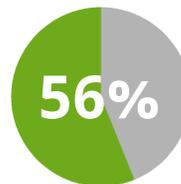


JOURNALS POSTED ON APRIL 10, 2016

Overcoming the Odds ~ April 2016



RUTH MOONEY



SUPPORT PLEDGED



COSTA RICA

Dear Friends,

Growing up in Minnesota, I was taught that it is not nice to brag. But maybe just this once. . .

Yesterday I had the privilege of placing the graduation stole on a truly outstanding student, because I was his thesis advisor. I've told you before about Macoy. He grew up in an orphanage in Lima, Peru because his mother was too poor to support him and his brothers, and she worked as a live-in maid, so she couldn't take care of them. Of his generation of 87 young people, he is the only one to have gone on to university and one of only 4 who graduated from high school. All of the people around him were poor. None had an education. All were working at subsistence jobs. Most went to church. (See the pictures of a typical neighborhood in South Lima.)



Macoy asked himself, does the church have anything to say about poverty, misery and hopelessness, other than the consolation of heaven "in the sweet bye and bye"? Why, in the Christian American hemisphere, is there so much injustice, inequality, and despair? Does Christian faith mean anything at all in this life? Does it have

anything to say about economics, politics, refugees, the environment, discrimination? His church had taught him NO.

When as a child he would show up hungry at church, they would tell him it was God's will for him to be poor. When the country was being torn apart by a vicious civil war, the church had nothing to say except that it was "of the world" and should be ignored by Christians. When the girls in his youth group got pregnant (a high percentage), they were expelled from the group and from the church. He lost the girl he loved because the pastor forbade her to continue seeing him when he moved to a different church.

Macy is an example of why the *Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana* is still vitally needed in Latin America. As he read the Gospels, he saw a different Jesus: one who got angry at injustice, who built community rather than destroying it, who wasn't afraid of hard questions and who loved the outsider and the sinner. He began to see a Jesus who didn't teach conformity but who transformed people and empowered them to make changes in their lives. So he wrote his thesis with a complete analysis of the church school education in his neighborhood and proposals for change.

His thesis focuses on Christian education for the adolescents in the area where he grew up and has pastored. In 85 pages, he offers new teaching methods that encourage creative, analytical thinking, develop self-initiative, and engage Christian faith with the real problems the teens are facing. Then, he expands their narrow view of spirituality to embrace all of life, including our relationship with God, with ourselves, with one another, and with the creation. It calls us to celebrate life on this earth in all its fullness as we see God present all around us and calling us to transform our reality with God's power.

Don't you think I am right to boast about this?

With gratitude for your friendship and support,



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