



Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Acts 8:4

Communities Changed Through Children

by Paul Olver, Latin America

The corrugated metal roof and walls cranked up the 97-degree heat like an oven. One small window opening high in the wall offered a little breeze when the door was open. Forty desks squeezed tight together in rows. One badly scratched 36 inch white board on the wall. Not a book or notepad in sight. Multiply by seven – four classrooms upstairs and three downstairs. Welcome to La Escuela El Buen Pastor (Good Shepherd School).

Two hundred seventy children – preschool through grade five – attend this school which has been in operation for four years as a ministry of the Free Methodist Church. Engracia is the director; her father is the pastor of the church. She says, “If we only had more space we would have another 50 students. The parents love our school.”

El Buen Pastor is the other FM school in Managua, Nicaragua. La Escuela El Mesías (Messiah School) just celebrated its 10th anniversary. As a pastor’s wife, Jeny Ampie had felt the need to do something for the children in the church community. After starting the school she went to college to get the needed credentials. Now El Mesías has 450 students preschool through grade nine. Jeny says, “If we only had more space we would have another 50 children immediately. Parents come all the time pleading to enroll their children.”

When Jeny’s husband passed away five years ago, she stepped in to pastor the church in addition to leading the school. She continues to head the church and now oversees both schools.

Resources are hard to come by for two schools with 620 children in very impoverished neighborhoods. About 10 percent of the students are sponsored through International Child Care Ministries (ICCM), but all the children could qualify. Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Americas, just after Haiti.

Pastora Jeny worked with the district leader, Pastor Hiuberth Zapata, to plan a spiritual emphasis day for all teachers and staff of the two schools. Forty gathered for the first Teachers Spiritual Retreat Day in May 2015. Drs. Hiuberth Zapata, Delia Nüesch-Olver, and Paul Olver shared biblical principles for Christian teachers. Participants were highly engaged and appreciative. Many of the teachers had to hurry off as soon as the event concluded because they teach a second shift in the public schools to be able to make ends meet.

This is a glimpse of the kingdom of God. People identify a need; the church gets behind it. Young lives are shaped; a community is changed.



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