

2020 Nicaragua Info for our Cornerstone Mission Team

Basics:

We will be traveling to Somotillo, Nicaragua for a week long mission trip with Because We Care Ministries (www.bwcm.org) from June 20-27, 2020. They have a great video on their homepage showing some of the sights and sounds in Nicaragua.

First Steps:

- Please let Mike or Larry know as soon as possible if you know you are going (or if you have decided you are not going).
- Begin saving and raising funds. First deposit of \$750 is due by **April 1st**. You will also need to turn in the BWCM forms at the this time too (they are attached to this packet). This payment will need to be made to Cornerstone Community Church (your name and mission trip in the memo line of the check). If you are struggling with raising funds, I have some ideas that can help. Please let me know if this is a need. Final deposit will be due May 17th. The amount of the final deposit will depend on the cost of the airline tickets. It should be between \$500 - \$800.
- Social Media Sharing and Fundraising - We ask that you if you use GoFundMe or YouCaring to raise funds, please specify what you will do with the money raised if you don't go. People can also donate directly to your trip through our online giving option at Cornerstone. Just make sure that they choose the category of mission trip support and leave a comment about who the donation is for.
- If you don't have your passport yet, you will need to get it as soon as possible. It typically takes 4 to 6 weeks to get your passport. Also if you have a passport make sure it is current and has not expired.
- Start collecting supplies for the trip. We can use coloring books and crayons, hot wheel cars, toys, t-shirts, hats, hair bows, kid's bracelets, flip flops(children's sizes and small adult sizes), nail polish, deflated soccer balls, ball pumps and small stuffed animals and dolls. We are also collecting school supplies for the school that Because We Care Ministries has started supporting. We need dry erase markers, pencils, paper, and crayons.

Background

We have sent numerous teams from Cornerstone to Nicaragua over the past 12 years and this is a great opportunity to truly make a difference for the Kingdom. We will be doing pastor training, medical and food ministry, and children's ministry in the schools and the villages. We will fly out of Charlotte, Roanoke, Raleigh, Washington, or Greensboro (depending on who has the cheapest flight) into Managua, Nicaragua and then travel about three and a half hours by bus to Somotillo, Nicaragua. We will staying at Casa de Shelly, our mission house for the week.

While we have not had any severe problems in the past, please know that we will be staying in a remote part of the country without access to modern hospitals. The country has also undergone recent protests against the government. We will be riding in the back of pickups, large dump trucks, and we will be doing some manual labor on the model farm and in local communities. The climate in this area is extremely hot, and you must stay hydrated and rested to stay healthy. We have access each morning to filtered water that is safe to drink and wonderful meals prepared by the staff at the mission house. If you have any medical conditions that might prevent you from this type of work or this climate please talk to Mike or someone else that has been on the trip

What We Expect from you

Flexibility

As with any mission trip, expect many surprises and changes of plans. Flexibility is key as we make the best use of our time during the week. You will be stretched physically, mentally, and spiritually throughout the week. We typically don't know what we will be doing day to day, and weather and/or other things outside our control may change our plans suddenly.

Being Prepared

Preparing before the trip is important. Preparing yourself physically, mentally and spiritually is important. Each person will have an opportunity to share your personal testimony with others. If you have not shared your testimony or if you are unsure about how to share the Gospel, we will help you with this during our planning meetings. We will also be working through a mission trip journal during the week. We will have translators but learning some basic Spanish words will enhance your experience. One of the best ways to prepare is to start praying now that God will use our team for His Glory. The free app Duolingo is a great way to learn basic Spanish.

Fundraising

Each person is responsible for raising their own funds. There is some money applied to the trip for each Cornerstone attendee from our missions fund at Cornerstone. That amount will be determined as we see how many people are going on the trip. Please consider sending out fundraising letters to family, friends, coworkers or people in the church with whom you have connections. Make your letter personal. Include your excitement about the trip and personal feelings about why you want to be a part of this mission team.

Other fund raisers really depend on the group. These opportunities will need to be organized by the team. In the past, we have had group fund-raisers to help offset the cost of the trip for everyone or for extra money for our team to have for medical missions or to help someone on the team that is having trouble raising funds. If you have ideas that can be done as a

group, please let us know. Also in the past, we have held lunch fundraisers after church. If we do this, I will need team members to step up and help organize the fund-raisers.

If you need to make payments or if you can pay more to help others, please let us know. We have had former mission team members provide partial scholarships to help pay for the trip.

