

Nicaraguan “Bridge of Hope” Project Update, July 11, 2010

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9

“But you are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession. You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

Building the bridge in Nicaragua – I felt like I had one foot out of the boat, but wasn’t sure what it would take to move the other. I had the desire to work on this project, and I was willing to apply my knowledge and skills He has given me towards this project. But chosen? The previous month He had given me a message to share with other people on being willing to step out on faith, and it is based on Matthew Chapter 14, which tells of Jesus calling out to Peter to have faith and get out of the boat and come to him on the water. So the week before I left, I prayed to God that he would give me a clear sign, whether or not I am chosen for this project, a sign that would signal for me to take my other foot out of the boat and onto the water, and to commit my whole self to this project.

With that, Mike and I landed in Managua on Friday, April 23, and met Avery Bang, the Bridges to Prosperity representative, at the airport. We traveled almost 4 hours to the Town of Matiguas. On Saturday, we met with the villagers from the Gavilan (aka Patastule) community, the Matiguas townspeople, the mayor of Matiguas and his council of leaders, and the town’s engineer. The purpose of this meeting was to make sure our Mission Team had the support of all parties involved. This meeting was very successful, and you could see the excitement in everyone’s eyes as we all left to go to the proposed bridge site. We accomplished all of the preliminary field work that day – bridge centerline, measurements, foundation locations, etc. and completed the initial bridge design calculations that night.

You know, looking back now, it was almost like we were actors playing our part, acting out a script that had already been written.

Even with that statement, we must face several facts:

Not everyone will give: Last month a local hair salon held a hair cut fundraiser, and raised \$500 for the bridge. As I sat and talked with folks, one family came out of the restaurant next door and stopped and I told them about the project, and the mother and children seemed very excited. And then as the father was asked if he wanted to buy a \$1 ticket for a prize drawing to support the bridge, he simply stated “NO, I don’t want to buy one”, and walked away. Wow, not even a single dollar.

What about the \$25,000 for the bridge materials? Is the Nicaraguan Bridge project only about raising the money? I often find myself losing focus too. No, it’s NOT about the money. It’s not even about building a bridge. It’s about growing relationships with other Christians, those on the mission team from our church and the Nicaraguan people, working hand in hand, mixing concrete and laying block, nailing the bridge planks in place, and praising and thanking God for the given opportunity to do so. Yes, the money will be given and the bridge will be built, but will people’s hearts be changed, and will OUR walk with God be closer as a result?

What about the Bible story of the Samaritan helping the wounded Jewish man lying beside the road to Jericho. When are we going to stop READING this story and start LIVING our own story? Who will reach out and supply the bandages? **Who will give** so the materials for the bridge can be purchased to help the people in the Gavilan community? Will you be part of the story?

Finally, not everyone is called to go. Jesus only called one person out of the boat, while all of the other believers stayed in the boat. If you are not called to go help build the bridge, then support those who go: support the project with your offerings and, most importantly, with your prayers.

Now, what about my question about being chosen for this project, a sign from the Lord to get out of the boat? Actually, on the flight from Miami to Managua, God answered that prayer when I pulled out this daily devotional book on the plane, one I had picked up at church two weeks before the trip and had not yet opened, and as I opened it to DAY 1, and saw it was on Matthew Chapter 14 where Jesus calls to Peter to get out of the boat and to come to him on the water.....