

February 2022



Dear Family and Friends,

“... But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

Luke 15:20

“Who is your family? Who is your daddy?”

Since we opened our doors we have ministered to 80 children. Some for a few months, others for years. Some, even though they are older, we are still reaching ministering to them. I remember when our second child, Benito, arrived. He had been at the national hospital for weeks. When he arrived, he seemed very happy to be with us. He didn't speak much and his mind seemed clouded and slow. It made me wonder what had happened to him. It took time, but his past eventually became known to us.

Benito was reared by his alcoholic father and a stepmother. When Benito was very young his mother died. The story is, his father had severely beaten her and three days later she died. Both Benito's father and stepmother were physically abusive. His stepmother would punish him by hitting him in the back of the neck with a broom stick. This method of punishment had left one of Benito's other brothers mute. Benito said he remembered when his father sold two of his older brothers. This was devastating to him. When Benito was 10 years old he was sent to the town square to shine shoes for money which he would bring back to his father.

One afternoon after Benito had been shining shoes all morning, he became tired. So he stepped onto a bus and went to the back seat to take a nap. He fell fast asleep. When he woke up someone was telling him to get off the bus. As he stepped out of the bus, nothing looked familiar. While he had been asleep, the bus had left and traveled two hours away from his home. He was scared and confused. And because he was so young he didn't know the way home. After walking around the bus terminal for quite a while, a policeman noticed he needed help and took him to the juvenile judge who then sent him to the national hospital. Three weeks later he came to us.

Benito was five years behind in school and could neither read nor write. He was backwards and slow. But we took him as he was and did our best. He was a sweet sensitive boy and was very much loved by all our other children. As the years passed, he learned to read and write and did well in school. He was easy going and always helpful. One of Benito's main struggles was with his personal motivation. We just worked with him the best we could.

Time passed quickly. And faster than I could imagine, Benito turned 18 years old. The time came for him to transition out of Casa De Mi Padre. At that time, Cole had been serving with us for several years and had been married for some time. Cole and Sarah wanted to have Benito live in their home to work and continue in school. So that is what he did. Benito found work at a motorcycle repair shop and continued in his grade school studies. He seemed to be doing well.

After about a year, Benito's old motivation problem seemed to reappear. He became distracted by different friends he had made and became totally unmotivated to get up in the morning, work, or do his schoolwork. In time, Cole felt he could no longer help him so Benito had to leave. Benito was out on his own for many months. He then returned to Cole and asked for help. Cole graciously took him in again. Cole got him back in school and I gave him a job at our construction site. For quite a while things seemed to be going better. Benito was two weeks from graduating the 6th grade at age 19, but he took off again. This broke our hearts. But at his age, he had to make the right choices. Cole and I saw him off and on over the next year. The last time I saw him he didn't look good at all. I had heard he was involved with drugs and alcohol. This made us so sad.

A couple of weeks ago I received a phone call. At first I didn't recognize the voice. The voice asked me if I was doing good. I said “yes.” The voice continued on. Finally, I asked who it was. The answer, “Benito.” I hadn't heard from him for quite a while. Benito asked if he could come see me. I said, “Of course.” Thirty minutes later there was a knock at the gate. I invited Benito in. He looked very different, in a good way.

We sat down and I asked him a few questions, where he was living? Did he have a job? He told me he was living with Josue. This is the man whom Benito worked for before at the motorcycle repair shop. Josue is a good Christian man. Benito said he went back to Josue and asked if he could have his job back. Josue recognized Benito had a lot more problems than just needing a job. Benito had been drugging and drinking. Over the next several weeks, Josue helped Benito get off the drugs and dry him out from the alcohol. Josue took him into his home and put him to work. Benito said, “Josue had asked me some questions,



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“Who is your family? Who is your daddy?” Benito continued. “I told him I did have a blood father but he didn’t take care of me. He always hurt me. And he sold my brothers. Why would he do that? In my heart Papa Shane is my father. He took good care of me.”

