

## Letter 26 from Nicaragua – Deborah & Don

January 27, 2012

Hello Everyone,

I feel like I have not written for a while so I will try and make up for that. We have just returned from a wonderful , awesome vacation in Grand Cayman. The diving was spectacular and the hospitality wonderful. The only downside is that it was expensive. The highlight of the trip was a dive in Stingray city. The stingrays followed the smell of the squid in our hands and danced around us trying to find the food. They have poor eyesight but a good sense of smell. We were also surrounded by tons of fish zipping all around us. One large female Stingray sat on my head and rubbed her belly on my head for several minutes. I had to hold on to my regulator to stop it from popping out of my mouth because I was fighting the urge to laugh. It was spectacular. I had rented an underwater camera for this afternoon and although I have never taken pictures underwater I got a few good shots. The other dives were on reefs and sunken ships and were also very good. There was no current so these were pleasant easy dives. Every time I climbed back on the boat I would think to myself “thank you God that I was able to do this one more time”. Don also enjoyed this activity.

We went to a turtle farm, the botanical gardens and walked around George Town as well. It was a refreshing rest that we both needed. It is often hard to get a day off and I work 6 days a week so by Christmas I was beginning to feel very tired. We stayed at a lovely Bed and Breakfast and met lots of neat people.

Life in the church goes on. This week we take communion to the shut ins because the congregation had Communion on Epiphany Sunday. I am doing a baptism this week which is always fun. School is out right now for the summer break and we go back to school the 2nd week of February. Yesterday the Warriors came to the house (several of them showed up on Monday and Tuesday when they heard we were back in town) and they ate lunch and watched a movie. Several of them are going into high school so they will not be able to meet in the afternoon. We asked them if they wanted 2 different groups or change the day to Saturday and they voted. It was unanimous: they want the group to stay together so Saturday it is, starting again when school starts. We also brainstormed with them about ideas for projects for them. They generated a long list, which included a trip to Canada (over and over again) as well as a baseball tournament and field trips plus picking up garbage around the school. They were eager and energetic. Then they watched I Robot with Will Smith.

Today the men were just finishing up the second phase of the cement wall around the school. This second wall will stop traffic that comes from the street into the school property. We have several more sections to fix so the work will have to continue. It is my dream that before we leave this wonderful place all the sections will be finished so that the kids are safe.

The sad news this month was that the son of Rev Stedman and Miss Tamar died from Kidney disease. We were in Managua on our way to the Caymans so we were able to attend the funeral. It was a packed house because Rev Stedman is well known and respected throughout the country. The other sad news is that they are moving to Bluefields in the near future. I will miss them fiercely and so will most people in this community. But it is understandable. Their daughter-in-law and 7 month old granddaughter are in Bluefields. So they have put the house up for sale and have started packing.

Our young adults are going to meet tomorrow night and plan a day to make heart shaped cookies for the Minstrel show. They are a fun group and mostly women so we do a lot of laughing at women's jokes.

Today I received my Observers for December and January. So I spent the afternoon reading and soaking up all the UC of Canada news. At times we miss the United Church so getting the Observer is really important to both of us.

We still are having a good time and love it here but we sure love hearing from folks. So Happy Valentines to everyone.

Deborah and Donald