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MSC Missionaries in Georgia, USA

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We have a boy named Blessing this year, a quiet, cute little fellow in first grade. He is a blessing indeed to all of us, as is each child here at Willow Branch. It is our purpose to give our time and love to the children and their families, but the blessings we receive in return far outweigh what we give them. There are not many things more heart-warming than the love of a child, and we prove Jesus' promise that if we give, He will return blessings that will overflow into our laps. Here are some of the ways we were able to bless our children this month:



A family from First Baptist Church of Atlanta (FBA) gave us 15 tickets to go see the Atlanta Passion Play the Sunday before Easter. We took those of our students who were able to go. This play is performed at the Atlanta Civic Center each year by a very professional group of actors and musicians from FBA. As we mentioned in a previous newsletter, we are trying to expose our children to events outside their normal activity range by taking them to symphonies and plays. Of course, the "Passion Play" is much more than just a cultural event, but a life-changing moment for anyone who attends. They were very excited when the actor who played Jesus came down to talk to them afterwards and gave them hugs!

After the children were finished with their homework on the Thursday before Easter, we showed them the movie "Jesus for Children", which is the same "Jesus" movie that Campus Crusade for Christ shows all over the world. This one has short interludes where the story pauses and children on the screen ask questions of a teacher who explains what was meant by certain scenes. After the movie, some of the children came to us with questions wanting to understand what the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus meant to them. We prayed that these children who were so close to knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior would ask Him into their hearts.



In addition to these activities, a Sunday school class from FBA came to Willow Branch on the Saturday before Easter for our annual Resurrection Egg Hunt. Each egg held some small trinket or memento of Passion which were used to tell the Easter story. The children got to keep the eggs with gifts and candy that they found. The man telling the story that day was the same actor who had played the role of "Jesus" during the "Passion Play" – his name is Chris. Now, you can imagine how the children felt to see Chris telling the story of Jesus right on their own apartment grounds. They held on to him and would hardly let him go!

There were also many other children there from other apartments nearby. The word always spreads when something is going on at Willow Branch.

Then, suddenly our prayers were answered. After the Easter story, Chris asked if there was anyone who wanted to give his/her life to Jesus. Six little hands flew up in the air and you had to be there to see the heart-



warming joy on these precious faces. As these six repeated the prayer of salvation after Chris, my heart was overwhelmed and I could only weep and praise God for this wonderful harvest.

Another function of our program is to educate others about what we do in the Missions field so that they can go back to their own neighborhoods and hometowns and start similar programs. On two different weeks we have had college groups from Michigan and Illinois that came to observe how we

operate and to help with the children, both with homework and outside playtime.

Youth pastors also bring their young people on mission trips during their spring breaks to let them observe another way of life. One ninth-grade boy told us that his “eyes had been opened this week”. He had never seen much beyond his own immediate small town environment, so inner city life was quite an experience for him.

As you can see, life is never dull at Willow Branch! And as the word spreads about the positive changes in the lives of the families here, we are being asked to do more and more. It would be our desire to see God bring in other missionaries who could duplicate our program in other parts of town and in other cities. Would you pray with us about that? Please also continue to pray that God would move in the hearts of these people; that spiritual bonds would be broken, and that they would be able to see Jesus as He really is and learn of His great love for them.

As you can see, we have had a very eventful month. Thank you for taking an interest in our ministry and for your prayers which bear much fruit. Please continue to pray for us and consider remaining a part of our Missions work. And, as we say often, we can never have too many volunteers!

God bless you.

Bennett Ekandem

*Please support our ministry!*

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