



Dear Friends and Family,



When it rains, it pours – don't we have a saying like that in English? Halle and Kathy often make fun of my English, saying that the more I speak Spanish the more I forget common sayings and phrases in English. However, I think I have this one right. Well, lately in Nicaragua this saying has been literal. Recently someone told me that the rain level this season is now equal to the amount of rain that fell during Hurricane Mitch. While we are thankful that the rain has been spread out over four months and not a week like most hurricanes, it still has caused a number of problems. There have been a number of deaths because of flooding. Many roads are being torn apart because of the constant rain. Many bean crops have been lost. Recently the complaint heard most on the street has been that beans are now \$0.93 a pound when before they were \$0.41 a pound. Now that may not sound like a big deal, but when you live on \$50-150 a month and beans are a big part of your diet, a change like that really affects your budget.



Now living on that kind of salary is not easy, and if there is one thing that amazes me in living down here, it is the generosity of people who are barely getting by. Just the other day the gentleman who is planting beans and corn on our back property came by with a huge bag of beans for Thomas and me. We have never charged him for using our property; mostly we like that it is being used for something more than weeds until we are ready to do something on it. And while he has given us gifts from past crops, this was a lot of beans. Knowing how expensive beans had become, I asked him why he wasn't selling these beans. His reply was classic, "Everybody has to eat!" I didn't have the heart to tell him that we just don't eat that many beans☺. However, it was a great blessing to take to Thomas' mom's house.



Now while people may be generous with what they have, it is often hard for people to save money for a rainy day. Therefore, it is very common here for people to ask us if they can borrow money. Looking back on this year so far, Thomas and I, as well as the sports center, have loaned out close to \$1000 for a number of different purchases or projects. We do not charge any interest and just hope that the loan will be paid back within a reasonable amount of time. Some are and some are not. One lady wanted to rebuild her small home in order to be better protected during the rainy season. Another gal needed to finalize some university payments to be able to receive her diploma. One guy wanted to buy a bed while another man wanted to purchase a horse. One lady wanted \$13.90 to start selling soup from her home. While we are not exactly a microfinance loan organization, it has been a blessing to be a blessing to others.



As for blessings, there have been a number of them lately in our lives. It was a wonderful treat to have a short-term team come from my home church in CA this past August! I enjoyed meeting new people and seeing them get a passion for what God is doing at the sports center. It was also a blessing to have my mom come visit for a week just in time for Samantha's 3rd birthday! I think you could say that she experienced rain like she never has before. We are also thankful for God's provision financially. For those of you who support us please know that we so appreciate your gifts. And while your money may be loaned out to buy a horse, eventually we do use it for being able to live and do ministry.



May God rain blessings on your life today!

Seeking Him for life,

Amanda y Thomas Gutierrez



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