



Volume 13, Issue 4

September 2013

***“In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.” -Luke 14:33***

Dear Friends,

It has been some months since my return to the United States this visit, and being a legal resident of two countries and two very different worlds I am often jolted by the differences of each. Recently my 27- year - old nephew related a story to me - and I swear this is true - about a man he had worked with in construction over this summer. It has to do with possessions.

But I'll back up a bit first... his story stirred a memory of my early mission life in the village of Santiago Ixcán and immersion into not only a completely new reality geographically but also in how one perceives the world. It happened like this...

I was only 9 months into the new life I was still adjusting to since establishing the first mission base in Santiago Ixcán, the center of five villages in a region served pastorally by the Catholic Church.



The mission base, my home, was a small simple wood cabin divided into a wide living space to receive guests and to cook, adjacent to two small bedrooms with curtains instead of doors to provide for a bit of privacy. I named the newly built mission house *La Florecita* - the Little Flower - after St. Therese of Lisieux the patroness of mission. Numerous children, women and men passed through the doors of *La Florecita* - as I poured endless cups of coffee and water - listened to needs, and received many gifts. It was a house of hospitality for the people of the village as well as for priests and other missionaries who came to serve in the remote area.

A number of men from the Catholic Church had worked two months constructing the house and consequently there were some left over planks of wood propped up on the side of it standing there for some time, maybe months, I don't remember exactly.

Lazaro, a friend and a catechist (lay leader), of the Catholic Church and I were walking down the hill from the church one morning to *La Florecita* a few yards away. As we neared the house I noticed the boards that had been leaning against the house were gone - disappeared! The internal sirens went off in my head, my heart started beating and I frantically pointed my shaking finger toward where they had stood and cried, "Look, the boards are gone! Someone has robbed them!" Not skipping a beat in demeanor or pace, Lazaro simply said, "Just changed owners." "What?" He repeated, "Just changed owners." I felt disoriented as I tried to wrap my emotions and thoughts around his words. I repeated in my mind - just changed owners... just changed owners... and the words ever so slowly started working on me, diminishing the shock of intrusion - like a punch knocking the wind out of me - and out of my anger, and out of my distress. Just changed owners, hmmmmmmmmmm...never thought of it that way,



*Kathy and Lazaro Morales laying out boards for the mission house, September 1998.*

I chuckled. Didn't need the boards anyway, I shrugged.

Now, back to my nephew and his story... It seems that he and two of his 20 - year old something construction co-workers working about 115 miles from Bismarck, ND decided to cash their paychecks and take in a bit of the big city (ND size) 'entertainment'. While they were drinking at a popular downtown pub they ran into a team of baseball players playing in a local tournament and discovered the team had players my nephew and his co-workers had known growing up in Fargo, ND! Great!

My nephew left the group to meet his girlfriend and according to him, his co-worker, \* Bill, a hippy - sort with long blonde hair got very inebriated.

Meanwhile, one of the softball players, \*Mike, had found a wallet stuffed with bills on the ground outside the pub where they were drinking! He greedily grabbed the cash from the wallet (threw the wallet into some bushes) and with glee generously offered Bill some of the money. Like winning a mini-lottery, the two of them went on a spending spree squandering the "instant cash" until finally (it didn't take long) all the money was gone!

Bill, then reached into his back pant pocket for his wallet and yep... you got it - it was gone! He yelled to generous thief Mike, "That was my !@#%& wallet you found! We spent my whole paycheck!"

So, I'm thinking about the loss of possessions from these two different scenarios and two different viewpoints.

I'm not minimizing the devastation of someone who has been violated and robbed of their possessions and hard earned money, nor do I want to legitimize theft. It's a sin and it's wrong.

But my friend taught me a lesson that day about material things...It wasn't right that someone had stolen those boards, but I was holding on to them and I didn't need them. Rather than hoard, I needed to give. I needed to lessen my grip on possessions as symbolized by those wooden planks.

And I ask myself now, "What else don't I need?" (Perhaps someone else does need?)

I also discovered when I surrendered and accepted the fact that the boards had changed owners, I received freedom and peace. In the end, it's just stuff after all.

As for Bill and Mike - crime simply doesn't pay. There's always a price in doing wrong. Honesty is still the best policy. This time there was no change of owners - Bill robbed himself.

(\*Note: Names have been changed.)

Thank you for your continued support of Ixcán Ministries! May God bless you and yours as you have blessed us.

Paz y Bien,



Kathy Snider

#### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Ixcán Ministries provides a prayerful, pastoral presence through lay missionaries living in solidarity with the poor of the remote Ixcán jungle of Guatemala to learn from as well as to assist both spiritually and materially the people with whom life and ministry are shared. The organization strives to be a bridge between two cultures and nations allowing for the exchange of varying gifts between the rich and poor for the ultimate purpose of empowerment and transformation of lives and society.

Ixcán Ministries is a 501(c) 3 organization. Your contributions are tax deductible. You may contact us at:

Ixcán Ministries  
PO Box 51  
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Purchase Ixcán Creations products at:  
Susie Q's 411 W. Main Mandan, ND  
or on our webpage  
[ixcanministries.weebly.com](http://ixcanministries.weebly.com)

[ixcan\\_ministries@yahoo.com](mailto:ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com)  
Marlane Peterson  
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## ***Upcoming Sales Events:***

***Ixcán Ministries is helping to sell the Ixcán women's handcrafted goods at various vendor shows, home parties, church sales and other venues. Ixcán Creations was created to sell the goods which help the women to provide for themselves and their families. all proceeds go directly back to the women whose goods are sold. There are currently 31 jewelers and 7 weavers involved in the Ixcán women's group. Six women from the Bismarck/Mandan community help promote the product sales. If you are interested in hosting a Home Party, please let us know!***

***Oktober Fest - Mandan Dykshoorn Park -Saturday, September, 28th, 2013 11 am to 7 pm  
Ixcán Ministries has a booth under the big tent from which we will be selling the women's goods from. Hope to see you there!***

***Garage Sale and Bake Sale to benefit the Ixcán Ministries Scholarship Fund  
Saturday, October 5th, 2013 9 am to 3 pm  
709 5th Avenue NW, Mandan, ND***

***Home Party/Open House  
Wednesday, October 23rd, 2013 4 pm to 9 pm  
48 Captain Marsh Drive, Mandan, ND  
Selling the women's goods...lots of new product to see and purchase. All proceeds will go back to the women.***

***THIRST Event - Bismarck Civic Center  
October 25, 26, 27  
Ixcán Ministries will be selling the women's goods at a booth during the event.***

***Spirit of Life Church  
December 7 - after 5 pm Mass  
December 8 - after 9 and 11 am Masses***