

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

It has been 2 weeks since we wrote you of what God seems to be doing in the life of 72 year old Miguel. The man who in the past has mocked us for telling him we would pray for him and who would visibly become angry and violent at the mention of Scripture now welcomes us into his home and listens attentively as we read the Scripture. He asks questions about the Scripture. He pleads with us to pray for his family. On a recent visit he asked if when he prayed he should direct his prayers to God or to the Virgen. Miguel is a sick man and sometimes his mind comes and goes as we talk to him of the Scripture. Our approach is to go with one simple truth of the Gospel message each time we visit (normally 2 or 3 times each week). Each time we return we review the previous truth and share another principle of the Good News that Jesus saves sinners. Miguel's wife is always there when we visit so she too is listening and hearing these same precious truths. Please continue to pray for Miguel & his wife Juani.

As amazing as what God appears to be doing in Miguel's life is what our Great God is allowing us to see Him do in Miguel's network of family and friends. Many years ago I read a book called *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples* by Win & Charles Arn. The premise of the book is that the New Testament principle of evangelism/discipleship is built on what the authors identify as the oikos principle. They write:

The word oikos is the Greek word for "household". In the Graeco-Roman culture oikos described not only the immediate family in the house, but included servants, servants' families, friends, and even business associates. 'An oikos was one's sphere of influence, his/her social system composed of those related to each other through common kinship ties, tasks, and territory.'

In other words, the authors describe a picture of NT evangelism/discipleship as one that was at its core a process rather than a program. The process of evangelism occurs most logically through our network or web of friendships and family ties. Let us give you a living example of what appears to be going on in La Poza. Please stay with us, this update might be a bit longer than usual but what we will describe may be the most significant event to happen during our year and nine months of ministry in La Poza.

Web Friendship #1: Four weeks ago we were attending the Sunday morning worship service in a community about 25 miles from La Poza. We often attend there on Sundays and are friends with the pastor and the people. As we were exiting on that Sunday the pastor told us that the previous week he had an appointment at a doctor's office in Valle Hermoso (a city some 35 miles from La Poza). While there he engaged a couple he had never met before in conversation about the Gospel. Their names were Nacho and Martina and they also happened to be from La Poza. Nacho also just happens to be Miguel's oldest son. Pastor Joaquin told us of his conversation with hopes that we would be able to follow up with them. This happened in much the same time frame of changes in Miguel's life. This past Saturday we had the privilege of sitting with Nacho and Martina and hear them describe some of what Pastor Joaquin had talked with them about from the Scripture that day. We gave them each a copy of the Scripture and told them if they would like, we would be more than willing to come weekly and study the Bible with them. They were very much desiring that to happen. We have plans to meet Saturdays with them to begin studying the Scripture together. Oh yea, they also mentioned the "change" they had seen in Nacho's father, Miguel.

Web Friendship #2: On a recent visit with Miguel he happened to mention to us that one of his best friends in La Poza is a man named Marcelino. We know Marcelino. His wife, Sylvia, has attended our Sunday Bible study in the past. She is a professing believer. His stepdaughter, Lilia, regularly attends the same Bible study. She too has professed Christ as Savior. Sylvia has told us that Marcelino is not a Christian and in fact is hostile to the Gospel and has told us to be very careful in how we engage him in spiritual matters. The day we found out from Miguel that Marcelino was a close friend Robin and I both wondered aloud whether God might choose to use Miguel to reach Marcelino. Last week Marcelino just happened to have some physical needs that called for Robin to make a house visit. After attending to his physical needs we turned the subject toward Marcelino's friend, Miguel. We told him of the change in Miguel's words, actions and attitudes. We told him of his willingness to hear and understand the Scripture. Marcelino listened attentively but said nothing. Once again though, this web of friendship that God has established provided the opportunity to sow some seed!

Web Friendship #3: This coming Saturday we have been invited to the wedding of Daniel and Ada. Daniel happens to be another of Miguel's sons. We've also been invited to the fiesta that follows the wedding. Many family members and friends will be there. We're anxious to see what opportunities might pop up in the oikos web this week.

There are more strands to this web I could share and other webs where we have been given unusual opportunities to minister the Gospel but this email has already grown much too long. So we close with just a few thoughts. We believe that we are just now beginning to see fruit of a year and nine months worth of relationship building, language learning, and cultural understanding. This may be the most significant time of our year and nine months here. We are most certainly experiencing a season of ministering the Gospel like we have not experienced up to this time. From the human perspective the reasons for that are that our language abilities have grown and relationships have developed. Just being here for this length of time has communicated something to the folks of the community. From the divine perspective, it may just be the time of harvest. We don't know that yet, but we are encouraged with how we see the harvest ripening.

What this means for you: We absolutely need you to pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in La Poza like you have never prayed before. We know the enemy will not sit passively as the work advances. We expect his attack. We have seen it already. But we rejoice knowing that we serve a Sovereign Lord who is infinitely more powerful than any attack Satan might throw at us. But nevertheless, we need you to pray that we will be wise to his attacks and full of faith that God will prevail as we faithfully obey His call.

Together with you in the Greatest Cause,

Steve & Robin