

“Why Don’t You Take a Missions Trip!”

By Pastor Sonny Wahl



What is the best way to transform your church into a church of power, to disciple a group of Christian youth, and have an adventure of a lifetime in faith all at once? The answer is simple, “Take a Missions Trip!”

A good friend of mine who was writing his doctorate asked my opinion on the subject of discipleship. My reply was this, “give me a group of Christians for a week in a third world country and I will give them back to you with their lives changed forever”. In this setting you will learn how to pray for the sick, love on the poor and share God’s love with those you cannot even speak their language. You will learn how to share your testimony through an interpreter. You will learn how to eat food that you have never seen. You will learn how to weep and cry at the injustices and terrible tragedies that surround the already downcast. Yes you will learn how to be grateful for all that you have after seeing those who are happy and grateful even though they have nothing.



Jesus walked with his disciples, ate with His disciples, awoke with His disciple, taught and ministered with His disciples, and so forth, daily for 3 years. Why do we think we can sermonize people for 2 hours once a week on Sunday and call this the New Testament discipleship? Some will go on retreats and encounters and try to work the “bugs out of their life” and “get some life back into their dry souls.” This is all good but it cannot substitute for the life changing experience of a foreign missions trip! It’s not only fun it’s scriptural too! (Mark 16:15)

We just returned from an amazing trip to Nicaragua with 20 teens and 20 adults from our church. We traveled to participate in a Children’s Crusade with over 7000 children in attendance. That is a lot of kids! They were bused in from many parts of Managua’s poorest neighborhoods. The children enjoyed clowns, skits, cotton candy and puppet shows. They were then fed a hearty meal along with the Word of God. Many sat out in the rain and 100 degree heat as there was not enough room to shelter them all. They did not complain or seem to mind, just happy to be there in God’s Love!. All this was televised over national television.



Our group spent the majority of the week ministering in churches, feeding stations, hospitals and slum areas. We also traveled to the beautiful mountain areas and jungles to hold church services where God's presence was very real and tangible. One major important key of having a successful and powerful trip is to have a daily team devotional each morning after breakfast. We discuss the day's events and enjoy our own worship and times of sharing. It is like a pre-game warm up and refreshing time.

The group's favorite part of the trip was adopting 10-15 orphan boys and girls to come and live with us for the week. One night I stopped to check in on the different hotel rooms to see how everyone was doing. In each of the girl's rooms was a precious little orphan girl sleeping with them! They went out with us during the day, went swimming with us in the pool and enjoyed mealtimes. They were so happy and thought they had gone to Disneyworld. Sadly these orphans have been abused, abandoned and some even tortured. Our hearts were broken over their misfortunes. Yet they still smiled and sang and danced for Jesus! Not just a few tears were shed when we said our goodbyes.



The team had done exceptionally well for the week despite the heat, stomach aches and tiredness. There was little to none complaining or arguing. Everyone's attitudes were good and all our Nicaraguan hosts were very impressed and touched to see this maturity in our youth group. We give a special thanks to the prayer group that covered us back home! The devil loves to tear apart mission's teams from the inside by strife and division, so a prayer covering is essential.



Finally we rewarded our youth group by taking them to the top of a Volcano and down the mountain on a Canopy Tour. Imagine sliding down a cable from station to tree station 5 stories high over a jungle while monkeys watch. This was a trip of a lifetime as we rode over 2 miles of cable and 13 stations. To finish up the trip the Nicaraguan church put on a special banquet to bid us farewell. Our little orphan friends danced and sang as we all cried. No one wanted to go home.

All 39 team members say their lives have all been changed and they will never be the same. Many want to return and some want to be long term missionaries. That is discipleship! All glory goes to God!

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