



Marcia & Gary

Keeping Up with the Joneses

International Training Director with CrossWay International

April 2015

Back in the Saddle Again

While I've kept busy sharing my ministry around the country, it had been some time since I'd been overseas. As I took my first cold shower of 2015 in my Masaya, Nicaragua hotel room, I thanked the Lord for bringing me back to this beautiful country.

Several miles away, in CrossWay International's training center at Laguna de Apoya, workmen continued construction on the second floor, while pastors and church leaders gathered on the first. Within the hour I began to teach two days of intensive training on the gospel: what it is and is not, how to clearly share it, and how to respond to questions and objections that arise. And, as often happens when the gospel of grace is clearly presented, at least 2 of the 16 Nicaraguans indicated that they had understood for the first time the message of



salvation by grace alone apart from their good works and put their trust in Christ for their salvation.



On the third day of this mission trip, CrossWay Nicaragua's field director and I met with architects to discuss plans to build a 100 plus seat amphitheater on the training center grounds. A team from Northwest Community Church in San Antonio is planning to begin construction on this addition in June. Since they will be the first mission team to stay in the second floor dormitories at the site, I spent the rest of that last day developing a "To-Do List" for the training center building. Please pray that God will provide the funding needed to complete both the building and purchase materials for the amphitheater construction.

Back to School?

Back in October I was attending a theology conference in Dallas, when I had an idea. The speaker was the president of a Houston area Bible college that was aggressively establishing satellite campuses in numerous remote countries. Although I have been blessed to bring much needed training to pastors and church leaders through 2 to 4 day conferences, I began to imagine the impact CrossWay could have, if we could offer courses that led to a Bible college or seminary degree. Could our facilities in Nicaragua, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Liberia become satellite campuses also?

As I prayed and discussed this idea with the CrossWay staff, I was given a green light to begin discussions with this school. And as I learned about the technology they were using, and their strategy of expansion, another seed was planted in my mind. If, while developing this partnership, I were to take a few courses and write a few papers on what I was doing, I could complete a Doctor of Ministry degree in the process.

It's been over 15 years since I completed my Master of Theology degree at Dallas Theological Seminary. Then I was preparing to be a pastor, not to train international pastors. I imagine that I could learn a few things to make my ministry more effective. I've also been told that a doctoral degree will likely open some doors with Christian groups and governmental agencies abroad.

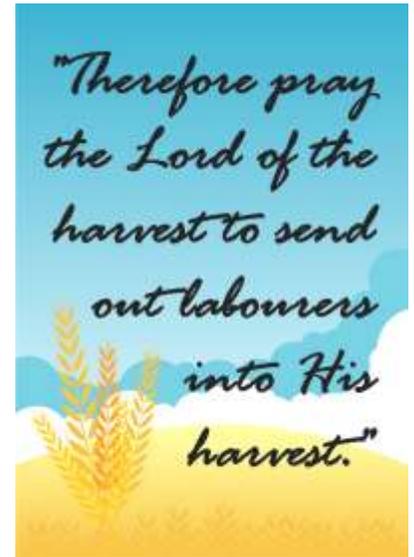
I need much prayer over these possibilities. This will require great effort for me. It will also be a financial challenge and step of faith. I am also asking God to protect me from pride, which could become a temptation when seeking greater knowledge (1 Corinthians 8:1b).

The Trail Ahead

My next trip is to Nicaragua on June 10-27. As was mentioned above, I'm leading a team to do construction on our training center there. In addition to beginning work on the amphitheater, there will also be some finish out work to do on the building, such as painting, cabinetry, installing the drop ceiling, etc. During the evenings the team will work with local churches to help equip their members through seminars and workshops. If you would like to be a part of this team, please let me know. The dates are June 20-27 and the expected cost is \$2,000 per person. There is also a great need for donations to pay for the materials needed for this project. So if you cannot come along, but would like to help complete this facility, please indicate "Nicaragua Training Center" on your check memo line or PayPal donation special instructions window.

In August of this year I am also planning to return to Kenya. I have been invited to lead a pastors conference in the city of Matuu, about 75 miles west on Nairobi, the capital city. This is the hometown of Daniel Matiku, one of the Bible college students that CrossWay Kenya has been supporting. We are hoping to train about 25 pastors from that community during a three day conference. I have one pastor planning to attend so far, but it would be better to have another. Please pray for this trip to be funded and staffed soon, and that God will use it to transform the churches of Matuu, Kenya and other place that He leads this team.

It was a great blessing for me to have the opportunity to visit supporters and friends in Florida last month. Special thanks to Suncoast Community Church for allowing me to preach, and to members of the First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks missions teams for meeting with me and listening to how God is using my ministry. Please keep me in your prayers.



Let It Go, Let It Go

When Marcia and I drove back from Florida last month, we brought my mother-in-law, Shirley Linington, to Texas for a visit. While we were watching TV one night, we saw an announcement that Disney was going to release a sequel to the movie *Frozen*. To which mom retorted, "I guess they just can't *Let It Go*."

That reminded me of the response I often get when sharing the Gospel. Even after I've explained that an eternal relationship with God, heaven, forgiveness, and everything else God promises His children is given as a free gift to those that trust in Christ, many still assume that we must give God something in return. I've come to believe that this misconception is born in us. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Good works cannot earn forgiveness for our mistakes. Faith (or trust) in Christ is the opposite of work. It's resting on the finished work of Jesus. Only when we change from the mindset of earning God's favor, can we trust in the Gospel promise (John 3:16). In other words, *Let It Go*.



Praise Items	Prayer Requests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That God has allowed me to return to the field and resume training pastors and church leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the team going to Nicaragua to work on our training center and to minister to nearby churches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great visits with friends and churches in Florida 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastor/teachers to help me train pastors in Matuu, Kenya in August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The healthy birth of our granddaughter on December 23rd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For wisdom in working to bring Bible college/seminary classes to CrossWay training centers and in seeking more education myself