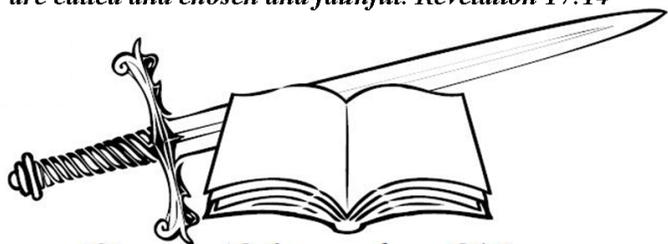


He is Lord of lords and King of Kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful. Revelation 17:14



Our King's Men

Laurel Ridge Community Church

Men's Newsletter

Fall 2019

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me! —Isaiah 6:8



Cambodia Trip Update

—by Rusty Sims

As many of you may know, we have been involved in international missions to Cambodia since May of 2015. Our primary focus in Cambodia is the Hope Learning Center. The Hope Learning Center educates and feeds many of the at-risk children from the surrounding slums with a focus on introducing them to Christ.

Our upcoming trip will be October 1–12. Please be in prayer for the team that we would recognize the will of Christ and be open to his leading. We would love for you to get involved in whatever capacity God has for you. We can use hygiene kits, shoes, money, driving the team to/from the airport, etc.



If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to look me up at church or call at any time at (925) 354-9204. ✝

Remembering Nicaragua

This fall marks the five-year anniversary of the first Laurel Ridge Church mission trip.



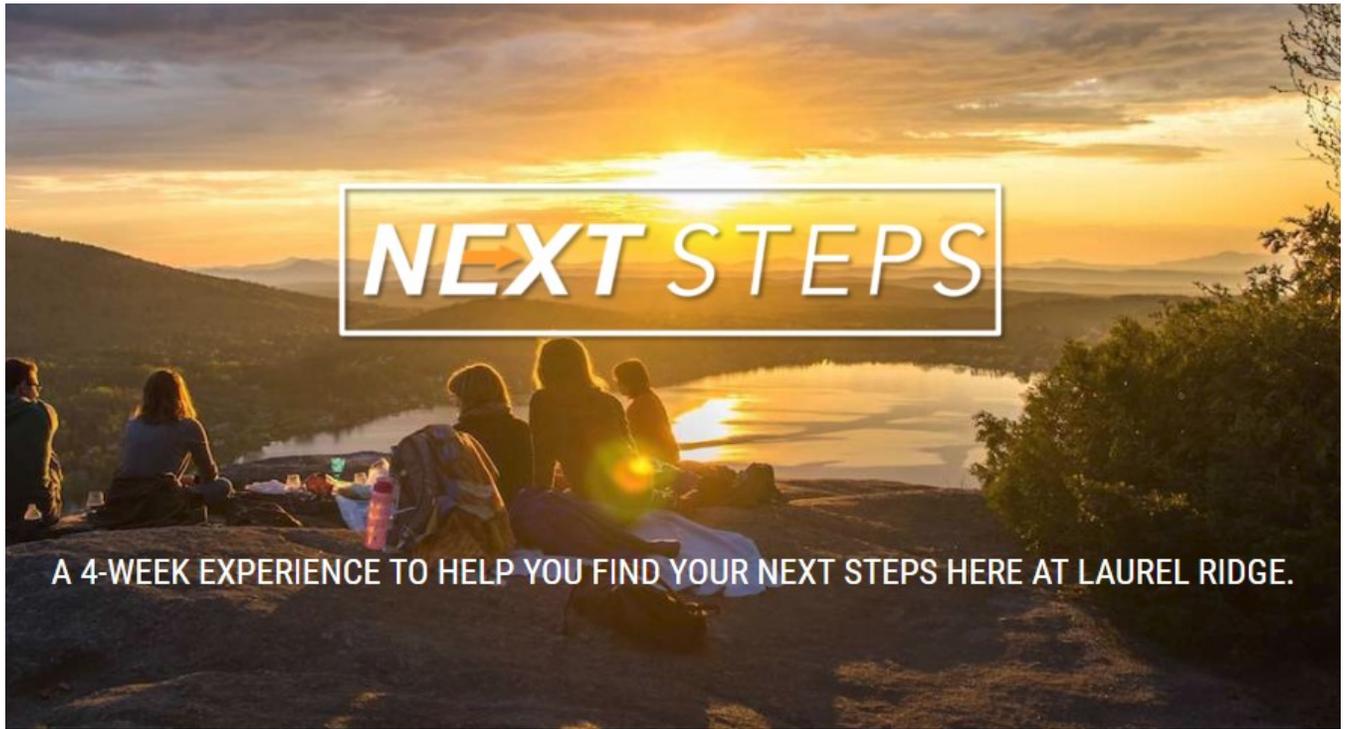
Our mission team of 15 people partnered with Chosen Children Ministries (CCM) to serve the people of the Central American country of Nicaragua. Team members Jim Hopper and Keith Cook relate their thoughts and experiences below.

