



ANABAPTIST BORDER MINISTRIES

SAN JUAN, TEXAS

December 2024 - January 2025

Yanick and Kenley's Journey -Lois Ann Histand

Yanick and her son Kenley spent roughly 8 months in Senda 2, but it has been over a year since they left their homeland of Haiti. Their goal was to reach Ohio where there is a son and daughter who immigrated to the States 8 years ago. The main reason they left Haiti is because of the terrible unrest and insecurity plaguing the country. But one day as we visited, I heard their personal story of why they chose to leave.

They lived a good life in Haiti in a suburb of the capital and had a very nice house by Haitian standards. It was a three-story house that was pretty much a complete house on each level. Having enough food wasn't really an issue either. It wasn't unusual for Kenley to come home from school at the end of the day and make food for himself and the others.

Kenley in English class



Yanick had a good business with two warehouses where she sold things like rice, flour, sugar, beans, and laundry soap in bulk as well as cases of spaghetti, macaroni, powdered milk, crackers, cookies, hot sauce, tomato paste, etc. She would go to the open-air market every so often and stock up on supplies for her business. In December of 2021, she was on a *moto* (motorcycle) with a driver heading to the market to once again buy supplies. Along the way, two guys called her name and at gunpoint made them stop. These fellows robbed her of all the money she had brought to buy supplies with. It was equivalent to 3 or 4 thousand American dollars. That was a major loss!

In December 2022 Yanick had gone to the market and made her purchases. She had hired a driver with a bus to take the goods to her warehouses. On the way home, bandits once again stopped them at gunpoint to rob her. But since she'd just bought her supplies she didn't have much money with her. They forced the driver to take the bus with all the goods to where they wanted it. They let the driver leave with the bus once they had unloaded everything for their own use and pleasure.

Yanick's children had told her that for safety reasons she should stop buying at the market, but she wasn't ready to quit. After this second huge loss in a years' time, she decided it was time for her

and Kenley to leave the country. Of course it would take time and expense to plan and get ready to leave. She sold pretty much everything in her warehouses. She also had some money saved in the bank, but the bank wouldn't let her take out more than \$100 USD at a time. So she spent many days going to the bank to withdraw the money. Her children and husband who were in the States at the time also sent money to help. The charter flights from Haiti to Nicaragua were outrageously expensive, and it cost \$7,000 USD just for tickets for the two of them to take a direct flight to Nicaragua.

Their journey to the States began in early October 2023 when they flew from Haiti to Nicaragua and then traveled through Honduras and Guatemala before entering a town in Mexico where they spent a few weeks, after which they moved on to Mexico City. The next 6 months they lived in Mexico City where they had rented a house. At this point they had paid money to someone who did paperwork for them to get their CBP One appointment. They came to the US/Mexico border for their

date, but upon arrival they were turned back. Their paperwork was not legitimate. They had been scammed! They had not only lost more money, but they would also have to reapply on the CBP One app for a new appointment.

It was now April of 2024 and Yanick and Kenley came into Senda 2 to wait for another appointment. This was where I met them and, after some time, they began attending the English class I had once a week for the Haitians in camp. They continued to come to class faithfully, even when they were the last two Haitians there. They left the beginning of January.

Sometimes we would get into spiritual conversations and although Yanick often didn't contribute a lot, Kenley would ask questions or make observations about things he had been reading in the Bible. We had given them Bibles when they came into camp and Kenley began reading, starting in Genesis and continuing, reading a portion almost daily.

Weeks and months wore on in camp as they continued to wait for their appointment. December 19th was a special day, Kenley's 20th birthday. It was also the last day our team would be going to the camp before our two-week Christmas break. Since Yanick and Kenley were the only Haitians in this camp anymore, I made a cake to take in celebration of Kenley's birthday. We finished our English class and were getting ready to enjoy the cake when they got the news they had been waiting on for months! They had gotten their appointment! Oh, what joy and relief! After all those long months of waiting, they finally received it! Kenley thought it was about the best birthday gift he could've received. He had long hoped to be in the States for his birthday, but as the time drew nearer and there was still no appointment, he gave up on that idea. And now they had gotten their appointment on his birthday. It was very special to be there with them when they got the news!

