

Dear Friends,

Recently I attended a lovely outdoor wedding in southern California on the property of where a one-story beautiful stucco house stands on a hill overlooking land dotted with avocado and fruit trees. Tropical flowers, vines and plants grace the area and even the bathrooms, with exquisite tan tiles and gleaming porcelain, added to the charm. I felt like I entered a mini-spa to do a basic function.

When Jesus mandated his followers, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation," I never connected that mission mandate with well, building latrines.

Recently, after a Luchadoras women's group meeting, one member, Cristina Jimenez, pulled me aside. "Hermana Katy," she whispered. "Do you think you could help my family with a latrine?" My eyebrows raised. "Don't you have one?" I asked. "We were sharing one with the family nearby, but now they are forbidding us to use it. We have to use the bush around the house." Cristina was referring to herself and her four daughters — Chavela (15 years), twins Petrona and Glendy (12 years), and Yojana (8 years). "Let me look into it," I said.

Javier Gonzalez, our on-site administer in Guatemala, and I consulted with Carmen Jimenez (Cristina's sister who lives near her home). "What is the latrine situation?" we asked. Carmen confirmed Cristina's dilemma. Moreover, Milca, Carmen's daughter-in-law informed, "You can't believe what happened with our latrine!" Then she recounted how an overnight guest, a nurse from our village health post, went to use their latrine. Shortly thereafter, frantic cries pierced the air from the outhouse! They rushed along the muddy path finding to their horror, the young woman waist deep in sh..! The soggy, weakened wooden floor of the latrine had fallen through! They pulled the poor woman out of the stink, muck, and excrement and showered her off!

I moved on the latrine project.

We chose the composting latrine model used at the mission house. The simple wooden structure stands on a tall



cement- block base built off the ground. Inside, are two adjacent holes where a cement-molded seat stands over one of them. The system separates the urine from the dry matter, converting excrement into fertilizer after about 4 months. It serves a dual purpose.

Javier figured out an estimate of materials needed plus labor. Each composting latrine costs about \$550. I presented the project to the Board of Directors who authorized the construction of two latrines – the first beginning with Cristina and the second for Carmen! In exchange, we will ask each recipient to do some community service hours.

Meeting this practical need of the poor doesn't feel that 'evangelical', but I know proper hygiene practices are vital for good health and improves the quality of life for the people.

And that is 'good news.'

Thank you for your financial help and prayers as we walk together with the materially poor ones of the Ixcán. Our humble presence is making a difference in the lives of the people there. And in ours.

May God bless and keep you.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



Mission Update:

Kathy returned to the United States on August 12th. She is presently in North Dakota for some months to do reverse mission work. Javier Gonzalez will administer and supervise our mission outreach programs in conjunction with the leadership committees of each project. Kathy is in close contact with Javier by telephone.

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.

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