



newsletter 75

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'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'

John 16: 33

Camilo's Testimony

When IMC first met Camilo, he was a toddler living in Fusa. He spent much of his time alone on the street, often just wearing a T-shirt and a nappy... His brother, Andrés, who was also with IMC for many years, was already working on a building site, lugging sand around in a wheelbarrow... Their parents have struggled with drug addiction for years.

Here's a translation of what Camilo said in a video shown at IMC's AGM in May.

'When I went to Granja Peniel, I was six. With time, you start to engage with what God wants to do with your life. It's like when God created the world: it happens step by step. God started to show me people who always wanted the best for us, who taught us the word of God, who gave us education, food and a home. That was really important, because we didn't really have those things before. This was like the best present anyone could have given us. Because we were with IMC from very young, that was good because we learnt about God early on. If you learn those things when you're young, they stay with you.

'IMC wanted us to get on in life: they wanted us to have a goal, a dream, something to aim for in the future. So we started a process of training. We started from scratch.



Camilo at 14 and (inset) as a toddler

'Now, we were aiming for something... They always taught us to do the right thing although, being young, we always wanted to do the opposite of what they wanted us to. They disciplined us and we didn't understand: we thought we were doing the right thing but we were wrong. We grew in different aspects of lives, personally, academically and spiritually. IMC talked a lot about God and we didn't always appreciate it at the time. But, now I'm 18, I realise that the process IMC took us through was really great.





'There was a time when I went off with my friends and left IMC, because I wanted to do my own thing. That's when I began to realise the things that God wanted for me. When I was with my friends, I tried lots of things but those things were of the world and were not the best for me. Time went on and I began to feel lonely, away from God and from IMC. Then there came a time when I took a step towards God and prayed and he showed me the way.

'IMC has supported me a lot in my studies and I've done well. God has done something great with my life. Without IMC, I'd be nothing. IMC laid the foundations in my life when I was little. I want to take my career forward and IMC is helping me with that. I'm studying nursing and IMC has paid for me to do that. That's a huge blessing for me because I couldn't have done that on my own. I thank God and IMC.

'I have a big dream: I want to be a professional footballer. God has given me great talent, for which I can thank him. One of the ways I can thank God for what he's done for me is to join a club where I'm trialling to see if I can be a professional footballer.

'IMC are paying my subs and transport, and I'm doing it for God and to help IMC when I can, when I'm a professional. I'm starting a new phase. IMC wants me to finish my studies so I can have a professional career and strong values. I want to help the foundation as they've helped me. God will open up a way for me, even if there are lots of obstacles in my path. I will reach my goal if it's God's will that I continue to receive support from IMC, which has been so great until now.

'Greetings and many thanks... to all the people whom I don't know personally but whom I know God has used to bless me. Many thanks and God bless you.'

Please pray for Camilo's continued success in his studies and in life in general. Give thanks for all that he has achieved and for all those who have helped him, in Colombia and here in UK.

The Bigger Picture

You will no doubt have gathered from newsletters that the last few years have been challenging ones in Colombia and UK. Last year was a particularly difficult time.

At the beginning of 2013, Peniel Farm had 16 boys in residence and was staffed by house-parents. Also in residence was Luz Dary (our social worker) and her son. Support and regular visits were made by Nancy Centeno (Director), Jennyfer Ambrosio (Admin) and Carlos Forero (head of the Dining Room in Fusagasuga just outside Bogotá.)



The Yoval Messianic church continued to support the home with visits by doctors and dentists in particular, and Pastor Raúl served as the Director of the Colombian Board.

By December, the house-parents had left, the Yoval church had reduced its support to pursue other priorities, and Pastor Raúl stepped down from the Colombian Board.

The UK Board had warned Nancy of the likelihood that we would not be able to send out the usual monthly amount as incoming funds had been decreasing. December was the month this happened and it still came as a shock for Nancy.

These factors, combined with the Board's considered intention of moving to a more holistic, community-based programme of outreach and care (as in Fusa), reaching more children at risk, meant that the year ended with just seven children living at the farm. The plan was to find these children new homes.

The Colombian Board are pursuing various possibilities for the farm, including some exciting partnership opportunities with other similar-minded Christian charities in order to make best use of this valuable resource. Here



in the UK, we feel this is a positive step forward which will free up resources to pursue the community-based approach in line with the aims and objectives of IMC.

This process of change has not been an easy one for the Colombian team (especially Nancy) who have invested so much time, resources and love and care into the lives of the hundreds of children who have lived at the farm over the years. It will continue to be used for Colombian children and young people at risk, whatever decision the Colombian Board reach as to the future of Peniel Farm. The Board have our full support in this.

The work in Fusa with the Dining Room continues. This community-based programme, which provides a meal, support with homework and Christian teaching and discipleship, as well as social and spiritual support to families in difficulty and parenting skills teaching, is the model IMC hopes to reproduce in another area of Fusa and other, very poor districts of Bogotá such as Bosa. Foundations for such a programme have already been laid in Bosa, a community of 'recyclers', with children's clubs and outreach to families.