They were given January 7, 2025, as the date to cross the border. That would be the day after our team went back to camp after Christmas break, which meant we would get to see each other one last time before they crossed. It was fun to go back to camp after the break and see Yanick and Kenley again as they packed up to head out. But even more special was when our Administrator, PH Yoder, wondered if I would like to pick them up after they crossed the border, and bring them back to base for a few hours. We've done this on occasion with other migrant friends who had crossed, but this was the first time for any Haitian friends to come. We had a good afternoon and evening here together before we took them to where they would spend the night before flying to Ohio the next morning.

Yanick and Kenley are only two of thousands of people who cross the southern US border looking for a better life in the United States. Each one has their own story and reason for leaving their home country. I can't touch every person's life, but am I faithful in reaching out to the ones I do meet? Yanick & Kenley's story isn't over yet, and I only played a small part in the bigger picture of their journey through life. But my prayer is that they saw Jesus in me, and they will desire a deeper relationship with Him.

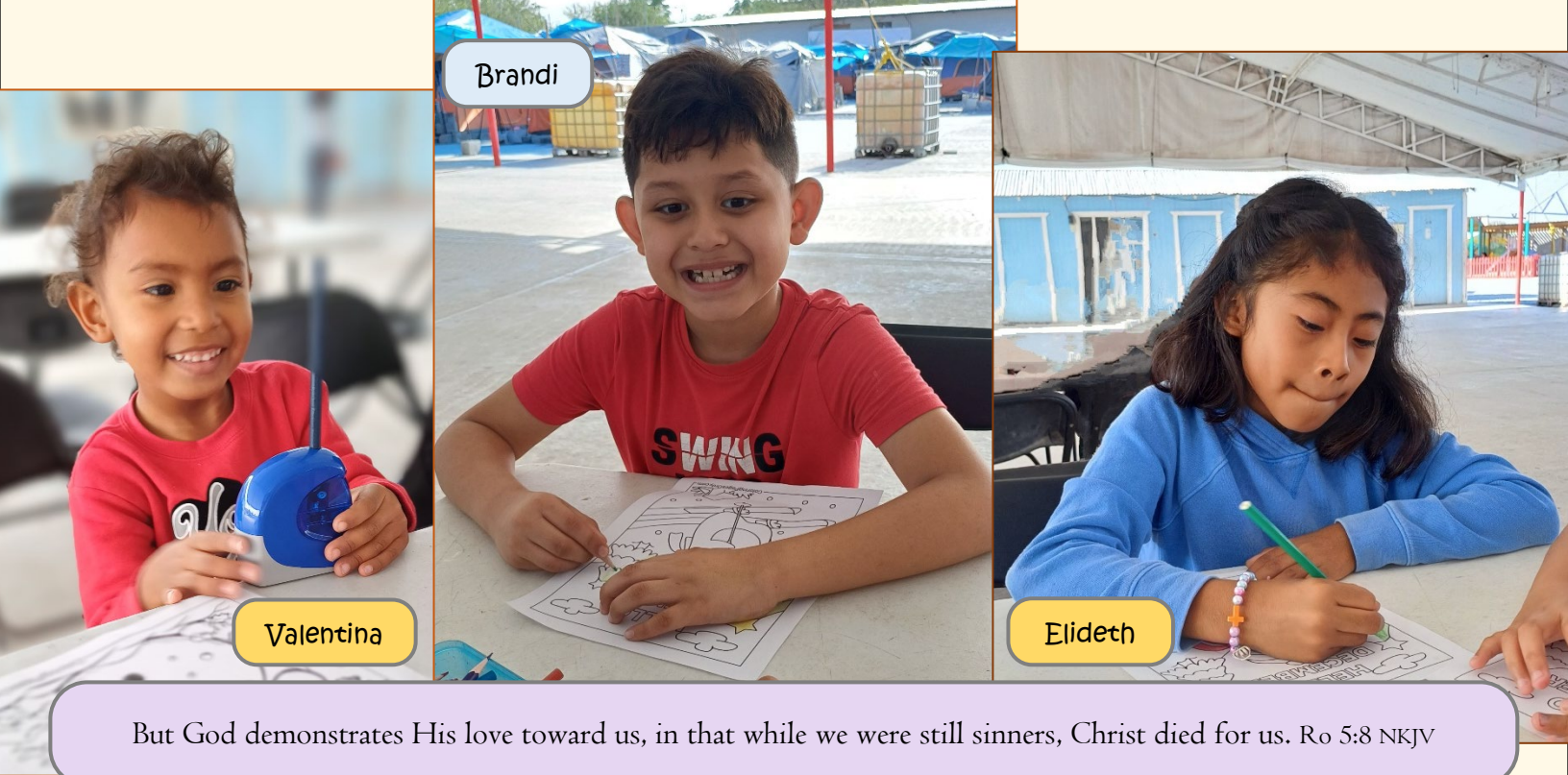
Pray for Yanick and Kenley, that the eyes of their understanding would be opened, as it says in Ephesians 1:18. Especially pray for Kenley as he reads through the Bible. That he wouldn't stop reading it; that he would understand what he reads; that he would be drawn closer to Jesus; and that he could grow and not be pulled into the glamour, lure, and temptations that the US tries to offer him.



