



### **Mission Statement:**

To revolutionize the lives of the homeless people who live on the streets of Guatemala City through serving as an extension of the Lord's love and to see them fully realize their purpose that the Lord has set apart for their lives. (Ephesians 3:17-20)

### **The Problem:**

The epidemic of human beings living on the streets is a huge problem that affects every country in the world. It is something that the Lord never intended to happen, but due to greed and the ability of man to earn and hold onto large sums of money, it has become a reality. Of course, money is not always the reason for a man or a woman to live on the streets. There is also the issue of the individual, who for one reason or another, makes the choice to leave his/her home in hopes to find something else better, which in most cases they never find that better thing. There is also the situation in which the parents or spouse of an individual just throws them out to the streets knowing that they have nowhere to go.

Street children throughout the world are often subjected to physical abuse, police harassment and outright murder. They are frequently detained by police simply because they are homeless, or criminally charged with vague offenses such as loitering, vagrancy, or petty theft. They are tortured or beaten by local officials and often held for long periods in poor conditions. Girls are sometimes sexually abused, coerced into sexual acts, or raped. Street children also make up a large proportion of the children who enter criminal justice systems and are committed finally to prisons that are called "schools," often without due process.

Here in Guatemala, as in all of Central America, children living on the streets are a huge epidemic that has cost the lives of many, many innocent people. In Guatemala, to live as a street kid, means to live a life in which everyone will hate you. Here in Guatemala the street kids are known as "Squatters" and are viewed as the dirtiest people in the country (mainly because people charge them to use the bathrooms so they just go right on the streets now). During the 1990's many, many innocent people were killed in an effort to clean up the streets in Guatemala. They would be picked up and taken to some field and then the police would kill them and leave their bodies on the ground to rot. Although it is not as common today, it is still an epidemic that affects the country.

# A Story of the Reality of the Streets



**Nahaman Carmona Lopez was 13 and lived in Guatemala City.**

*"I only wanted to be a child, but they wouldn't let me," is what his gravestone read. Fleeing from the savagery of war in El Salvador, the young child and his family arrived to Guatemala City as refugees. Looking for peace and survival, he found only abandonment, violence and death.*

*One night, while walking on the streets, he was kicked to death by four policemen who found him and decided to punish him.*

*His crime? He was a street kid... a subhuman without pedigree, a vexing reminder of Guatemala's malignant inclinations, the mortifying embodiment of a fallen society, a scapegoat. And, in death, a martyr.*

**Each and every day more people in the streets keep dying.**

*This is what happened to Nahaman's friends, since his death:*

*Gabriela continues with the prostitution, selling her body in order to survive. Life hasn't allowed her any other option.*

*Wilmer has lost a lot of weight. The doctors say that it's a miracle that he continues to live.*

*Carlos can hardly walk and speaks with great difficulty. He dribbles all of the time.*

*Nahaman's best friend, Francisco Tziac, still cries for him, recalling his screams for mercy and his inability to save him.*

This is real life for many of the people who live and die on the streets of Guatemala. It is a huge problem that has blinded their eyes and prevented them from seeing the truth of the gospel of Jesus. It has caused them to not see themselves as anything but worthless trash. It has caused them to drown their pain thru the sniffing of alcohol and glue. One street youth described, "They (the drugs) make you forget how lonely you are, how hungry you are, and forget how you aren't wanted at home or on the streets." It has caused them to hate other people as well and to not trust anyone. The problem has grown so bad, that they cannot even trust one another. Night after night, there is the threat that when they finally fall asleep, that someone, even their buddy who has agreed that they would protect one another, will come and take their things away. There is the threat of the police coming to kick them and beat them up for no reason. There is the threat that their 'drug lord' will come and beat them up for not having the money they were suppose to have for the drugs. There are so many threats to their lives which causes each of them to live their lives in total fear.

*"Deliver those who are being taken away to death,  
And those who are staggering to slaughter..."*

Proverbs 24:11

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# Facts of the Street Kids in Guatemala



- There are approximately 7000 children under the age of 18 living on the streets of Guatemala right now (as of February 2003). There are also just as many, if not more, adults living on the streets along with them.
- Over 50 children and youth under the age of 23 were murdered in Guatemala City alone in the month of January 2003.
- One study conducted by Casa Alianza/ Covenant House America Latina reported that 64 percent of street girls interviewed had been victims of incest.
- Robbery, prostitution, and begging are the main sources of income for most street children. Condom use is sporadic and birth control is rarely discussed within families or by outreach programs.
- Many of the children, particularly the younger children are barefoot, poorly clothed, and covered in scrapes and bruises.
- Sexual assaults against female children and youth are also common. As dangerous as it is for the boys on the streets, girls are even more vulnerable to sexual attacks. Strangers come to areas populated by street kids looking for the young girls and boys and offer them food and clothes in exchange for sex. If they do not make the exchanges willingly they are often raped. One sixteen year-old Nuestros resident said she had been violently sexually and physically assaulted by a taxi driver, "They think that just because you live on the street that they can do whatever they want."
- ***There are currently no official government shelters for street children anywhere in the country***, any government employees working with street children, and government employees investigating conditions on the street or investigating reports of abuse.

