



## Shining the Light Ministries February Newsletter

### **The Birth of a Ministry within a Ministry: Part I**

By Pastor Greg Lentz

I had met Jeff Schweizer at the International Ministries “Hear the Call” conference at Green Lake, Wisconsin in 2016. We were there to discern and explore our callings to ministry. I had recently completed my undergraduate degree and felt that I was being called to become a missionary. I was exposed to international missions on my trips to Haiti with 1st Baptist Church in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. During this time I was able to speak with a variety of different missionaries and also spent time with Jeff as we spoke about our different experiences. Jeff shared his experience in Nicaragua and I shared my experiences in Haiti. It was in a conversation with Jim Bell, Associate Director of International Ministries that he posed the question of what the work was that I wanted to do if I was to become a missionary. My simple response was that I wanted to share the Gospel. Jim Bell suggested that I should look at possibly taking some Biblical classes before making a decision on becoming a missionary. It wasn't until I was driving home from Green Lake that I found myself overcome by a strong desire to continue my education. It is in this moment that I knew God wanted me to continue my education and enroll into Seminary. As I began my seminary experience at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, I continued to stay in touch with Jeff. Jeff left an open invitation for me to travel with him to Nicaragua. Over the next couple of years I remained in contact with Jeff, and in January of 2019 I was able to finally embark on a trip to Nicaragua that would change my life.

I did not think that this trip would be much different than my trips to Haiti. Jeff did ask me if I would do a small training for pastors while we were there, so before we left I put together a small training to share with the pastors. I was still exploring and learning about the many different aspects of ministry, but I did see it as an opportunity to put different things that I had learned in seminary into practice. I was very excited to travel to Nicaragua and see the work that Shining the Light Ministries was completing in the communities surrounding Leon, Nicaragua. The opportunity to be there physically and see the work being done with my own eyes was a true blessing to me.

As we began to travel to some of the communities Shining the Light Ministries was serving, I saw many gardens and spent time with the people in the communities. At some point my vision began to shift. I began to see less of the gardens and began to feel a connection with the people. As we entered into other communities the condition of the gardens wasn't attracting my attention. I was more concerned about the condition of the people. I now wanted to spend time with the people of the communities and to take time and pray for and with them. I wanted to better understand how I personally could be of assistance to them. The gardens are essential to these communities and provide for these families throughout each growing season, but I was still waiting for God to show me whether or not I was to be a part of Shining the Light Ministries.

God would reveal this to me on the day that I completed the training for the pastors. It was during this time I was able to spend time with roughly 16 pastors. As the presentation moved forward you could just see their desire to learn and grow in their faith and leadership. This truly captivated me and brought value to the work I was completing. That evening I was invited to preach and share God's word. The combination of these two events was something that had been generating over the past couple years. It took me back to the conversation I had with Jim Bell. What seemed so distant at the time of our conversation, became a physical reality. I was not only able to share the Gospel, but also able to work with Nicaraguan pastors. That evening I truly felt in my heart that I was doing what God was calling me to do. This experience was the launching point for my continued work as a part of Shining the Light Ministries in Nicaragua. I would again travel to Nicaragua on January of 2020 where I would build on my previous experience and seminary education. With the help of Pastor Fausto and Pastor Martin a training topic was decided on and the organization of 2

training sessions were put into place. It was on this trip that we were able to have 2 training sessions with 30 to 35 pastors in each of the trainings. I was once again overwhelmed by the pastors and church leaders desire to grow in knowledge and faith. I was also able to travel to a couple communities and share the Good News with the people of these communities.



Training Sessions



Worship

After the completion of this trip, I truly believed God was calling me into this ministry of teaching and sharing the Good News to the pastors and people of the communities being served by Shining the Light Ministries in Nicaragua. When returning I had one year left of seminary and was looking forward to another trip to Nicaragua where we would be able to have more training and expand the ministry, but as you all know 2020 would not be a normal year. God's vision has not changed for this ministry, but my vision needed some adjustment bringing to life the ministry of;  
**Empowerment Satisfies Hunger: Equipping Nicaraguan Pastors to Feed the Body and the Spirit.**

### ***Let Your Light Shine!***

*Jeffrey Schweizer, Steve Rieger, Josh Kafer, Gregory Lentz, Roger Gonzalez, Melissa Lewis, and Becky Seay  
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