Kenley's birthday and the day they got their appointment

Yanick making yummy Haitian food in the camp





But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Ro 5:8 NKJV

Suffer The Little Children To Come Unto Me -Marilyn Gehman

“Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Mark 10:14

During my few short months with ABM, the little children in Senda 2 especially, have wiggled their way deep into my heart. Maybe it’s because they are so welcoming; they always run to meet us with big smiles and hugs. Maybe because they’re happy to just be together even if we don’t do much. It takes so little to build that relationship: jumping rope together, blowing bubbles, coloring together, etc. They love it all! It’s not always easy to keep peace between them; nor is it easy to keep their attention during a Bible story. But the few who do pay attention and learn the lesson make it feel worthwhile. Let me introduce you to a few of my children.

Valentina, 4, has black curly hair, an impish grin, and chocolate brown eyes that can be sparkling with happiness one minute and shooting darts the next. She can be ever so endearing and *cariñosa* (affectionate), but she has a feisty, fighting side as well. When she gets that set look on her face and boldly scribbles on her neighbor’s coloring page it’s harder to love her. Valentina left her mother and her two-year-old brother behind and is now in camp with just her father, waiting for their *cita* (appointment). They didn’t have enough money for all four of the family to leave Honduras at the same time. No four-year-old girl was meant to leave the nurture and care of her mother and live in a rough camp for months on end, needing to defend herself against the teasing of boys much bigger than she.

Brandi faithfully came to Children’s activities as well. Sometimes the pure sweet faith of a child who doesn’t have the normal capacities of other children outshines all the others. As a small child Brandi experienced head trauma in a bad fall and has not completely recovered. His comprehension of Bible stories is incredible, if only he could get past the stuttering and be able to express his thoughts. One day on a coloring page he had written ‘*Papi Dios*’ Papa God.

Valesca wishes to have the *gringa* (me) as HER best friend. She loves to spend time with us, whether it’s jumping rope or coloring. She can get moody at times if she feels she’s not getting enough attention. She is attentive in class, mostly well-behaved, but shy if I give her the mic to sing. I worry about Valesca because her mother is not a godly person. Lately she has withdrawn somewhat and this Sunday she didn’t even come to children’s class.

Antoñio is the most loving of all the little boys in Senda 2. He’s just at that age where he’s so impressionable. Maybe 7 years old. He likes to please, he’s very affectionate, but he isn’t above picking fights, ESPECIALLY with Valentina. Part of him wants to be a protector of the younger children and help keep peace, but part of him wants to find someone smaller than himself to fight since he receives plenty of knocks from the boys bigger than himself. I tried to help Antoñio see that words can be fighting as well. Maybe he doesn’t reach over and scribble on Valentina’s paper, but when he calls her a liar, he is hoping to get a reaction out of her. Antoñio loves children’s class and quickly absorbs the details of the Bible stories.



