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Tyler Yates

Dear Pastor and Church

November and December were very eventful months. I was able to present the ministry at many churches, meet new people, make new friends in the ministry, and see faces I had not seen in years. The Lord took care of me the whole time, but I was excited to go to Mexico. I went down to Mexico in December. I left December 12th and returned January 6th. It was a trip that really began knitting my heart with that area even more so than before. I was able to take two Americans with me to visit for the first time those areas, and they loved it! In my time there, we visited many cities, people, and pastors. There is so much I could say about the trip, but I will only mention one of the highlights.

On the 26th of December we went out into the jungle to visit something called a *milpa*. A *milpa* literally means a cornfield, but the people use it now to speak of a property they grow different crops and fruits on. One of the ladies we've helped through the clinic, name Martina, invited us to visit her dad's *milpa*. Martina has two kids, Gretel and Gael. Gretel is about 6 years old with a cleft palate and mental disability and Gael is about 10 years old and a round, energetic kid. This time I was able to meet Martina's dad who is 72 years old and healthier than me. He is a short man named Fabian, with white hair and eyes that slightly drupe. He and I quickly made friends and started talking about his life. He owns a large piece of property where he basically lives. He grows all kinds of things, anything from pineapple to dragon fruits. At their *milpa* there is no running water or electricity. He is also a *chiclero*. This means he harvests "chicle" or gum from special trees. He will cut the tree from the bottom and makes groves all the way up to the top, allowing the gum to run down the tree into a bottle.

After a two-hour drive in the back of a Ford Ranger, we arrived, wet and beaten up by the limbs that were hanging onto the road. He showed us around the property, and we ate a fresh pineapple that had not quite yet sweetened. On the property they had a little hut made of sticks and a roof made of guano palm, a very common plant in the area. I spoke to Fabian to pick his brain on God and to my surprise he wasn't a Catholic. He told me he didn't believe in idols or that your works can save you. He told me that he believed only Jesus can save you. Though he knew this fundamental truth, he and his family are very doctrinally illiterate. Later that evening, when the sun went down, we went hunting. It was me, Fabian and two other guys. We separated into two groups, me and Fabian and them. It was nighttime so we had headlamps on and started walking into the dark jungle. I wanted to experience a little bit of how they live, and I sure did get to. It was a little rainy, about 75° and we walked for a long time. We didn't shoot anything, but it sure was an experience to hunt in the jungle at night. The next morning, we heard the howler monkeys yelling in the distance. Later, we got up and prepared to leave. Before we left, I got a picture with Fabian. I put my arm on his shoulder, when he then reached up, put his arm around my neck and drew me closer to him. He then called me his *suku'un* which means "brother" in Mayan. He told me we are brothers in Christ. It was very touching to see him express himself that way. The Mayan people are not usually expressive in that way, so I knew he considered me a good friend for him to have done that. His daughter Martina lives in a village named Petcacab. I asked her if she'd be willing to have a Bible study in her home and she was very excited at the idea. I'm still on deputation in the States, but there is so much work to be done with the Mayan people of Mexico. Pray that God will continue to open doors in these villages.



Praises:

- Safe survey trip to Mexico
- Church Relationships
- Witnessing opportunities

Prayer Requests:

- Full Support
- Mexican Paperwork
- Continued Deputation Safety
- Funds for a vehicle in Mexico

