

The Water Log

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Dear Friends,

The excitement and anticipation is starting to build as it gets closer to the time to leave on my 2nd trip to **India**. **Michael Glesner** will be joining me this time as we depart on **October 21**. We will be working with **Village Ministries International** and contacts they have in **India**. I've had a couple of phone calls with the leaders there and it sounds like we'll have plenty to do. The plan is to teach the pastors attending training seminars from all over the country how to use the **SWIM** units for evangelism as well as how to help those with water needs. It sounds simple, but there is a lot involved as we will have to search for some supplies and evaluate the needs in an entirely different culture.

Please pray for us during this very important 3 week trip. We feel God has blessed us with a wonderful opportunity, but it's also a very expensive venture and we want to make the most of it. Also keep **Vickie** in your prayers as she'll be holding down the fort in **Estelí, Nicaragua**. She also needs to renew her residency papers while I'm gone, so that will be an added stress. Fortunately, we now have a dog and cat to keep her company and guard things. They're still in the training stage so she'll probably be protecting them more so than the other way around, but they do keep us entertained with their antics.

Rafael will continue the water projects here in **Nicaragua**, of course, but he is slightly handicapped by our lack of sufficient supplies. Follow ups have been somewhat neglected lately, so he will be able to do quite a few of those at least. We are looking forward, hopefully, to a pallet of equipment to arrive shortly after I return that should fill up the storage room. It's our first time to attempt this type of shipment, so we're a little apprehensive about how it will go. We're trusting the Lord to work out all the details and paperwork.

The last 2 weeks of work have been kind of exciting for us as we have broken "new ground", so to speak, in 2 different areas of **Nicaragua**. Some of the regions we have been working in are pretty well taken care of and we now have to look to areas farther away and more remote. **Bocay** is one of these new regions and remote it is! Over 5 hours on poor roads to reach the beginning of the area. Over **250** communities in need of our help. Makes me wish we had an airplane at times!

At times we have people ask what a "normal" day is like for us and what we do on water projects. So I'm including a short article describing just that:

"It's just a little further." Wilbur, the Nicaraguan health care official, assured me. Which, when translated to real world language means you better be checking the fuel gauge to make sure it's full. Branches and tall grass were swiping at the side of our trusty Toyota pickup, which was already making full use of its four-wheel-drive capabilities on the hole filled, winding mountainous path they generously call a road.



"You can stop here," he finally said as I wondered how I would turn the truck around for the return trip. As we exited the mud covered pickup, we heard loud praying from a small wooden structure. The praying stopped and two men walked from the building towards us and after some introductions, they explained that a woman from the village was in the hospital and they were praying for her as they waited for our arrival.

We then set off on foot, making me wish that I had remembered my rubber boots as the water saturated ground was squishing up over my Wal-Mart tennis shoes and making my socks wet. Crossing through a couple of

fences in the light rain and following a walk/cattle path between banana trees and coffee plants loaded with beans, we arrived out of breath at our destination. This was the house of the health promoter of the 80 home village. All that really means is that he is the go-between for the people of the community and the poorly equipped health clinic 25 miles to the southwest. He might have a little first aid training and can most likely read and write.

After a few opening comments from Wilbur about our reason for being here, Rafael and I then launched into our teaching/training session. We are so familiar with this process by now that we hardly have to think about what the other person is going to do or say. We know our parts and know how the rural people will react. Recognizing from their previous prayers that these people are Christians makes it easier and gives us some common ground. Even though we know this, we still present the gospel along with the presentation as it's intertwined and we never know if the listeners fully have a grasp.

The two main leaders of the community pick up on the process of making chlorine very quickly and the wife of one of them also gets involved in the practice. We see the light in their eyes and the smile on their faces when they realize they have something very valuable for the welfare of their community being presented to them. Thanks to some information from the health department, most now realize that their water is unsafe to drink. But with the government financial conditions what they are, they also realize that help for giving them potable water is not likely to take place in their lifetime. This equipment puts the ability in their hands.

After the prayer of dedication of the chlorination equipment, and the explanation of how Christians from the U.S. have made this ministry possible, we present each of them with a Bible for their part in showing Christ's love to others. This is always my favorite part as many of them clutch the Holy Book to their chest and get teary eyed. To possess a Bible in some of these rural areas is a luxury most can ill afford. Most likely some of them cannot read, but our hope is that someone in the family can and will make use of it. I always close with the following comment, "This Bible is very similar to the water equipment just presented to you. If you don't use it, it is only a shelf ornament and nothing is changed. If you use it faithfully for its intended purpose, it can change the life of you and your family. That is our desire, to better your life physically and spiritually."



Once back at the Toyota, we realize that some of the young men have cut several "heads" of bananas with machetes and left them in the truck bed. It's their only way of showing their appreciation and so we gladly accept them and shake hands and give hugs before leaving. Except for a few of the bananas that we eat on the way back to take place of the lunch we missed, we will give the rest to Rafael's mom to sell out of her house to supplement her meager income.

So later, 3 hours of driving, we arrive back in Estelí and I drag myself into the house, weary but happy for the opportunity of serving our Savior in another community. After a day of rest and organizing, the trip will be repeated again and again. This is what we do here in Nicaragua. And although it's a feeble attempt at trying to briefly explain what it's like, we really can't possibly describe how it becomes a part of us and our relationship with God. I wish all of you could experience it. But then again, maybe it is just something special that the Lord has given to us and others might not feel the same way. Thanks again for providing us with the means to continue in this work.

Blessings,

Greg & Vickie Stout