Valesca

He can usually give a recap of the story including the lesson that was to be learned. I pray that the lessons will go deep into his soul and follow him through life, because his mother is not a Christian and likely will not take him to church in the U.S.

Alyson and her brother Thiago are two faithful attendees to any children's activities. Allyson is a bit older, maybe 11 or 12, and she has often helped to keep order among the younger children during class. Thiago is very shy but also well behaved. I believe Allyson and Thiago are in camp with both of their parents and it's obvious that they live under a Christian influence. Yesterday I was blessed to see both children in a Bible study with their parents and then later in a church service.

Said has been in camp as long as I've been visiting there. He has a beautiful smile, but he doesn't show it often. Unlike most Latino children that I meet, he is reserved and not very expressive. He prefers to speak English and will use that excuse to not come to class, because the lesson is in Spanish. He would rather come for just the activity part of class, but occasionally he sits in on the Bible Story. "Why you talk so slow to me?" he asked one day. "Well, you talk slowly in English, so I thought maybe you need me to talk slowly as well." ☺ I should know from experience that most people learning a new language can understand well what they hear, but the hard part is getting the words to roll off their tongue smoothly. Said, being 9 is one of the older boys in the range from 4 - 11-year-olds that come to activities. Again, I wonder what difference it would make if his mother were in camp. He is there with three older sisters and his father, who are all quiet. They say their mother is the most expressive one of the family. She is

already in Texas, having crossed a year ago. We continue to pray for Said's family, that they would be 100% on board for the Lord. Their father Thomas has been attending Bible studies for a while now, but so far none of the girls ages 13, 15, & 19 will voluntarily attend a Bible study or church service.

Graci's quiet presence graced our coloring table for a while. She didn't always attend the class but she would color. Her mother Tanya and I became friends, because she would often accompany Graci and join in the coloring which she found very relaxing. Graci's mother is a Catholic who believes that Faith is the most important ingredient in our relationship with God. I agree with her. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" Hebrews 11:6. But I believe she's leaving out another equally important ingredient in the Christian life: obedience. "He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar" 1 John 2:4. Tanya knows she is living in fornication, but she believes that she has time to get her life straightened out. "God gives every person a chance to make things right before they die", she says.

Jostin is a 10-year-old boy in camp with just his mother, who is quiet but strong in her relationship with God. Jostin is also quiet and always respectful and obedient. I appreciate how his mother keeps a close eye on him. He and Said are often together in the park, playing with their collection of little cars.

Elideth is one of the older girls that comes to class. I would say 9 yrs old. She has a dear smile and a big hug to give out. She doesn't cause any problems for me in class. Her mother faithfully attends all the services available: Bible studies, afternoon services, and Catholic mass. One concern I have is that Elideth's mother doesn't bring her daughters with her to the services. The older daughter Kayla, 13, is at a critical age and I feel like she could be getting a lot of negative influence in her life since her mother lets her roam around at will.

I love each one of my *hijitos* (children) very dearly. I love kneeling down on the concrete, opening my arms wide, and waiting for them to run in for a hug. I love to see them soak in the Word and learn songs about God. I love to see their excitement when they finally get their *cita*. But then I know that soon there will be a last photo together, a last hug, and a last goodbye. At least for now. I wish I could put them all in a good Christian school in the U.S. and help them find a good church to go to. I pray for them as they leave and start their new lives, that God would protect them from evil and that the seeds that were sown will bring forth fruit in their lives. I know that the same God who arranged the details that brought our paths together in Senda 2 can easily continue to orchestrate the details of their lives for His honor and glory.

Who Is My Stranger? -Paul Yoder

How does the Bible view migrants? Not surprisingly, this is a question that even comes up here at the border.

It's a question that I am continually asking myself, and I'm never really satisfied with where I end up.

