

Feb 2010 Report

This week is Transfiguration Sunday. The two mountain top experiences speak to us of the closeness of God and the exhilaration of that closeness...When we experience these things it can be as if our feet are not touching the ground for a bit.

The reality is You don't really have to go to the top of the mountain to experience that closeness. This past Saturday night we had the young adults meeting. The two men did not show up. I had nothing specific planned except to do a bit of planning mostly because I had a cold and did not have a lot of brain power that day. We were just chatting when all of a sudden we were talking about violence against women. Eventually one woman openly admitted she was being abused. We talked about the need for forgivenessnot necessarily reconciliation because that is not always possible...We talked about the need for an escape plan...We talked about how important it was to not judge women who put up with it. We talked about what the Bible said and how to interpret it in these situations...all of which was not on the agenda...intimacy developed and love was shared....We have reached a new depth in this group...and it makes my heart sing. It is astonishing what God can do if you don't have an agenda.

We returned from Synod a week ago and it was a long exhausting, interesting, and informative meeting. One of the more interesting reports was the ADSIM report. ADSIM is the Mission out reach program of the Moravian Church. It sometimes gets funding from the United Church of Canada...It has the only filtered water setup in town and has just gone commercial. They are looking at ways to beat the price that Coke and Nestles charge for water. We are trying to get this community to buy locally. Somehow it feels good to be combating the forces of Empire...Coke sells thousands of plastic bottled coke, water and other stuff. You only have to walk down the street to see the refuse of these products. So the feeling is that if we have to use plastic bottles at least use those that support local mission. ADSIM is also doing some lumbering work as well as reforestation and lots of other little projects all over the country. This is where Don continues to work and he is really enjoying the work. At Synod heard that there had been internal problems at ADSIM last year. Rev. Stedman Bent has been appointed as Executive Director for an interim period of time. Don is working with Stedman to evaluate security issues in terms of flow of money and paper trail for receipts as well as the public image of the organization. He is enjoying the challenge.

In some ways the Synod reminded me of our United Church conference meetings...people pass motions with no idea of how to pay for these things...and they argue and get excited just like United Church folk...and share in music and worship and Bible Study

And amazingly enough, at the end of the week we had all the work done, a new Superintendent elected with a new provincial board (which has gender parity as well as clergy and lay) and everyone went home tired but happy. Just to show the commitment to this meeting, many of the delegates had to travel by bus for about 30 hours to Rama and then get in a punga (a big canoe) and travel for another hour or so and then they get to Bluefields. This is dedication to God and the greater church.

The Sunday school is very active here and we are planning to form a children's choir....The youth are also active and the Youth leader and I have been discussing the need for them to be singing more regularly...We are looking at ways to revitalize the morning worship which is not as popular as the evening service.

The school year has just begun so my yard is full of adorable young people with white shirts and blue skirts or pants, with lots of energy. The school board is looking for ways for me to be more involved in the school. I might be leading the devotions in the morning. I will find out in the next week or two.

The regular activities continue on. We have prayer group twice a week and Bible Study once a week. This week I am doing a memorial service for a young man that was murdered because he went for a walk. He was 36 years old and left behind a wife and six young children and his elderly mother. This is the sad part of living in a violent community. There are some parts of the city that are more dangerous at night. Drugs are a huge problem here (because we are on the coast and the drug traffickers come up the coast). At this point I don't see ways to get the community to work on this together. I am hopeful that as my Spanish improves and I learn more about this community, that God will open a door.

We are also busy planning our Anniversary Service, which is also Ash Wednesday. We are asking our outgoing Superintendent to preach and inviting all the other churches to come and join us. This Saturday we are having a planning meeting to map out the upcoming year. I am looking forward to it and I am looking forward to what comes next. The weather is changing again and we are entering the dry season so it is getting warmer. That means fewer mosquitoes!

It was great to have Jim Hodgson, National Staff (and our boss), with us at the end of Synod and here in Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi). It is always great to talk to other Canadians and hear about Canada firsthand. We have also met a number of Americans and Germans here that speak English.

God Bless all of you and don't forget to support the Mission and Service Fund.

Deborah and Don