

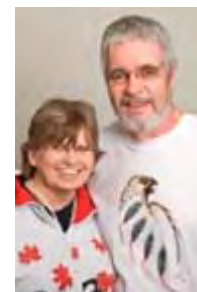
# Letters from Overseas

## Deborah Elliot and Don Gibson Write from Nicaragua

Greetings from Puerto Cabezas,

April 2010

It is very hot. For the past two weeks the temperature has gone up about five degrees, which means it is really hot. I ran out of clean shirts this week because even when sitting the sweat runs down your face. We have had no real rain since the end of January. So it is also dusty. Most of the roads are made of red clay, and when it dries out wearing a bandana over your mouth is essential. The dust coats everything. Our well was dry for about two weeks, but the municipal water supply came on so we have water again. However, the municipal water is very unpredictable so many people still don't have water.



This week one of the elders of the church died. She led the prayer group, never missed Bible study, sang in the choir, and had served as an elder and a trustee. Her name was Miss Pat. She remembered me from 20 years ago, so she had a special place in my heart. The wake lasted all night, with food at midnight. At 1:00 p.m. the service started at her house, led by the Rev. Steadman Bent. Then we all walked to the church and I led the church service. Several members of the choir spoke or sang to honour her. Then we walked to the cemetery and sang as they closed up the tomb. It was a sad day for the whole congregation: her choir robe still hangs on her chair in the front row of seats.

I have been teaching at Doris Robb Gaby Primary School. The board of directors are all members of our church. I teach kindergarten to Grade 6 on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings. Language is a challenge, because many of the children in the kindergarten do not speak Spanish. Many speak Miskito, so translating things into Spanish to facilitate learning doesn't work. Lack of supplies and poor nutrition further complicates the situation. School starts at 7:15 a.m. so I finish by 10:00 a.m. On the bright side, the kids are enthusiastic and adorable.

The other thing we have just started is an English Club for the community. This is for folks over 10 years old. We have 31 people registered and a long waiting list. Several youth from our school are in the class. I am working with the fifth grade teacher Simon and another volunteer. The class is two hours long and the first day (last Saturday) some of the students asked us to go longer than two hours, so I guess they were enjoying themselves!

Don is still working at ADSIM [the Development Department of the Moravian Church] and enjoying himself. He is feeling better than ever. Our Young Adult group is doing well and the Women's Fellowship decided to meet twice a month instead of once a month. This Saturday I am giving a workshop on pastoral visiting and listening, and confirmation classes continue.

Also this Saturday is the last cooking lesson for the UN project. All of the participants have really enjoyed themselves. The women really find it funny that Don is in the class and having a good time. They tease him quite a bit. I usually show up just in time to eat so I get teased as well. They are going to pick a date to have one last meal together, with each of them cooking one Creole dish.

We are both learning a lot and this place has become home. Our ministry is bringing us both great joy and blessings.  
In Christ's name, Deborah and Donald

Visit our global partnership photo site (<http://unitedchurch.smugmug.com/Nicaragua>) to see Deborah and Donald's photos.

**Deborah Elliot and Don Gibson** are United Church of Canada overseas personnel serving with the Moravian Church in Nicaragua. The work of this ecumenical partner and the work of overseas personnel are made possible through your gifts to the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada.