*"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat;  
I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink;  
I was a stranger and you invited me in;  
Naked, and you clothed me;  
I was sick and you visited me;  
I was in prison and you came to me."*

Matthew 25:35-37

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# Another Story of the Streets from October 2002.

*A total of six street youth - one of them 4 months pregnant - were wounded, some seriously, after a drive by shooting against a group of twenty children sleeping in downtown Guatemala City early yesterday morning.*

*Nery Rolando Recinos, 16; Jaquelin Yajaira Franco Barrera, 15; Henry Giovani Alvarez Jimenez, 19; and Emilio Sanay Sirin, 26, were all treated and released from the San Juan de Dios hospital. The pregnant girl, Sandra Verónica Guamuch Torres, 17, and Manuel Isaisa Aj, 15, who was shot in the right knee, were both hospitalized in serious but stable condition.*

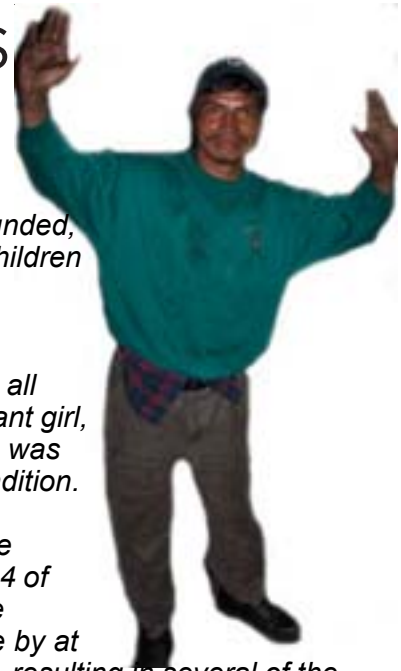
*The 22 homeless children and youth from the ages of 12 and up, were sleeping in a large abandoned house known as "La Casona" in Zone 4 of Guatemala City when two men walked by the building and insulted the homeless group. Shortly after, two armed men on a motorcycle drove by at about 1:30am and opened fire on the mass of children trying to sleep, resulting in several of the indigents being wounded.*

*According to the witnesses, a few minutes later a black Chevrolet Suburban vehicle with polarized windows drove to the entrance of the house and one of the occupants partially wound down the window and shouted that if the children reported the crime, then they would return to "finish them off".*

*"La Casona" is a partly demolished house that serves as a "home" for several dozen street children who are regularly visited by Casa Alianza street educators. Many of the children are addicted to toxic solvent-based shoe glue, which suppresses their feelings of hunger and cold.*

*Several of the traumatized children immediately went to look for a police car, which arrived shortly afterwards. According to the youngsters, as the police called an ambulance, the same black Chevrolet returned to the scene of the crime and despite their explaining to the police that these were the culprits, the police did not try to detain the vehicle or question the occupants.*

Obviously, there is a huge problem here in Guatemala that needs more attention. Already there are organizations who target specifically the younger streets kids (under the age of 15), but these organizations only reach 20% of the youth population. There are also feeding centers, such as The Lord's Kitchen, who regularly feeds over 300 people per night from 5pm to 6pm. There are also ministries who drive throughout the streets handing out food to whomever they can find. What does not exist, however, is a program that provides both the younger population and the older population with the number one thing they need, THE LOVE OF JESUS and a simple hug!! Feeding the people who are stuck in the streets will only sustain their lives, it will not change them. We, *the body of Christ*, need to do something that will get them off the streets. *We need to show them who they are in Christ.* Then, we need to do whatever is needed to equip them with the tools they need without discriminating against anyone due to their age or time living on the streets.



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# Purpose / Vision of The Street Revolution



The purpose and vision of The Street Revolution is to share the love of Jesus with them through the building of real relationships. The mottos of the ministry are “LOVING THE UNLOVELY” and “BRINGING HOPE TO THE HOPELESS.”

