



# *“I want to walk as a child of the light”*

## *Micah Project 2011 Year-end letter*



I'll never forget that night in 2001, just over a year after the Micah Project had opened. The original group of Micah boys and I were finishing dinner in the dining room of the Micah House, when the lively chatter was suddenly silenced by frantic pounding on the front door. Darwin and Moises Pavon stood there, tears streaming down their faces. They had just learned the news that their dad, Pedro Pavon, had been killed in a trucking accident on the main highway north of Tegucigalpa, only a few hours earlier. Their mom Flora, pregnant with her seventh child, was suddenly a widow and a single mom.

Darkness on top of roiling darkness...that's what sixteen year-old Darwin must have felt the night of his father's death. Just two years prior, his family watched Hurricane Mitch tear their humble home to pieces and wash it down the river on whose banks it precariously sat. As a sophomore in high school, he was forced to flee up the mountain on that black night and huddle with his family on the floor of a church while the fury of Mitch raged around them. For the next months, they lived in shelters with little more than the clothes on their backs.

Now, whatever normalcy his family had fought for after Hurricane Mitch was once again torn to shreds, and Darwin found himself in the dining room of the Micah House, fatherless. The terrifying realization sank in that, as the oldest son, he had suddenly been thrust into the role of "man of the house." Slowly, he pulled himself together and began to make plans for his father's funeral and burial the following day, according to Honduran tradition. Steeling himself against the agony that threatened to drown him, he prepared for a long night of grief-filled preparations. Heading out the front door alone into the dark night, he turned to us and said, "Take care of my brother Moises for me, will you?"

Darwin suffered enough horror in those few months to sink him into a black pit of despair...but he refused to take that downward path. I would not be recalling terrible events from a decade ago if they had ended in darkness. In a country that has this year been declared "the murder capital of the world" and "the new hub for the cocaine trade in the Americas<sup>2</sup>," we are surrounded by and overwhelmed with stories that end in darkness. They are splashed in all their gory detail on the front pages of the Honduran newspapers, and, all too often, we encounter them face-to-face in our daily lives in this increasingly violent city. There is much darkness. But that is not what drives Darwin's story.

### *“I want to walk as a child of the light...”*

Darwin moved into the Micah House a few months after his dad's death so that he could concentrate on his senior year in high school. After he graduated, he received a scholarship to study agricultural engineering at one of the most prestigious and academically rigorous universities in Latin America: Zamorano. Darwin flew through his studies at Zamorano, and four years after starting, he was receiving job offers--even before he graduated in December of 2007. His life can be seen as a model for forward progress, for one who refuses to give up... who stares darkness in the face and determines that he will not be defeated by it. But that is not how his story ends either.

### *“I want to walk as a child of the light...”*



The Darwin Pavon of 2011 is a man who lights up any room he walks into. He is optimistic, forward-thinking, caring, dependable. He is dating a woman who shares all of these qualities...abundantly so. But, the thing I love the most about the 2011 version of Darwin is that he is as much a part of the Micah family as he has ever been. He has always taken his role of older brother seriously, both as a Pavon and as a Micah son, and that is as true today as ever. When he is not travelling for his job at an agricultural supply company, he is at the Micah House or taking a couple of the Micah boys out to dinner. He is mentoring Maycol through his first year in the Timothy House and first year in college--often the toughest year for a Micah boy as he takes those first steps into manhood. Whenever we need a favor, before we even put a period on the end of our request, Darwin's response is always "Claro que sí...of course I will!". Darwin's mere presence gives our younger boys a real, tangible example of what's truly possible.



*Darwin and Moises Pavon survey the damage of Hurricane Mitch near their destroyed home in 1999.*

1 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-15549083>

2 [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-501715\\_162-20127965/honduras-becomes-western-hemisphere-cocaine-hub/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-501715_162-20127965/honduras-becomes-western-hemisphere-cocaine-hub/)

Amazingly, Darwin's impact goes even deeper than that. At some point, early on, even in the midst of such darkness, he decided, **"I want to walk as a child of the light."** His life would not just be about personal gain--it would be about declaring to the world, through his lifestyle and actions, that *"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all..."* (1 John 1:5). As a Project, we were able to provide Darwin with a lot of opportunities and a lot of hope; but in the end, he is the one who made the decision to walk as a child of the light.

I have to say, I absolutely love where the Micah Project is in its history right now. From Axelito, who is finishing the second grade, to Junior, who is graduating from high school, to Daniel, who is graduating from college, to Darwin, who mentors all the rest: it is such a joy to see God's hand at work at every stage of the life of our ministry. At the risk of over-simplifying the incredibly complex task of bringing a kid off the streets and forming him into a Christian leader, I would say that the main reason that the Micah Project has worked so well over the past twelve years is that **light-bearing is contagious**. When our grads Oscar, Olvin and Darwin invest their valuable free time at the Micah House, when Marvin Morazan leads us in worship on a Sunday night, when Jose or Bryan helps the youngest guys to record their newest song; when big Pedro takes a break from his civil engineering homework at the Timothy House and roars into the Micah House to fill it with raucous laughter...the newest Micah guys see the light in them and it sparks a flame in their young lives as well. That spark doesn't always catch right away: for some of the younger guys, a past of addiction and trauma constantly threaten to extinguish it. But our community of staff and older Micah guys keep rekindling those flames, and for the large majority that pass through our doors, it eventually bursts forth in light!

Another reason that the Micah Project has been so successful is that so many of YOU have also been light-bearers in our boys' lives. It's hard to express how encouraged we are by you all on a daily basis. When I was in St. Louis recently visiting my home church, I was so surprised by how many people came up to me and said things like, "How is Marvincito doing? Let him know that I am praying for him!" Or "Give Yeison a big hug for me!" Or we'll have a picture of Hector for our "Photo of the Day" on our Facebook page, and someone will write and say, "Just wanted you to know that I pray for Hector every day!" I think I can speak for all of the missionaries that are a part of the Micah family when I say that, when our own flames start to falter due to fatigue or stress or discouragement, those prayers and words of encouragement are a fresh breath of oxygen!



*Miguel, Wilmer and David, our 2011 sixth grade graduates want to be light-bearers just like many Micah boys before them.*

**Your financial support is another way you carry the light for the Micah Project. You probably already know this, but end-of-the-year giving is what provides the majority of operational funds needed in order to carry our ministry through to the following year. We ask that you would please consider giving towards our 2012 operational budget as you have done so faithfully in the past.**

This next year is going to be such an exciting year in the life of our ministry. As we launch our capital campaign in February to build Micah 2.0 on the land that we purchased in September, we can hardly wait to see how God is going to use the new facility to take our ministry to the next level! Our unwavering commitment to you is that we will continue to use all of the resources you give us to shine forth God's light in lives that have only known darkness. Drawing up architectural plans and building new facilities will not distract us from this commitment; in fact, they will inspire us to be even more creative, hope-filled, and relentless in our desire to be beacons of God's light here in Honduras.

In his light-filled first epistle, John writes this to the young believers of his day: *"I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one."* (1 John 2:14). When I hear these words, I am reminded of Darwin, who shines such a bright light in our lives, and also of Oscar, and Olvin, and the other Oscar, and Marvin, and...so many of our older guys. Join me in praying this over all of the Micah boys as well...that this truth may spread like wildfire in the Micah Project in 2012.

In the name of Him whose brightness conquers all darkness,

Michael S. Miller  
[www.micahcentral.org](http://www.micahcentral.org)