* * *

My wife, Janine, and I were new to Laurel Ridge. I had never been on a mission and prefer to avoid air travel so I was surprised when God put in my heart a strong desire to join the team, just a few weeks before they were to leave. It turned out to be one of the greatest times of discovery and blessing in my life.

Our journey to Managua was an adventure in itself, highlighted almost literally by a descent through a violent electrical storm. Our trip ended at the CCM center, an eight-acre, walled compound

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What is NEXT STEPS?

At Laurel Ridge Church, we believe that following Jesus is not a classroom experience but a journey. Since Next Steps is a journey, we'll give you a backpack and a different item each week that reinforces the training we're giving you to follow Jesus with us.

Step 1: Connect

First Sunday of the month

Join us to connect with Pastor Dan's personal story and Laurel Ridge's unique story, and discover how pursuing God with us can impact your story as well.

Step 2: Community

Second Sunday of the month

Enjoy some fun activities and discover how to build community by making friends, following Jesus and making a difference in a Community Group.

Step 3: Change Maker

Third Sunday of the month

Discover how you are uniquely shaped to impact others. Then pick from two adventures. The first will take you on a tour of key places on our campus to observe how volunteer teams called Change Makers are impacting people's lives. Or, you can choose to learn how to make a difference as a Community Group Leader impacting people's lives in homes all over our community.

Step 4: Compassion

Fourth Sunday of the month

We will explore how people at Laurel Ridge just like you unleash compassion both locally and globally, changing the world one neighborhood at a time.

Sign me up!

The Next Steps Experience happens on the first four Sundays of each month at 11:00 AM in Room 101. To reserve your spot, browse to <https://rock.laurelridgechurch.org/page/544>.

Events and Ministry Opportunities



Saturday, October 12, from 8:30-4, at Mission Church in Vacaville, 6391 Leisure Town Road Vacaville, CA 95687. Their website is Website is imissionchurch.com.

Session speakers Zoro the Drummer and Pastors Clay Allen and Mark Clark will address topics relevant to men in all seasons of Christian life.

Ticket prices are \$73 in September, \$83 during Oct. 1-11, and \$93 on the day of the event. Tickets for full-time students (under age 24) and active duty military men are \$35. All tickets include coffee and donuts for breakfast; lunch, and snacks at breaks.

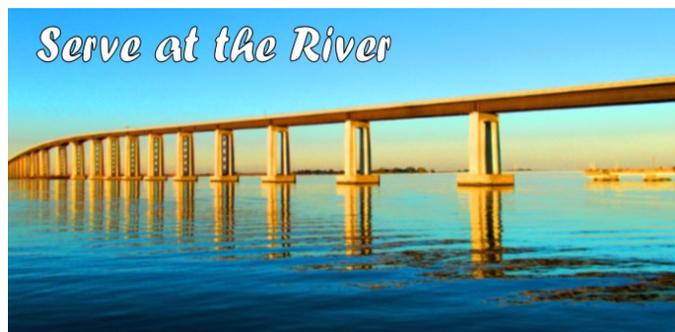


Who did the people at Lystra think Paul and Barnabas were?

Answer below.

Hermes and Zeus (Act14:1220). They thought Paul was Hermes because he was the chief speaker.

Visit www.norcalmen.com/ for more information or to register. Contact Jeff Alford at men@laurelridgechurch.org or at (925) 550-4334 if you would like to join the group from our church going to the event.



Sunday, September 22, from 1:30 to 3:30 PM at the corner of A and 6th Streets in Antioch. Also on October 27, November 24 and December 22 (the fourth Sunday of each month).

Join with other believers in providing a meal and sharing God's love with the homeless and other people in need.

Donations of food, soft drinks and other items, and volunteers to help set up, serve and share are welcome. Contact Bob Andrade at 925-329-1108 for more information or to sign up.

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Remembering Nicaragua —cont'd from page 1

from which CCM staff support mission teams serving various neighborhoods, or *barrios*.

The church service the next day on the compound was a special event at which 700 Nicaraguan brothers and sisters in Christ joined CCM staff, our mission team and another one from South Carolina to praise and worship God. Tears streamed down my face almost nonstop at the sight of people in another country gathering to love the same God we do.