A Typical Day

- Wake up early
- Eat Breakfast
- Share Testimonies at the Local Radio Station
- Morning projects including Pastor Training/Food Preparation/Construction Ministry/Farm Ministry
- Lunch
- Travel to remote villages to share Christ, feed hot meals, and provide medical care
- Supper back at the Mission House
- Evening Devotions and Share Time

Packing Info

We ask that you pack all your clothes for the week in a single carryon bag. This allows us to use our checked baggage to take ministry supplies. Here's a description of what you can pack

Carryon Suitcase - Your carryon suitcase must be no larger than 9 inches x 14 inches x 22 inches. This will be used for all your clothes, snacks, and personal supplies. The TSA limits you on liquids that you can carryon a plane. All your liquids must fit in a single quart size zip-lock bag and must be less than 3.4 ozs per item. Details are at <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/liquids-rule>. Remember that we will only be gone for a week. No need for industrial size shampoo or conditioner bottles. You may want to pack swimwear, we will have an opportunity to use the pool at the Hotel on Friday afternoon/evening

Personal Bag - On the flight, you can also bring one additional personal bag. It must be small enough to stow under the seat in front of you. Most people will bring a small backpack with them. This is usually where you will pack books, snacks, and other small items that won't fit in the carryon suitcase.

Checked Bag - Each person is allowed one 50-lb. checked bag. The church has a number of duffle bags that we will use for this. We will use these to pack ministry supplies, school supplies, clothing to giveaway, Bibles, and anything else we need to transport for BWCM. If you have larger liquid containers or if you have something that cannot be carried on in your baggage (i.e. a pocketknife or multitool), then please place it in a bag with your name and

pack with our ministry supplies. All liquids will need to be sealed in a leakproof bag. We have had a number of spills over the years from shampoo, bug spray, etc. All aerosol cans must also be checked.

Protect Your Passport - First, make sure you have signed your passport. You will need to keep your passport with you at all times. When we are traveling to and from villages, we may be required to show our passport to the local authorities. There are several types of passport holders available. Some are worn around your neck and some are belts. Whatever you use, make sure that your passport is secure and discrete. If you use a pocket, make sure that it will not fall out. I have used a running belt that is made for my iPhone and it works great (a large SPIBelt from Amazon)

Money - You will need some money to take with you, but not a lot. Everywhere will accept American dollars, so you won't need to convert currency when we get there. Once we arrive, BWCM will provide all meals and hotel costs for us. Here is what you will need money for

- a \$10 bill to enter the country. You have to pay this at immigration at the airport. It needs to be a \$10 bill in good condition with no tears or no markings on it. (Most places in Nicaragua will not accept money that is wrinkled or torn)
- meals at the airport while traveling
- snacks in Nicaragua - we may stop at a gas station or ice cream stand during the week
- souvenirs - they have a bunch at the airport, and several smaller crafts are available at the mission house. They have great pine needle baskets for around \$30 that are very similar to the sweet grass baskets from Charleston
- Don will also pass around an offering plate a couple of times during the week. He does take up a special offering at the end of the week for the staff at Casa de Shelley.
- Also, please bring \$20 for our meal on Friday night. If possible, we will eat at a Nicaraguan restaurant
- Typically \$100 would be enough. Make sure to bring mostly smaller bills, mostly 1's, 5's, and 10's.

Have Your Testimony Prepared - What is your testimony? It is how Christ has changed your life. Think about it in three parts. Your life before Christ, how you put your faith in Christ as your Lord and Savior, and the difference it has made in your life. We will talk about this in our group, but you need to be confident in your faith as we get opportunities to share on the radio and in the villages.

Don't Drink the Water! - Unless we tell you it is safe. At the hotel in Managua, only drink water from a bottle. Don't even brush your teeth with the water from the sink. Everyone will have a bottle of water in your room that you can use for brushing your teeth. At the mission

house in Somotillo, the water has been filtered in our room area so it is safe to drink. Do not under any circumstances drink water from any of the villages. Most of their wells are very shallow and have many parasites and are contaminated with sewage as well.

Drink a Lot of Water! - It's not unusual for the temperature to be 90 degrees at night and 105 degrees during the day. You will need to drink several quarts a day to stay hydrated. Please bring two water bottles with you. The nalgene-type wide mouth bottles work well, but make sure that the lid or cap you drink from is covered. Flies can transmit disease and could land on flip-top lids. We will put them in the freezer each night so they will be cold for the next morning. If we are working outside, take plenty of breaks and drink more than you think you need. Over the years, we have had many people who are accustomed to hard work outside struggle with the heat. Heat stroke is a very real possibility and it can happen very quickly. You will get sick if you don't drink enough water. Start hydrating before the trip so you are accustomed to drinking water. If you are not "peeing" you are not drinking enough! We will keep a close eye on everyone, but drinking plenty of water is non-negotiable.