Benito continued, “Papa Shane you taught me the Word of God and did so many other things for me. This last year I was so lost in the world. I was into drugs and drinking. But it was terrible. I forgot all the things you had taught me. It got so bad. Finally I just couldn’t do it any more. Then all these things I had learned at Casa De Mi Padre began to come back to me. I remembered I needed to read my Bible. I needed to start talking to God. I needed to start living right. I had to get away from all bad stuff and bad friends. Josue helped me get away from all that bad stuff. Now I don’t desire it any more. I began to pray and asked God what he wanted to do with me. Now I know what I want to do. I have a plan. I want to learn more about motorcycle mechanics and electrical repair. Someday I want to start a little motorcycle repair shop of my own. And someday I want to go to Casa De Me Padre and teach the younger boys what I have learned and teach them how to work on motorcycles.” I responded, “Benito what you have told me is not just a plan; it is a vision for your life. This is what an adult man should have for his life—a vision!” Benito continued, “Papa Shane I cannot thank you enough for all you did for me. I am so grateful for what you, Cole, and everybody have done for me. Thank you.” I said “Really Benito, we are your family.”

Often times in Guatemala people come to me because they want something. This is just the way it is. This was in the back of my mind when Benito was sharing his story with me. But, if I could help Benito with his vision, I would. And it would be right. I asked Benito, “So how can I help you achieve your vision?” Benito thought a moment and replied, “Just pray for me Papa Shane.” I said, “I will, let’s pray right now!” We prayed together. It was precious. Then Benito said, “I brought you some gifts to say thank you.” He opened up a crumpled black plastic bag and pulled out some sugar cookies, and a Hershey’s Cookies and Cream candy bar. Benito knows I love chocolate. I was very moved by his kindness. I know what his little gift meant. Benito is an extremely poor person. He owns the clothes on his back and whatever is in his backpack and that’s all. His gift to me, his request for prayer, and his story of what Lord is doing in his life is worth more to me than anything.

The conversation Benito and I had was the deepest and clearest conversation I had ever had with him in all the years I have known him. And, he was doing all the talking. There was a light in his eyes I had not seen in years. As I saw him to the gate, I said, “Come here.” I placed my hands to hold his face and said, “Look me in the eye.” I asked, “Do you remember these words Benito? Christ loves you, God loves you, and I love you. You are loved, cared for and wanted. How many times did I tell you this? Benito responded, “Mucho.” After he left I went to my room and wept with joy for what God is doing in his life.

Ministry Need: We are still looking for a family, church group, or some individuals who would help us produce and distribute our monthly paper newsletter. This remains a very important feature of our fund raising efforts. Pray and ask the Lord if he could use you to help meet this need. Share this need with a friend and have them contact me via email: crshane2010@gmail.com.

Construction Update: We are working full speed on Casita (Little House) No. 2. The team is putting the crown on as I write to you. This is the concrete cap at the top of the walls on which the roof structure will rest. We are praying the Lord will provide enough funds to help begin our next step, building the roof structure. Please be in prayer about this.

General Fund Expense Needs: We are always so thankful for the gracious gifts of all our supporters. We couldn’t keep on ministering to kids without you. However this past month our General Fund went into the negative by over \$1300. Our general expenses include food, clothing, medical, utilities, transportation, and meeting the needs of our staff. We are always amazed and thankful for the outpouring of love and gifts in December. We always try to save and stretch what the Lord provides during Christmas. However, it always seems the first quarter of the new year is difficult for us, and this year is no different. Please consider praying for this and sharing our letter with a friend. Thank you for your continued faithfulness.

We are very encouraged at all the Lord is doing in the lives of all of our children, young and old. We are eternally grateful and thankful for all of our faithful ministry friends who help us keep going. Thank You!

To God be the Glory! We cherish you.

Love
Shane
Joseph Shane Sanderson

It is such a blessing
when you see your kids
choosing to go the
Lord's Way.