The Mt. Zion barrio that we visited the next four days was a jarring reminder of the struggles that many people endure just to survive. The village was simply a large parcel of bare land that the government had provided some years earlier for people to move into. A narrow, rutted dirt road about two miles long provided the only access from the highway. Arriving when we did at the end of the rainy season, the bus lurched and sloshed its way through mud puddles large enough to swallow a car. The “nicer” homes were four walls of concrete blocks with a corrugated tin roof and a dirt floor. The only utilities were a water truck that arrived at 3 A.M. each day. Everyone wanting water for drinking, cooking and bathing for the next day had to meet the truck and fill up their jugs and buckets.

The church itself, *El Buen Pastor* (the Good Shepherd), was just a wooden roof over a concrete pad, open on all sides. The pastor and his family lived in the two-room home behind it. We arrived and some of us set right to work on the school we were there to build while others began interacting with the adults and children. The children were so sweet and beautiful, and looked at us with shy curiosity. They were very happy

when we said *hola!* More kids arrived each hour as word of our arrival spread. We were an event!

The four days at Mt. Zion went by quickly. Members of our team took turns leading VBS activities with the help of our translators. Six of the women on our team went door-to-door to talk to the local women about Jesus and had amazing personal encounters. They heard stories about physical abuse, husbands deserting them, and the ravages of alcoholism. Several accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior during the visits. We played with the children, talked with the grownups, handed-out 15 huge duffel bags of shoes and boxes of hygiene kits, and served them a meal, bread and other treats.

The heat, humidity, and poverty at Mt. Zion were a constant that the locals had to deal with, but our time with them was a blessing to us and them. Never have I felt so completely open to God, used by him to bless others, and so filled with joy and love. If you have ever been tempted to go on a mission, please say yes. It might be the greatest discovery of your life. ✝

—Keith Cook

Sunday Celebration

Still tired after our 16 hour trip from Oakley, California, our mission team of 15 people from Laurel Ridge Community Church was blessed on our first day to be a part of a Sunday morning worship service at the CCM campus in Masaya, Nicaragua on September 28, 2014. This was a unique gathering of many congregations established

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Remembering Nicaragua —cont'd from page 4

by CCM joining together for a celebration of the 445th anniversary of the Bible's first translation into Spanish.

CCM buses left the Masaya compound before daylight, traveling as far as 70 miles to bring people from nine churches led by pastors who had been trained at CCM's Pastor Training School. Although not all of the CCM congregations were able to attend due to the distance, there were over 700 people present for the celebration. As each of the nine pastors of those congregations in attendance gathered on the platform and were introduced, the entire assembly clapped to honor each congregation. The covered outdoor arena (which also serves as a basketball court) was packed to overflow capacity, with more families sitting on blankets spread on the ground in the heavily shaded area around the arena.

We were blessed with music, sung in both Spanish and English, and a message from the book of Nehemiah brought by Mike Hamlet, pastor of First Baptist Church of North Spartanburg, South Carolina, the home church of Wallace Nix, Founder of CCM. My brief notes of Pastor Hamlet's message are as follows:

- ◆ Nehemiah had no special abilities; God can use anyone.
- ◆ The people were together.
- ◆ Heart for the Lord.
- ◆ Pray for a greater passion.
- ◆ God gives us a vision. Everyone here can share in the vision.
- ◆ Someone ought to do something—it must be us. Willingness to work.
- ◆ First is heart, second is vision—what can God do through you?
- ◆ Only God can fix man's problems.

- ◆ Pray for the pastors.
- ◆ God may have given you the work of an encourager.
- ◆ It's all connected—everything in the body of Christ.
- ◆ A vision to go beyond anything I can do.
- ◆ You (in Nicaragua) are a blessing to us. I pray we are a blessing to you.
- ◆ You must refuse to quit—we are doing a great work. The one who counts, the one who will make a difference will not quit.

After the message, the entire group was fed a meal of rice and beans and a piece of fruit, typical for a Nicaraguan meal. They then returned to their buses, and many of our team waved goodbye to them as they drove down the driveway and out the gate for the long trip back to their villages.

I was very moved by this very memorable gathering and message, and didn't realize how unique it was until later. It seems that the typical CCM mission team to Nicaragua does Sunday worship with an individual congregation out in the village. To have all these congregations in one place and the CCM leadership of both U. S. and Nicaragua present was a very special and rare blessing. I know this experience had a part in touching the lives of many of our team members, and stirred our hearts toward a deeper involvement in missions and showing people God's love.

What is God calling you to do? I hope, after you read this, you will take time to do your own Bible study of Nehemiah and give thought to Pastor Hamlet's message. May God use that message to stir your heart to touch the people around you as well as those far away with the love of God. ✝

—Jim Hopper (jhop1967@gmail.com)