and tall

The following day when I saw Camilo he came up to me and said that he had read 1 Thessalonians and Timothy that very night! **Amigo (friend) Please pray for discipleship for Camilo...**

Bogota, Colombia Trip

We want to encourage anyone reading this to know that you are welcome to join the team on our next trip.

(Dates TBA)



The 2 girls on the left were weeping during our testimonies at the school and are standing for prayer. The young mom on the right is 16 years old and her baby goes to school with her.

The team traveled to the poorest of schools with German up into a mountain village. German carries extra large Christian themed oil paintings up to these schools everyday and teaches the students about Jesus and His love for them. The humble class we visited had students that were (approx.) 9-16 years old. All the mission team members shared a testimony and prayed with them for God’s hand to be upon them as well as His guidance to be strong in their lives.

They were very thankful for the socks and received them with big smiles. (We want to thank all for your giving unto the LORD, it went a long way and you are much appreciated.) The younger children had a later class and we did not get a chance to meet them but the principle promised that all the socks would be passed out when they arrived.



God’s creation is breathtaking...

We did some sight-seeing in Bogotá; the presidential palace, night view of Bogotá from the mountainside, feeding the pigeons in the square, toured some very old churches and lastly a cable car ride up the side of Mt. Serrate with a walk up to the summit, what a spectacular view!

We will miss all our new Colombian friends as well as the ones we’ve known for over 20 years. God’s kingdom is amazing; His people are precious in His site. Gary & I are thankful for the godly relationships being developed with the people of Colombia and our hearts long to see them again.

Gary and I want to thank our wonderful team, interpreters, and our Colombian missionary friends for making this mission trip INCREDIBLE.

All our love,
Gary & Lora Rozkowski
Mission Pastors