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QUÉ PASA

What's Happening

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What does “Family” mean to you?

We all come from diverse backgrounds and “family” situations in our lives. Each one of us can tell a different story of what that word “family” means to us. I want to tell you what it means to the children of ICC.

I remember speaking up in front of the church to the children at El Oasis in Mexico 20 years ago. Many of the kids had been struggling with where they had come from and what might lay ahead for them. Some of them were scared and very uncertain of just what life would hold for them. I remember praying about what to say to them, and then the word “family” came into my mind. It was like a soft voice spoke to me telling me to talk to them about being “family.”

As I spoke, I told the children that they no longer needed to worry about where their food would come from, where they would sleep or even if they would have a place to lay their heads. The reason was because they were now part of the big “ICC family,” and this family is filled with love and hope for each one of them. I told them that they now have many brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and loving moms and dads in their lives as a part of their own family. When I said those words to them, I could see an amazingly warm glow come upon so many of their little faces as each one of them looked up at me. You could almost feel the warmth of a campfire in that room from their little expressions, and it was a “warmth of the heart” that I will never forget.

I also remember after the meeting was over when three of the little girls came up to me and asked me “are we really part of a family now?” As you can guess, I held them close, and I told them that they were each an incredibly, special part of the big ICC family now and for always. Words cannot come close to expressing their excitement and happiness knowing and now feeling the love of what that word “family” really meant for them. It is truly an experience that I will always cherish in my life.

“Family” is a wonderful and a special word to every child of ICC. It is a word with a powerful meaning in their lives. It means that they “belong,” that they are “loved” and that there are people in this world that will take care of them and provide for their needs. As you can see, the words “powerful, love and care” are exactly what “family” means to these special children that God has entrusted into yours and my care here in our ICC family.

Today I watched three ICC videos talking about the children, their programs and how important each one of you are in their young lives. These videos spoke to me about just how much the kids need you. Why? Because I have been to some of the children’s villages and have personally seen the

enormous level of need that really exists for every single child living there as they work through their own issues that brought them there. I have also seen and heard of the gratitude, trust and love these children have for each one of you, their ICC family.

I wanted to make you aware of the special place each one of you have in the children's lives, because once this letter arrives in your homes, the children's projects and their own homes will be facing some very difficult decisions. You see, these summer months each year are without a doubt the most financially difficult and concerning months for all ICC staff and children in the villages. For numerous reasons, the financial income at ICC reduces dramatically, and it becomes exceedingly difficult to send the budgetary monies that are needed at each children's village for basic sustenance. Yes, there are times we cannot even meet those budgetary needs at each village. When that happens, the project staff are faced with some very difficult decisions. What can the children do without? That places a heavy burden on the decision makers because the children have done without so much in their young lives before ever joining the ICC family.

This is truly an extremely challenging situation to deal with in each location during these troubling months. Yes, I know that we are in a struggling economy and perhaps our own lives are different from what they have been for many of us. Yet, we still are okay, we still make it, and we feel so blessed for God's care to us. And we are right; it is an amazing blessing. It is a blessing that I hope that we all will pass along to "the least of these" today. To pass our blessings along to the children of the "Father of the fatherless" is something that is an honor and a privilege for each one of us to take part in, because no matter how large or small every blessing is there to share.

I am sure you have many things to deal with in your lives during these summer months, but I am asking you sincerely to please not forget to share your blessing with your ICC children who depend on you, their "family," to take care of them. Please send in whatever you are able to send today to make these months not be months of struggle, but instead, a time for the children to have what they need so that they can continue to have those smiles of warmth, the warmth that only comes from knowing that their family loves them and continues to provide for them. To the children, this is their understanding of "the warmth of family." This is the feeling that brings those smiles of warmth to their faces.

After all, as I think about it, don't we all want to feel that same warmth in our own lives? And actually, aren't our blessings from God meant to share? I sure think so, and I pray that you feel the same way.

God bless each one of you as you prayerfully consider sharing your blessings!



Doug Congleton
Executive Director



P.S. Please mark your special donations "Warmth of Family."

Thank you!