

March 2020

Latin America

Johnny & Ivonne Cruz



Dear friend:

I am dead tired. It's ten o'clock at night. I left Antigua, Guatemala, when it was not yet four in the morning. Tegucigalpa's glimmering lights are now visible in the valley deep below through the bus's frosted window. It's a modern, comfortable bus. Most of the people around me are asleep. Some are watching an absurd movie on the bus's TV screen. Ivonne, my sweetie pie, is down in that valley waiting for me. How I long to see her after a week on the road! But I could not feel more satisfied for what God has done.

This was a different kind of trip. We met with our Latin American team in January to hammer out plans for our work. Two of those guys said they needed help with their marriages. These are highly effective leaders, but at times good leaders need help to repair the home-front. I was able to make space in my schedule to come on the last week of February. The counseling sessions were spectacular.

Three of the guys on this team see me as their pastor. And a good number of the Latin American National Directors on our team do too. It is hard to describe the feeling of being able to love and serve these leaders. If this were not enough, our director for Peru's kids, a young widow, have adopted me as a grandfather. These are the sweetest and most beautiful kids you have ever seen. It doesn't get any better.

As I gaze at those far lights, there are other reasons that make me feel satisfied. In two weeks, my sweetie pie and I are headed for Pensacola for one of the greatest days of our lives. Our son, David, is marrying a wonderful Christian girl! I cannot even imagine how good it will be to stand there seeing my son take a wife. God has been so good to us!

There is also a feeling of expectation. It's something I could only have dreamt about. We have just hired an extraordinarily gifted pastor as the INSTE promotor for Honduras. We are already experiencing great fruit from his work, and he's just beginning. He was way out of our league, but God has his ways. He always does.

Yet there are other feelings mixed in between. There are worries. Two years ago, during our first Summit with our directors for South America, we all decided to hold the 2020 National Directors' Summit in Spain. It was a big leap forwards in many regards, not least that we would meet with all of our National Directors together for the first time ever. They were all going to save during two years so as to fly over. At this height, a bunch of them are saying they didn't cut the mustard. And there is another ingredient in the pot. The coronavirus epidemic is rearing a mighty ugly head. We may be best advised to steer on the prudent side and cancel the summit. What a wretched decision!

There is another feeling deep inside. It is gratitude. Gratitude to God for giving me the privilege to do all of this. And gratitude to you for your prayers and support to make the INSTE ministry to these countries possible.

In Jesus' love

Johnny & Ivonne