The truth of it all is that only through the realization of the love of Jesus can these people be set free from the terrible bondage that has held them back. Through the building of these relationships, we will be able to give them practical tools that can help them to get their life back together. Many of them do not know how to read and write and are daily expressing an interest in learning. This is something practical that we can give them and could only have come thru the building of the relationship and the building of trust. We see this ministry as a ministry that can restore these people to the place where God intended them to be, not just thru the feeding of food (a physical need), but through the realization that they are people who can be loved (an emotional/spiritual need). Our goal is to bring them to a place where they realize they are someone and that they were created for a purpose. Jeremiah 29:11 reads “I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.” This is the heart of the Lord for our lives and is His heart for the street kids as well. Through sincere love, we believe that this truth will take root into their heart and will allow them to dream the dreams the Lord has set apart for them.

## The Dream of The Street Revolution

One of our dreams for this ministry is to reach a point with these people that we can open a facility for the homeless that will be open for them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The goal of this facility is to provide the homeless people a place a refuge where they can fulfill many needs:

- Take showers
- Learn to read and write
- Play games and laugh with one another
- Receive prayer and biblical teachings
- Teach them how to do the practical things that can give them opportunities to find a job
- Whatever else the Lord inspires us to do for them.

*It will be place that they can call their own, that they could enter freely without any worries of being rejected because of the way they look or the places they live. Also, this homeless center would be a project that *the community* will be able to take part in the process of building and operating it. We believe that the best way to raise up a community is to do it from the inside out. This would mean that many members of local businesses and church congregations will work side by side to help the homeless and encourage them.*

*"And Whoever receives one such child in My name  
receives Me"*

*Matthew 18:5*



# History of the Ministry

In 2001, Carlos and Regan Penning of YWAM Guatemala saw that there was a need on the streets of Guatemala City. Through prayer, they located a specific group of men and women that the Lord wanted them to put their focus on. Their goal was simple. Bring the father heart of the Lord to the streets and nothing else. They felt that there were already a number of ministries who feed these guys on a daily basis, but there was not anyone who took the time to hug them. Over the next 2 years, their street ministry very much remained a ministry that they alone handled with the occasional help of outreach teams who came to the YWAM base. From 2001-2003, they saw many lives changed and many of the pregnant girls rescued from the problems of the streets.



In April 2003, Efrain Godinez and David Vonnannon came to Guatemala City to attend a Discipleship Training School and immediately recognized the needs of the people on the streets. Immediately, David had visions of a homeless center that would serve as a place of refuge for the homeless. Efrain immediately saw his heart break as he noticed the conditions that these people had to live in. Efrain also had a dream of building a home in the country where the guys who were serious could live. It was at this point, that the prayers of Carlos and Regan began to show fruit in the growth of the ministry that they had originally pioneered. In December 2003, David returned to Guatemala to officially begin working with the street kids and Efrain joined him. Also in December 2003, Julia Roldán (fiance of David) realized the dream and the need to pour out love on these people who have never seen love before in their lives. Together, The Street Revolution came to life.

In May 2004, The Street Revolution had yet another addition to the team in the likes of a couple, Jorge and Pamela Rodas, who came from a local church in Guatemala (Iglesia Camino de Vida). They too quickly took hold of the vision and inspired us to go out a second night during the week. This began to produce much fruit as our commitment to our friends on the streets became more apparent. Relationships deepened to a level we had never seen before and in this time, our hearts became more and more attached to their lives.

In late July of 2004, a new project was adopted in the ministry called "Casa De Toledo." Within this project, we got to see 3 of our friends leave the streets and begin working for the first time! We are currently working on a plan to carry out within this home as within it are 14 young people hungry for the love of our Father.



*"Tell of His glory among the nations,  
His wonderful deeds among all the peoples."  
Psalm 96:3*

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# Plan of Action 2004



- Spend at least 6 hours per week ministering to the group of people, mostly men, who live near the police station in Zone 1.
- Commit ourselves to daily personal prayer for the lives of each individual living on the streets. This will serve as our most effective tool in helping these awesome children of the Lord find their true purpose in life.
- Begin classes in reading and writing with those who are interested one afternoon per week
- Begin a 'mini church' service on the streets Saturday nights. The idea here is to provide them with the spiritual food they need and to bring them together as a family as opposed to individuals surviving.
- Establish connections with other ministries who are a part of their lives (networking). We feel that all the ministries have a specific role in ministering to the street kids which when put together make up one body that can change the lives of these people. Without one of these ministries, the Lord's work in the lives of the street kids will not be complete.
- Establish connections with drug and alcohol rehab facilities that may be able to help the streets kids. The number one thing that must happen to successfully return these people to society is to get them off the drugs. Already, we have a connection with one facility who wants to help us, but we feel we need multiple connections so that when someone is ready to recover, they can have some choice in where they are going.
- Meet on a weekly basis to discuss the things we see on the streets and to intercede for each of them. Discuss strategies and plans to reach each of them where they are at. Without this, our work is a waste of time. There is a spiritual war here and we understand that we must take responsibility and fight it together.



