



Dear Friends,

While spring flowers bloom in the 'north,' here in the Ixcán during the months of April and May, spring is 'summer' when rain rarely falls and the heat index soars. We sweat just sitting, we bake while walking under umbrellas to deflect the sun's rays, and in the hottest time of day with no air conditioners, we seek refuge in the shade of trees or in the wet coolness of rivers. Often a conversation will begin with, "Que calor!" (What heat!) and "No hay agua!" (There is no water!)

With little rainfall, the water level of the underground wells shrinks and the nearby Jordan River looks like a stream. To make things worse, our community water project- with the 3 inch diameter underground tubes that carry water eight miles away from its source, has gone defunct after twenty-two years.

So, everyone flocks to rivers and wells for drinking, bathing, washing clothes and dishes. Depending on where one lives, women and children can walk a mile or more with tinajas (plastic containers weighing 25 lbs. when full) or large plastic basins filled with dirty clothes or dishes balanced on their heads. They know the value of water. They suffer to get it.

And water is life.

Some people who can afford one ease the water shortage by collecting rainwater in 1100 liter (290 gallon) thick plastic tanks called tinacos. Even though rainfall is scarce, when it rains-it rains- and can fill a tinaco in less than an hour. The water is reserved mostly for drinking and saves countless trips to the river or well under scorching heat and heavy loads. Unfortunately, most people are too poor to purchase a tinaco.

Recently, I thought, *why not provide a tinaco for at least a few families?*

On the evening of April 14th, I met with co-administrator, Javier Gonzalez, to discuss developing a tinaco project. He drew up a list of materials needed: lumber, cement blocks for the base, tubing for rain collection attached on the edge of the roof and the tank. The cost came to approximately \$200.00.

The next morning, a young mother with a baby wrapped on her back came to my door. We had not met before

I invited her in. Maria swung the baby from her back to her lap and pulled the covering of the shawl from the baby's face, revealing-little Hansel. Her first child.

"He looks like a Vi (her husband's last name)," I said, smiling.

We sat across from each other at the kitchen table. Maria and her husband Pedro, in their early 20s, had recently moved into a vacant home on property owned by Pedro's sister.

In a sweet, shy voice Maria said, "Hermana, I have something to ask of you."

"What's that?" I asked.

"Could you help me with a tinaco?"

My eyebrows raised and I chuckled. "Maria, were you at my door last night with your ear to it, listening in? Javier Gonzalez and I discussed developing a tinaco project last night!" I paused. "I think we can help you."

She smiled and in a gentle voice said, "Dios es bueno conmigo. (God is good to me.) I prayed last night that God would



touch your heart and help me with a tinaco. My sister-in-law, who has been staying with us to help, will leave soon to return to her home and I am still weak from the cesarean birth of my baby. I need water close by."

Later, Javier and I met with Pedro. Pedro decided he could supply the lumber for the base. The rest of the materials we would provide. In exchange for the tinaco, he agreed to do two days of service.

Then Pedro shared a conversation he had with Maria: When I came home from work that day, I asked Maria how it went. She told me that Hermana Katy said 'No.' "Well, at least you asked," I said. Then I saw she was crying, and I asked her, "What's wrong? Why are you crying?" And Maria replied, "La Hermana said 'Yes.' She said 'Yes.'"

I recently visited Pedro, Maria and Hansel to see how their tinaco was working. We had just received a hard rain.

Maria was happy to see me. "Here it is!" as she led me to it. I pounded on the plastic white tank that reverberated like a drum.

"Is it helping?" I asked.

"*Bastante. Está ayudando mucho.*" (A lot. It's helping a lot.)

She called Pedro, who was working nearby to join us. He shook my hand and said, "We are happy and satisfied and so thankful for the tinaco."

After chatting outdoors, we sat inside around a wooden table covered with a floral plastic tablecloth. Maria placed a tall plastic cup of water and a plate with a boiled plantain in front of me. "For you," she said.

I lifted the plastic cup to my lips and drank the water like drinking an answered prayer.... Maria's.

Thank you for your financial support and prayers for Ixcán Ministries. May God bless you and yours and provide the needed rain for those suffering drought.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



## Mission Update:

We continue to reach out to the poor through the Luchadoras women's group, medical emergency assistance, providing water with the tinaco project, and beginning a latrine project. We are in the process of offering our women's Ixcán Creations jewelry and weaving products on-line.

Covid-19 is at a high level in Guatemala and most recently in the Ixcán. The department of health has mandated our schools to operate once again from the distance.

Kathy to date has remained Covid-free and will return to the U.S. in August 2021.

### 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.

Our programs include- Scholarships, Community Library, Women's Micro-business, Medical, Housing, and Food Assistance, Spiritual and Pastoral Accompaniment, and Promotion of Peace and Justice.

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

Contact us or send a donation to:  
Ixcán Ministries  
PO Box 51  
Mandan, ND 58554

[www.ixcanministries.org](http://www.ixcanministries.org)  
[ixcan\\_ministries@yahoo.com](mailto:ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com)  
Judy Van Lishout, President  
(701) 989-3737

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