

THE ROAD TO MULUKUKÚ

By Michael Norman (excerpt from Episcopal Fellowship newsletter)

“It is very important to leave your valuables behind and only carry what you can afford to lose. The road is not always safe.” (Dorothy Granada in Managua, Nicaragua, January 1993). It is the evening before we are to set out for an eight hour journey to the remote village of Mulukukú, where we will spend several days. We have heard these words before, but being in Nicaragua seems somehow to make them much more real.

For me, many things seemed much more real during our one week sojourn in the birthplace of Sandinismo. Prayer, scripture, faith and worship. Food, water, friends and family. Work, money, health and homes. Suffering, death, injustice and oppression. On the edge of survival, far from the choking cloud of first world affluence, creation’s gifts come into sharper focus, and the sinfulness of global economics are thrown into high relief. Unlike the Sandinista years when health care was universal, the Nicaraguan poor are now left to suffer and die, as basic survival services are denied in order to guarantee that payments to international bankers are regular and prompt.

Dorothy Granada has been a member of EPF since her self-described “conversion” to non-violence in 1978. In 1989 a women’s cooperative in Mulukukú invited Dorothy, who is a registered nurse with 35 years experience, to open a healthcare center for women. Since then Dorothy has lived in a simple bamboo house on the edge of the Mulukukú rainforest, without electricity, running water or telephone, working tirelessly to provide health care services to people who would otherwise have none.

She runs a family clinic four days a week (serving 30 patients each day), provides training for local health promoters, organizes health education workshops for families, transports patients to and from hospitals in Matagalpa and Managua, runs an ongoing Pap screening and follow-up program, sponsors periodic women’s clinics for family planning and pre-natal care and provides referral assistance for sterilization, surgery, etc. **Most recently, Dorothy hosted a delegation of doctors, dentists and medical students from Manchester College who treated 1,300 patients during a two week clinic in Mulukukú.** Full of life, energy, hospitality and cheerful optimism in the face of such suffering, Dorothy inspired us with her simple way of life, profound faith in the God of justice and passionate commitment to the service of the poor.

Our visit to Nicaragua was an unforgettable, energizing and inspirational lesson in the ongoing process of discovering what it means to be about God’s business. We unpacked our bags last week, but I expect to be unpacking thoughts, memories and reflections for many days to come.

Note added by Ed Miller: 1993 was the first year of Medical Practicum in Mulukukú, Nicaragua.