

## Nicaraguan Mission Team's "Bridge to Hope" Project Update March 21, 2010

As I wrote out what I would share today, I ended up with seven pages of notes... it looked more like a sermon, and I was not going to preach...that's Ben's job. Then I realized this could go past 12:00, and that's Ben's job too.

**But Seriously**, 5 minutes.

**Last Sunday**, I went forward to ask Pastor Ben to pray for the bridge project. See, since last year, the project has been in virtual stalemate. Basically we were no closer to building the Nicaraguan bridge than this time last year. The reason - I was trying to do it all myself, without God's help.

**That all changed** last week, when I went forward and turned it all over to God. I admitted that I could not do it on my own. I needed His help. I asked Ben to pray for a response from Bridges to Prosperity, who I had emailed a four page letter the previous night explaining the need for our bridge project, requesting assistance, any assistance, for the project.

**In the March 7 edition of Parade** was entitled a story "Building Bridges of Hope – moved by a plight a world away, one man takes action". Ken Frantz, the founder of Bridges to Prosperity, has seen the same need our Mission Team has, the need for walking bridges, and shares the same passion as our church. He has constructed more than 40 walking bridges since 2001. According to the article, over the next few years, they plan to focus their efforts in Zambia, Ghana, Liberia, Guatemala, and ...Nicaragua! His non-profit organization helps train churches in the construction of walking bridges, just like the one we are planning to build.

**On Monday of last week**, God answered my prayer, an email from Milosz with Bridges to Prosperity – they were in Nicaragua looking for bridge sights, and all the ones he had visited so far were "less than stellar" and ours "sounds like a contender". God still answers prayer, and God still opens doors and believe me God has opened a lot of doors this week. Just yesterday, a member gave me a faith commitment that he would go to Nicaragua and help with the bridge's foundation work. This would ensure the concrete is properly mixed by the villagers, the foundations are properly reinforced, and the bridge's anchor points done correctly in the foundations.

**Scripture Emphasis:** NCV James Chapter 2, Verse 14

“My brothers and sisters, if people say they have faith, but do nothing, their faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save them?”

**The Nicaraguan Bridge project** is a “faith based” project. Personally, this could easily be one of the most challenging projects I have ever been involved with. Project details include – further analysis of soil conditions, taking pictures of the site, foundation design work, excavating and pouring of concrete foundations, stringing and securing the steel cables between bridge supports, placing and securing slats between these cables. Finally, placing a placard on the bridge which will read, “This Bridge is dedicated in the name of Jesus Christ”. As you can tell, there is a lot of work to do.

**Estimated time-line**, start to finish, is one year. Mike McCormick and I are going to Nicaragua next month to survey the site and do the final soil analysis. We will be meeting Milosz with ‘Bridges to Prosperity’, an organization who will help with the design of the bridge. Because if I am going to put HIS name on it, it’s going to be done right! The final bridge design will be completed in May. According to Mike, the driest months are February, March, and April. This is obviously the safest period to build a suspended walking bridge across a river. So, the expected in-service date is May, 2011. The bridges foundation work will be done by year’s end.

**What’s going to happen between now and then?** The Nicaraguan Mission Team and you, the church congregation, must pray; pray that God will provide the resources for this bridge. A bridge for the school teacher who must wade across the river to go to work, a bridge for the farmer who must carry his fresh milk across to sell in the city, for the mother who must cross to get needed supplies for her family, and finally, for the person too sick to cross to receive the medical care they need, and without hope, passes away.

**My desire is to also share the focus** of this mission project with family, friends, and co-workers, allowing them to search their hearts, and if they so passionately choose, support this project and experience God’s blessings in their own lives. And when the bridge is finished, and we see the picture of a village of God’s people standing on that bridge, rejoicing and praising Him, we can all say, “I’m really glad I decided to support this mission project”.