

Date: Sat, 20 Nov 2010 21:16:18 -0600

Subject: Christmas Letter

Both Don and I grew up where snow was necessary for it to feel like Christmas. So the visual effect is not here (thank God-we got sick of shoveling it!). The sun shines and it is hot. Everyday feels like August in Canada. It is our second Christmas here and we are more accustomed to our environment. This week our church and the church across the street celebrated Harvest time. The churches were all decorating with sugar cane and palm branches. The children all sing and recite verses. When this day is over Christmas preparations begin. Two days ago at school I heard music playing so I stepped into the classroom to hear better. The 4th grade kids were standing around a small CD player practicing Christmas Carols. They laughed at me when I joined in singing "Felize Navidad". Today I saw a young women carrying a Christmas star as she walked by. The Christmas stars are made up of individual spikes all stapled together at the base of each spike. It makes a big round star with some glitter and different colours. On November 27th we will decorate the tree and the church. Last night we went out to a local restaurant and it was decorated with Christmas lights. Just like every church in Canada we will light our Advent Candle each Sunday. But here it is electric because candles have to be bought in Managua and it is too hot for candles anyway.

In our house we will soon put out our funky crèche we bought in Costa Rica. Mary and Joseph are two jolly over weight Creole people. Bananas hang from the sides and the animals are typical to Central America. We will soon put up a small tree in the corner of the room.

Christmas here is not about going to the mall or a pile of presents under the tree. It is more about celebrating joy and reaching out to others. Today our young adults began to prepare clothe bags that will hold personal supplies for women in the jail. We are also preparing bags for young women in a maternity house. These young women have no family. If they did they would be home with their family and not in a shelter. The Director is thrilled we are coming because these women get no visits at all.

Soon the young adults and youth fellowship will go out Christmas caroling at the homes of shut-ins. On a personal level two of our kids and our granddaughter are coming to visit for two days. They are going to San Salvador and going to take the bus to Managua. They are going the extra mile just to spend two days with us and that is a great Christmas present.

You can hear the Spirit of Christmas in the songs memorized by the young ones. You can feel the Spirit of Christmas in the enthusiasm of the young adults talking about buying soap for those that are marginalized. You can smell the Spirit of Christmas in the kitchen as the women prepare their special baking.

So our Advent is starting...getting readyreaching out....laughing and celebrating the joy of the new baby that is coming....we can't wait!
So the Blessing of Christmas be with all of you and may you all have a great Christmas

and a Happy New Year.

Don and Deborah

----- End of Forwarded Message