



WILDFIRES

Every Nicaraguan summer, the rainfall diminishes and all that used to be green, turns brown. In the Mosquitia, the grasses are so dry, and the sun so intense, that people believe that the heat off the rocks is enough to start wildfires. Others recognize that when someone carelessly throws a lit cigarette, or often when small fires are lit to burn trash, just the slightest breeze can create a blaze that can burn out of control over hundreds of acres at a time.

The grassy hills of Mosquitia are dotted with pine trees, and upon closer observation, one notices that each tree looks like it has been scratched by bear claws in a “V” shape that leads down to a triangular plastic bag, funneling and catching the sap from the wound. Pine sap is collected and put into large sacks that, when full, weigh 90lbs each. The Miskito people sell their sacks to a company where they are stacked and later put onto long trailers pulled by semi-trucks to be shipped to China for processing into many different products. Currently this is the biggest industry the Miskito people

have in order to make money. While the people know that the process of collecting sap is stunting the growth of the trees, and will eventually kill them, they feel this is the best way to provide for their income.

This year was particularly dry and all the community was nervous because the pine sap is like gasoline, once it catches fire, their hopes for making money are dashed for at least 4 months. We were on an obligatory trip to Managua when I got a desperate call from Ervin, our mission-base caretaker. “There is a fire coming, and I can’t control it alone!” Along with fervent prayers, we made some quick phone calls and sent Ervin some back-up. The fire was contained, praise God. The next day, again a call from Ervin with the same message. After calling for help again, the fires were stopped, but we didn’t know what to expect. The entire trip home through the pine savannah was sobering as we observed for miles and miles how the fires had ravaged the countryside.

As we approached the base, we saw evidence of a miracle, beyond a shadow of a doubt. The fires had decimated the forests around the hangar and mission



house, but right at the perimeter fence line, the fires could not advance. We could scarcely believe our eyes! Fire was still burning on tree stumps, smoke still in the air, nothing but scorched earth everywhere except within the gates of the mission base. The whole community also had to recognize that only God could have spared us in such a way. What a testimony to the work God is doing through us. Sadly, everyone in Tronquera, and most other communities lost their pine sap, but I do believe God was sending a message of hope to them, redirecting them to raise crops rather than destroy their natural resources. God still answers prayers, He is our Provider and our Protector. What a reminder of His mercy and love!

God bless you!

Caleb, Glenda, Jordana & Enoch

**Your AWA Mission Family stationed at the
AWA Nicaragua Mission Project:**



**Caleb Runne and Glenda Escudero,
Jordana and Enoch**