"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it"

Hebrews 13:2

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# Current Needs

- Our number one need right now is a prayer covering. We are working with people who live in a very dangerous part of town and are very hardened by their lives on the streets. We need divine protection and a divine insight into their hearts. We need to receive the effective strategies that the Lord wants to give us in reaching these people.



- Strategies for effectively teaching reading and writing skills. At this point in time, none of us have any training in this area, but we believe it is something we are being called to do. We are confident that there are tools out there, now we just need to find them and research them.
- Sound system that we can use in starting 'Mini Church' on the streets. Obviously having something like that on the streets will be dangerous and a risk, but we also believe in His protection over our lives and the things we bring with us for ministry.
- Financial connections. The dream of the homeless center will cost money and will also have a need for people to help staff it. It is better to begin making these contacts now and sharing the vision now, than waiting until the last minute to begin raising the money for the building. As far as timing, we have no idea when the Lord is going to bring this building into our ministry, we are hoping by the end of the year so we want to be ready for when the time comes.
- Medical personnel who have a heart to bless and help the homeless. Many of the people living on the streets do not have the money to take care of basic needs nor are they accepted at very many medical facilities because of how they look. Teeth cleaning, tooth pulling, regular checkups are not a possibility for many of these guys, but is very necessary. With the help of nurses, doctors, dentists, and pharmacists we can meet the basic health needs that every person living on this planet needs.
- Teams who want to come and spend time with the guys. We feel like our most powerful moments on the streets was when a team came to bless them. Many of the people living on the streets feel lonely and forgotten about and when they see a group come from another country to spend time with them, they are filled with joy.
- Long term staff. At this point, we are beginning to see the need to spend more time with them. Unfortunately, we are not able to meet that need with the 5 of us that are here. We need more people to provide more one on one attention to the guys and girls on the streets. Plus, the homeless center will require many people to run it successfully.

*"Everyone who is called by My name,  
And whom I have created for My glory..."  
Isaiah 43:7*

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# Casa De Toledo Project



The Casa de Toledo project began in July 2004 with the hope of reaching the heart of the guys who were living there. Casa de Toledo is a place that was started several years ago by a man named Carlos Toledo. His heart was to have a place that was non-governmental and non-religious that the guys who were living on the streets could go to in order to get their lives together. This place works on a 'come as you want' basis and provides food and a bed for everyone living there. The only conditions are that they cannot steal anything from anyone, cannot bring drugs into the house, and must be in by 7:00 to keep their bed.

In July 2004, we had the opportunity to meet Carlos Toledo in the streets and he invited us to come and visit the place. This came during a time of fasting and prayer when we felt the Lord was speaking to us about ministering to another group on Wednesday nights. When we arrived, we realized quickly that this was a great place that we could minister. We asked Carlos for permission to come at night and he said that we could come whenever we wanted. After speaking with a few of the guys who lived there, we saw that there is a great hunger for the word of the Lord in this place. So, we as a team, decided to adopt this as a new ministry within The Street Revolution.

At this moment, we intend to visit the home every Wednesday night and visit with the people living there. Already, we have 3 of our friends from the streets living there, which is also giving us the opportunity to visit for a few minutes on a daily basis. Some of the things that we want to do here is start a weekly Bible study, play games, have small prayer groups, and offer opportunities for them to come with us every Sunday to church. At the same time, we intend to encourage them to continue chasing their dreams.

Another part of this project will include taking on one of the people living there that we know and giving him a job to work with us. We believe that part of restoring a person who was once homeless is providing them with a chance to restore their dignity thru the ability to have a job. One of the reasons that many do not make it is because they do not feel their life has purpose. Giving them a job will bring them a purpose, while at the same time, will keep their minds occupied (we have also discovered that they have a lot of temptation to go back to the streets when they have nothing to do).

Finally, through our work with the people living at the home, we hope to be able to minister to the staff who works in the home. We feel that by serving them and washing their feet that they will soon see the love of Christ and desire it. We also feel that this will be a good place for us to be trained to open our own home, very similar to this one.

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