

LIVING WATER INT. MISSION TRIP TO NICARAGUA-Oct.17-24, 2015

Our crew of 11 people from the 1st Presbyterian Church of Cheyenne left town early on Oct. 17. Tom, George, Kevin, Stan, Norm, Joe, Marty, Jory, Fran, Theresa and Caroline drove to the Denver Airport where we boarded a flight to Houston then transferred to a flight to Managua, Nicaragua. It was a bumpy flight and it was dark by the time we got there, went through immigration and customs. Afterwards two members of the local Living Water Int. staff, Ronald & Norman, met us helped load up and drove us to one of the local motel's to spend the night.

We got up the next day, Oct. 18th. We had breakfast then held devotions, which is customary each day on a Living Water trip, and packed up our luggage. The two LW staff members picked us up, loaded all the luggage on the top of the van and drove us to their headquarters in Leon, which we would use as a base for the next few days. We met Douglas who was the manager of the facility and lived there with his wife and their young son. This facility was a walled in compound which housed their guests & the vehicles and equipment that we would use to complete the tasks that we came here to do. We settled into the dorm style rooms, unpacked and then went to the dining room to meet the cooks and have supper. We all carried some of the 288 tooth brushes and tooth paste tubes that Delta Dental in Cheyenne donated to us for this mission trip and we put them all in a big bag to be used for the hygiene program.

The next day, Oct 19th. we held devotions in a covered veranda where Douglas introduced us to Yader, the head driller, and Rodger, the assistant driller and Hacknier, the hygiene coordinator. These are the staff that will lead us in our drilling and hygiene work at the village of Osmon Zapata. We had a nice breakfast and loaded the trucks and bus for the trip of about 20 miles to the village drill site. Several people from the village were there to greet us and 8 to 10 men were already digging mud pits and ditches near the drill rig which living water staff had already set up. Hacknier said about 50 families of 4 to 5 people each lived here and they had only one shallow well that wasn't good water to serve the village. There were several children there to watch the work. She lead everyone in prayer hoping that the well would bring clean, safe water to this village. Yader and Rodger explained the drilling process & equipment to the 8 men on the drill crew, then we began drilling the 4 inch pilot hole. Hacknier showed the 3 ladies around the village and met the women and children. The villagers had to purchase two tanks of water to use in the drilling process which a tractor delivered to the site. We drilled the pilot hole down about 145 feet, taking soil samples every 5 feet, before we pulled the drill stem out and plugged the hole for the day. After the ladies finished with hygiene lessons, some of the children were playing baseball with a ragged ball and bat. Jory and others of the crew played with them when they had spare time. Fran took a turn at pitching to the little ones. We were tired as we traveled back to Leon but we had started our work and met some nice people. Everyone needed to clean the mud off so we drew numbers to see who would use the shower first because only the first or second would get warm water.

The next day, Oct 20th, we held devotions, ate breakfast, loaded the truck with bags of bentonite and readymix concrete, some 4 inch casing pipe and headed back to the village. It rained last night so the roads and drill site were muddy. The drill crew changed out the 4 inch bit for a 7 inch bit to ream the hole out bigger for installing the casing. The local workers helped by mixing the bentonite with the drill mud so it would carry out the extra material from the bigger borehole. The cooks at the Leon site sent a hot meal with us every day for lunch while we worked at the site. By this time everyone on the drill crew was getting the routine down, 5 of us had prior experience but the other 3 caught on quickly. Rodger

kept a keen eye on the whole drilling process. The 3 women on the hygiene crew were the same way, they had some living water on-line training and met with a lady, Marilyn, from our church who had been on previous trips, so by now they were pros at it. We brought a football and some soccer balls with us and played with the kids with them but they seemed to like baseball better. A few of the older children attended school outside of the village in the nearby town of La Paz Centro. We finished reaming out the hole and pulled out the drill stem. When we left we took a different route back to Leon, driving through the farmland on dirt roads. When we got back we joked with the guard, Santos who stayed at the living water complex most of the time. I asked him what he did with all the hot water for our showers and he laughed & said he didn't have any. After dinner, Douglas and his family took us into town to see some of the sites. Leon was the Colonial Capitol of Nicaragua in the 1600s and has a lot of old Spanish buildings but many are in bad shape because of volcanoes, earthquakes and hurricanes from the past.