In Fusa, the team continues to work with Lucy Leal and her programme, although the financial support from IMC has now ceased. There is no residential facility but rather 'day care', which is funded by the second-hand shops they have set up, with support from Lucy's church.

Nancy Centeno in her role as Director of IMC in Colombia, with support from Jennyfer in the office, plus volunteers, has taken a lead in steering the changes at the Farm with support from the Boards in Colombia and the UK.

With Pastor Raúl's resignation as President of the Colombian Board, Nancy has taken over this position and Carlos has stepped up to the role of Director.

The text above is an edited version of the report of the Chair of Trustees to the AGM that was held in May. If you would like a full copy of the original and/or a copy of the accounts for last year, then please email the IMC office at info@inministrytochildren.org

Please pray for the Colombian and UK Boards, that they will have the wisdom to make the difficult decisions necessary in the coming months. Lift to God in prayer the future of Peniel Farm. Pray for our workers in Colombia, for peace, encouragement and strength in this time of transition.

Latest Colombia News

Nancy's latest news arrived just in time to include in this newsletter. Every instance of 'please pray' has been put in bold for your prayer support.

Dear Friends,

Greetings and blessings in Jesus' name. We give thanks for all the work with children in our country, for your prayers and support.

On 11 and 12 April, we had a special retreat to say goodbye to the children on the farm. We went to a farm near the town of El Rosal, a lovely place which the children enjoyed. We celebrated birthdays and they swam in the swimming pool; they played, danced and sang and we had a very special time of prayer with them, with all of the IMiC team and Pastor Oliverio. There were a lot of tears, as saying goodbye is always painful, but many of them were also happy to be returning to their families.

Anita, three, and her brother Benjamin, six, were the only ones going on to another programme, New Dawn, which they already knew as they have spent a few weekends there. It is a good home, run in a similar way to how we work, and they were accepted and shown lots of love. It was helped by their older sister, Leidy, who's now 18, being there for a few days to help them settle in. **Please pray** for them and for Yordi and Leidy, their older brother and sister, who want to look after them but aren't yet ready for this responsibility as they are still studying.

I give thanks to God for the 14 years we've worked with children on the farm. It was sometimes a challenge seeing them grow up but it was incredible seeing the transformation



in their lives. We know that God has a time for everything and one season has ended. Ending this programme at the farm which provided a safe home for children at risk has been hard and we have shed a lot of tears, but our hope is in God who fulfils all his promises and hears our prayers. God will take care of each of these little ones.

We praise God for a new season and for his vision, confirmed to us, to work with families and we are excited by the doors that are opening up to us. We already have agreement to work with a network of churches in Bosa, a very poor, needy community. On 13 May, we began a workshop for church leaders. **Please pray** for strengthening of the new programme in Fusa and partnership with Pastor Alvaro of the church in Fusa, one of the communities where we have already begun identifying families we can be working with. **Pray** for plans for the farm too.

Please pray for a proposal in Barranquilla with a church I visited during Easter. They are working with young people from rural, marginalised areas. It is a very strong programme and I told them about what we do, and they are keen for us to work together to help families at high risk. This has been on my heart for many years to help children on the coast as I've seen a lot of poverty and malnutrition. Now we await God's timing to move forward on this future project.

Please pray for twins Gabriel and Over who left the farm early a few years ago, because of their grandmother. They left school and fell in with friends and family taking drugs. Now, their mother is in jail for murder and three of their uncles are also in prison for drug-related offences. Over and Gabriel were doing their military service but they didn't complete it as their grandmother died a month ago and they came to us for help. We had to put Over into a Christian rehabilitation programme; Gabriel was not in such a bad way but has a daughter aged two and no job. We gave him a job painting the office and doing other odd jobs but he had a setback and he too is to go into a programme for drug addicts. Meanwhile, he is living at

Peniel Farm under the supervision of Mr Nelson, with spiritual guidance from Pastor Oliverio. It's a difficult situation but we trust in God who can restore lives. **Please pray** for Over and Gabriel, that God will guide them.

Please pray for Hernan Linares who is on the Board of IMiC in Colombia – a great support. He has just been diagnosed with cancer and has started chemotherapy: he's had a tough time with lots of tests and we **pray** for healing and that God will bless and encourage him to fulfil all God's purposes in his life.

God bless you. Thank you for your support and help in this ministry, helping many young lives. With love and blessings in Jesus' name,
Nancy Centeno

... And Finally

In this world we have trouble, as Jesus told his disciples in our opening text, and in Colombia they have more trouble than we can fully appreciate. Yet, as Camilo testifies, these troubles can be, and are being, overcome. There are changes and ongoing difficulties but we know from past experience that, through your prayers and faithful support, seemingly impossible situations have been made possible, often in the most unlikely and unexpected ways.

So we take heart and it is with confidence we thank you for your prayers and support.

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