There are several advocacy groups that work with migrants. Sometimes in listening to their conversations I hear and feel that somehow migrants have more rights and freedoms just because they are migrants, and that they should have every opportunity to have every want and need supplied for free. Maybe I'm just cynical, but I wonder how much political interest is behind these groups.

But then I hear conversations from the other side of the fence, and sometimes from our own people, that if folks would just take care of their problems in their own country they wouldn't have to come to the US and mess things up. Some comments are made about migrants as if they're barely human. I've even heard comments like we should be hunting them rather than helping them, which makes me wonder which kingdom we are a part of.

So, we have varied opinions and views about migrants and immigration. It can be a real possibility to take the easy path and lean towards what we hear in the news and not stop to think about how God looks at this migrant situation.

In the Old Testament God gave clear commands how His people were supposed to relate to the strangers and sojourners that came and lived among them. It's interesting how He was very clear in making sure the stranger was taken care of and treated humanely.

But what about the New Testament? What did Jesus teach? I would like to focus on one phrase that Jesus said, "I was a stranger and ye took me in", found in Matthew 25:35. That is one of the criteria we will be judged by. How did you and I treat the stranger among us? We can easily justify ourselves and ask, "Who is the stranger among us?" We can rest assured that it's not our family. Even though the Bible tell us how we should treat our family, that's not who Jesus was talking about when he said, "I was a stranger, and you took me in".

The Bible also talks about our *neighbor*, but the stranger among us is more than just another neighbor. The Greek word for stranger means foreigner, or someone who is not from our country. Someone who is not familiar with our country, or our culture, or our language, or our way of doing things. It's someone who needs help, someone who needs a friend, someone who is easily taken advantage of. God was very clear that the *stranger* was



not to be taken advantage of. In Exodus 23:9 NIV it says, "Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt."

Do we even know how it feels to be a foreigner? Is our lack of willingness to help the migrants coming into our country due to us forgetting our calling to be strangers and pilgrims? Are we perhaps too comfortable? Does the thought of opening our homes and churches to these *strangers* scare us? What would happen if we simply obeyed the implied mandate in Matthew 25:35? What if we don't? Can our migrant friends say of us that, "I was a *stranger*, and you took me in"?

Helping *strangers* can be messy. There's no guarantee that the people we help will turn out right. Jesus *gave himself* on the cross even though there was no guarantee that you or I would turn out right. In Romans 5:8 we read, "While we were yet sinners (strangers), Christ died for us."

As we move forward in 2025, there will probably not be as many *strangers* coming into this country. But can we still have a heart for the *strangers* around us? Whatever we do let's allow God's heart for *strangers* and not politics direct our response to the *strangers* among us!



Suffer the children to come...



Feeding the hungry



Getting Acquainted

Would you like to learn more about ABM projects and service opportunities? To schedule a presentation in your area, please contact Paul Yoder at abm4god@outlook.com or (731) 607-7166.

This newsletter is published by Anabaptist Border Ministries, affiliated with Living Word Believers in Commerce, Texas, and will be sent free of charge to individuals or churches requesting it. To receive printed or email copies, please contact Daniel Miller: dl5320@gmail.com (870) 844-5320

Service Opportunities:

We have an opening for a single man and a single lady. Having a working knowledge of the Spanish language would be a blessing. If you've been praying for an *open door*, this may be *God's answer to your prayer*. Please contact Marc Sommers at (903) 413-8280.

If the Lord leads you to contribute to this work, please make your donation payable to **Living Word Believers** and send to:

Lavern Kauffman
7250 CR 4617
Wolfe City, TX 75496

You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. -Victor Hugo

BOARD MEMEBERS FOR ANABAPTIST BORDER MINISTRIES

Chairman: Marc Sommers; marcls@icloud.com (cell: 903-413-8280)
Treasurer: Lavern Kauffman; lktx91@gmail.com (cell: 903-303-9298)
Secretary: Daniel Miller; dl5320@gmail.com (cell: 870-844-5320)

Assistant: Derek Overholt; dereknevalina@gmail.com (cell: 903-246-1737)
Assistant: Merlin Cáceres; mcaceres@emypeople.net (cell: 936-488-8454)