The next day, Oct 21st, we held devotions with a new guest who brought his guitar and sang hymns with us. We enjoyed the Nicaraguan coffee that was usually ready when we met and one of the cooks said she would get us some if we wanted, so we all put in our orders for some to take home. We loaded some bags of gravel and concrete on the truck, hooked up the air compressor and headed to the village. The hygiene team brought the toothbrushes and toothpaste for the women and children at the village. It was rainy off and on today. When we arrived at the site we changed the drill pipe and bit out for a flat plate so we could begin setting the 4 inch PVC casing pipe. Some of the crew helped Yader cut slots in the bottom 20 foot section to allow water in. We began lowering the casing into the hole allowing time for the glue to dry in between sections. Once the pipe was in we placed gravel in around the pipe up to the top of the first few sections, then we mixed up some concrete and put it in around the pipe to seal the well above the static water level which we measured to be at 37 feet down. We then hooked up a drain pipe from the casing pipe and put the hose from the air compressor in and began cleaning out and developing the well. It was good water and produced about 40 gallons per minute. We had more time to help the hygiene team and play with the kids and talk with the villagers today. We moved the drill rig away from the well, cleaned it up using water from the new well and filled in the mud pits and ditches. The men from the village began building and setting forms around the well to pour a pad to set in the pump stand. Rodger got the dedication plaque out of the truck so the workers could put it in the concrete pad but I noticed it was the wrong one. It listed another group as the well sponsor so we took it back when we went back to Leon. The men finishing the pad after we left. I went through to plaques at the office and found the one from our Church. That night after showering a big truck full of well supplies showed up at the compound and our crew had to help unload it. At dinner the cook said she had brought the coffee we had ordered. Everyone got a workout that night so we all slept well, snoring was extra loud.

The next day Oct 22nd. We got some coffee, held devotions, had some breakfast and loaded the truck with 2 inch pipe, the pump, sucker rod, rope, tools, pump jack parts and headed for the village. We took a picture of the crew with the correct plaque, showing us as the sponsor, but we didn't look too happy because it would be our last day with the villagers. Joe took up a collection and Rodger took us to a sporting goods store where we bought some new baseballs, bats and gloves for the village kids. When we got to the site the villagers were getting the site ready for the dedication. The drill crew began sanitizing the pipe and rod and we began placing them into the casing pipe with the rope supporting the pump. The sections were 10 foot long and we set the pump at 80 feet so it didn't take long until we were assembling the parts on the top and then the handle. Yader pumped it up and we had water,

everyone cheered. We changed into the cleanest Living Water shirts that we had. The villagers gathered around and the dedication began. The village leader gave a speech, the preacher gave a prayer, Marty read a bible verse, Joe presented the baseball equipment to the children, Norm presented the plaque to the village from our church and the mason workers placed it on the pad by the well. We said goodbye to the villagers and workers who helped us and loaded into the bus to head back to Leon. We put away all the equipment and cleaned up. Living Water staff took us to a restaurant at the beach on the Pacific about 20 miles south west of Leon where the sun was just setting. The waiter had a time explaining the menu to us, George ended up with a big fish. When we got back, we had to pack up all our luggage and be ready to leave early next morning.

The next day Oct 23rd. We held devotions, had breakfast, loaded the bus and headed back south to the city of Masaya near the volcano of the same name. We spent some time shopping there, stopped for a carryout lunch at a chicken shack to eat on the bus while going on to Managua. We went to the motel we stayed at the first night after we landed. We said goodbye to our Living Water hosts. We visited a nearby Mall and returned to the motel for dinner and a Hot shower.

The last day Oct 24th. We got up early and caught the shuttle to the airport at 5am. The airport was already busy with lots of people leaving for the weekend. The flight was good but rainy crossing the Gulf and into Houston. Everyone made it through immigration and customs with minor glitches and we boarded our flight to Denver. It took a while for our luggage to get off the plane but Kevin found out that his came in on an earlier flight and was waiting for him there. We rode the shuttle to the parking lot where our 3 cars were and drove to Cheyenne. A perfect ending to a great trip, meeting great people through God's love and guidance. It bonds us all together, it's a life changing event, Joe said everyone should get to have this experience. He's Right! With God's help we'll do it again.