Always Wear Shoes - you can wear flip-flops around the mission house, but any time we go out you must wear closed shoes. There are no exceptions for this. We also recommend bringing a cheap pair of flip-flops to use in the shower. Several types of parasites can be picked up from walking barefoot, so this just another way we try to keep you safe.

Electronics - We will have limited opportunities to call back home. You may have wifi access at the hotel in Managua. We will also have a few cell phones that can be used to call home while in Somotillo. You probably won't be able to call every day, so let your families know in advance. If you take a phone for photos, it is best to place it in airplane mode while in Nicaragua to avoid roaming fees.

Use Bug Spray and Sunscreen - We are not here to get a tan. You are much closer to the equator and you will burn much faster than at home. Please remind each other to use sunscreen. You will need bug spray as well, especially during the evenings. Mosquitos and flies can be bad at times.

Wear Appropriate Clothes - What is appropriate and normal in our culture is not always appropriate for the mission field. Think long and loose. No tight fitting clothes please. You will have a farmer's tan by the time we are done for the week. Shorts need to be long. No "short-shorts" and even most running shorts would be unacceptable. If you have to ask if it is too short, then it is. Also, no tank-tops, sleeveless shirts, or spaghetti strap type tops. We are to set an example, and we want to do everything we can to keep the attention off of us and on Christ. For church on Sunday night, you will need to wear church clothes. long pants and a golf shirt for guys and skirts or dresses for the ladies is appropriate.

Keep Your Hands Clean - Use hand sanitizer throughout the day, and do not put your fingers in your mouth! If you are a nail-biter, you will need to stop before the trip. This is one of the biggest reasons people get sick on mission trips. Be careful to prevent germs by washing your hands and watching what you touch.

Protect Your Stomach - Only Eat What We Provide or What You Bring. It's fine to eat anything from a restaurant or anything that Mama Maria prepares for our meals. But don't pick any fruit off trees to eat unless we tell you it is safe. And do not eat any food that is offered to you in the villages. If you are a picky eater, we recommend that you bring protein bars or other healthy high calorie snacks.

Communicate! - Please let us know if you start feeling sick or start having any stomach problems. Also, please tell us if you are struggling with the heat. We've been here many times and we know how to get you help and relief.

Take Time to Pray and Journal - You will receive a mission trip journal for the trip. Use it each day to record your thoughts and prayers. Believe us, you will forget details if you don't write them down. Also, don't underestimate the Spiritual Warfare you will experience on the mission field. We are in a battle that requires prayer.

Get Plenty of Rest - You might be tempted to stay up late. Don't do it. You will need plenty of rest. We wake up early and have full days of working and playing outside in the heat.

Be Flexible - In other words, don't ask what we are going to do every 15 minutes. You will find out as soon as we know the plan for the day. The work we do each day will depend on what the Holy Spirit leads us to do, what the local pastors need for the day, and the weather for the day. Often plans will change at the last minute. Be flexible and be cheerful.

Be Ready - You never know when you will be asked to share, help, or give your testimony. In other words, do what Don asks! You will be blessed if you do.

How to Start Preparing

As a group, we need to prepare a Lesson for the Village

Collect Supplies

Start Packing

Work on Your Testimony

Memorize the Romans Road (Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-10, 10:13)

Drink Plenty of Water in advance

Here is a sample fund raising letter

Dear _____

I will be going on a Missions trip with Because We Care Ministries along with about 15 others from Cornerstone Community Church. Our team will be traveling to the country of Nicaragua from June 20th to June 27th, 2020. While we are there we will be ministering to the people of northern Nicaragua. Each morning we will be doing construction work and farm ministry, and each evening we will travel to remote villages to help with food, medical needs, and spiritual needs. We will also be helping the missionaries in any way that we are needed. Through this we hope to share the love of Christ with many people.

As you can imagine a trip like this takes money. I am looking for 20 people to sponsor me for \$____ toward this once in a lifetime experience. I realize that this amount may not be possible, so any amount that you might be able to give would be greatly appreciated. If you are sending a check, please make it out to Because We Care Ministries and put my name in the memo field. I believe that with prayer and God's help my financial need will be met. Please pray for me as I prepare for this mission and while we are there. Pray that people will see the love of Jesus through us and will be touched in some way. My prayer is that this trip proves to be life changing for the people of Nicaragua even more than for myself.

Thank you for letting me share with you what will be one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. If you cannot help in a financial way, please help support me with your prayers.

In His service, Your name