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Dear Friends,

I returned to Santiago Ixcán on July 14th. I struggle now to adapt to the extremes of heat and humidity, torrential rains and mud, bumpy potholed roads, and words that are lost in another language. The myriad of “lacks” of food, health care, employment, housing, and infrastructure in the lives of the people here are even more exaggerated to me coming from the Land of Abundance.

So, as to not be completely overwhelmed, I do what I know... I pray and I give cups of water to the many who come to my door.

It is a small thing, but no small thing.

I once heard that the first step in evangelization is hospitality. Ixcán Ministries mission outreach emerged from opening the door, sitting down with the ‘little’ ones - children, women, and men and offering a cup of cold lemonade (once electricity came to the village and refrigeration) or a hot cup of coffee or pinol (roasted corn ground into a powder and boiled into a beverage) depending on the season and the weather.

So it all begins, “I think in the small and the simple.” It is here in the sipping of the cold wet drink in the heat of the day or the warmth that pours from the steamy coffee cup on a cold rainy evening where hearts are opened, where pain is assuaged in the listening, where relationships begins to happen.

Like Santos pelted by torrential rains rushing to the shelter of my patio on his way home from the fields. With a cup of hot coffee in our hands he tells me of the struggle in his home, of his father’s mental illness and the effect it has on his wife and two year old daughter. “I can deal with my father’s violent outbursts, but I worry about my wife,” he says. I learned that he is building a house for his little family to live apart from his parents but has run out of money to finish it. “Come back at another time with your wife,” I say. “We may be able to help you with that.”



Or next comes my distressed unwed friend with her new baby. Carmen is also visiting and after a meal, we counsel and pray with her. She leaves with direction and a decision to return to church.

Or the children next door- Rosemary, Milady, Lily, and Meto- ages four to nine - who come daily. With cups of lemonade in our hands I listen to their stories and 'take' on life. They are my little ones, Milady calls me "Nan" (grandmother in Maya).

It is these types of visits that fill my days and sometimes my nights. It is the ministry of hospitality, the ministry of presence and listening that is so simple but can have lasting effects in the lives of the people who come to my door. However, in the end we are all changed somehow, because it is Jesus who was knocking.

Thank you for your continued help in allowing us to walk with the poor ones in the Ixcán, Guatemala. May God bless you and yours. Know you are in our prayers.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



In Remembrance:

There have been many losses in the mission this past year... Kathy's mom – Joell, long-time benefactor – Ann Didier, Ixcán Creations jewelry maker and leader – Josefa Lopez Carrillo and Kathy's faithful mule – Gitana. May they rest in peace in their heavenly home.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Ixcán Ministries is a Christian lay mission serving as a ministry of presence with the Maya people in the Ixcán jungle of Guatemala. We act as a bridge between cultures for the exchange of gifts to transform lives and society.

Ixcán Ministries is a 501(c) 3 organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

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