

# Cinderblock Salvation

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Principal

“You are no longer bastards.  
The Lord accepts you today as His sons.”

Pastor Juan’s eyes were loaded with tears as he gripped Cledarious and Derick around the necks and pulled them close. My own eyes were burning as I strained to behold and believe what was taking place before me.

In a cinderblock church not much larger than my living room two of my students had just given their lives to Christ. We were in the middle of nowhere, atop a desolate mountain in a poverty-stricken village just outside of Monjas, Guatemala. A ragtag band comprised of Americans from the Birmingham area along with UA college students had flown to Guatemala on a mission trip. We came to this small village to provide a vacation Bible school program. I brought Cledarious and Derick to Guatemala, hoping that they’d collide with Jesus on this trip.

When we finished the VBS we asked Pastor Juan, the local minister, to pray a blessing over these two young men. Through our translator, Pastor Juan began to explain the love of Jesus. Something unusual was unleashed in the room as I felt my body tremble and my eyes brim with rare tears. The hard and stoic expression on Cledarious’s face softened like wax in a flame. Derick was broken. God was using this poor Guatemalan pastor to grip his soul. The two young men cried out for salvation as the teary-eyed grown men in the room rose from their seats and embraced Cledarious and Derick as brothers.

I was stirred to my core as I realized that God used a room as dirty and unfriendly as a jail cell to be the spot where he would set two students free.