



NICA NEWS FROM ED & LINDA BAKER FEBRUARY, 2009

February has been a month of discovery – all about where we now live.

The first thing we discovered is that we needed to move! We talked with the folks in our neighborhood (only about 40 houses), and found another house for rent. We moved the first of February and love our new house. It's VERY safe – across the street is the commander of the Army, a house with 4 police officers, and 2 houses with politicians. One house has an armed escort available for the residents. One of the guards told us there is no crime on our street!



Since moving into our house, there have been several things we needed. None of our appliances from Paraguay were brought to Nicaragua since Paraguay had 220 volt electricity and here we are 110 volts. We decided to buy new TV & stove, but found a good used washing machine & refrigerator. Our washing machine is a Maytag, vintage about 1988, and only cost \$85! It weighs almost 200 pounds – and runs like a champ!

Moving into a new house always means new sounds. Ever hear an iguana walking across your sheet metal roof? Just imagine a person dragging a bag of concrete blocks across your roof – that's the basic sound. We have about a 3' iguana that likes to sun on our roof, he does get our attention.

We spent several days traveling with Pastor Marvin Matey. He is the President of MEFEL, responsible for over 70 churches. He has identified 19 churches where he would like us to work improving the water situation. We were able to visit 4 projects this month. Many of the projects up in the mountains will involve developing existing springs. This will be a new experience for us, but we are looking forward to the challenge. We are also looking forward to working up in the mountains – it's MUCH cooler there!





As you can see from the photos, women washing clothes in rivers is a universal situation in all developing countries. The other photo is of a very friendly family we visited. They have a well, drilled by the government, but before the project was completed the presidency changed parties, bringing it to a halt. That was several years ago. Pastor Marvin wants to build a church near their house, and complete the water project, which will be for a community.

Having Pastor Marvin's attention in the car for a few days was great. When we visited a location close to lunch time, the family always prepared us a lunch. We were also welcomed with refreshments at each pastor's house. We continue to bless our food and the hands that prepared it for many reasons! We also learned a lot about Nicaragua. The country grows a lot of bananas. We learned there are over 10 different classes of bananas; the US is so limited in their scope of bananas! There is also a lot of coffee grown in the mountains. The coffee that grows under shade will yield a better bean. Nicaragua has 2 harvests a year. The 1st harvest is for only selected mature beans. The 2nd harvest is called "doble maño" (double handed), and the picker will often strip the leaves with the beans.

Our 2nd outing was with Amigos for Christ, looking at projects they would like for us to tackle. The project is at Santa Matilde, which is only about 15 minutes from Chinandega. The area has 350 homes, and has been assisted by many different US aide groups. Most of the residents were displaced from Hurricane Mitch – but that was about 10 years ago. Amigos for Christ has drilled them 3 wells; 2 with hand pumps, and a deep 240' well. The 2nd well is waiting for a pump to be installed, and has been waiting since 2001. The community has yet to become organized and take ownership of these, and many other, projects. We will continue to hold off on the installation of the pump in the deep well till the community can get organized. We visited the site with Luis Esquivel. Luis is Project Director with Amigos.



We'll be heading to the states March 1st for 3 month. We have a training to attend, our grandson's first birthday to attend, visit some churches, and hopefully get a little rest.

IN HIS SERVICE,
ED & LINDA BAKER