

BUG SPRAY, SUN BLOCK, BOOTS, HAT, sleeping bag and 18 bulging suitcases later, we headed to Ecuador to work alongside Dan and Nikki Rogers. We brought supplies and carried big smiles as we looked forward to a time of serving in South America. Everyone was excited to be part of God's work in the jungle. The task was to help build the boys' bunkhouse at the youth camp that is being established in the Mashient village. The Lord opened the door for nine of us to go and be laborers together with Him. We will never forget this trip, not just because God touched our lives in all that we experienced, but we also took over 3,500 pictures!

Six months prior, plans were made and a team was established. Our chapel [Northwest Bible Fellowship in Omaha, Nebraska] was gracious enough to take a special offering to help financially and prayer was given on our behalf. When some of us were attending a Bible study from another church, our trip to Ecuador was mentioned. "Write down the names of those going on the trip," an older lady told me. She wanted to know specifically who was going, and said that she would have a group of people praying for us. Wow! Though she was not going physically, she wanted to labor together with us and God.

We flew out of Kansas City in order to save money on airfare, and again a family was willing to open their home for the night and drive us to and from the airport. Truly the "team" was much bigger than the nine that actually went. All along the way the Lord was encouraging us.

In Quito, Dan and Nikki Rogers showed us great hospitality. Dan laid out the game plan and oriented us to life in the jungle. The task at hand was to put the exterior siding on the bunkhouse in Mashient. The day would begin with the roosters crowing and crowing around four in the morning. What's up with that? No alarm clocks needed here. We would crawl out of our tents and begin the day with breakfast at seven o'clock. And even though there was plenty of work to do, Dan would start us with a morning Bible study and feeding on God's Word. It allowed us to focus on Christ

before we cut, sanded and pounded nails.

We studied Nehemiah, and I was struck by the question he asked that would change his life (Nehemiah 1:1-4). How are the people doing, and what is the physical condition of Jerusalem? The answer caused him to sit down, weep, mourn, fast and

LABORERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

by Scott Nordstrom

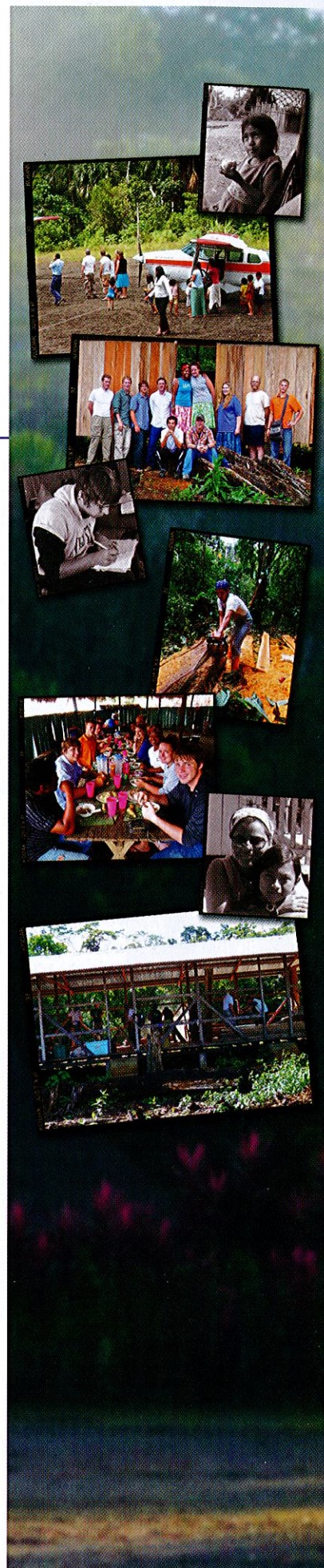
pray. God then allowed Nehemiah to work on the physical aspect of the city which would later allow for a spiritual impact. So, even though our verbal communication with them was minimal, hopefully our actions spoke volumes to them and our helping with the building will create spiritual opportunities in the days ahead.

Dan was able to bring in a power generator to run the saws and sanders. This also allowed us to watch some Spanish Christian DVDs in the evening. We always had a big turnout, as the villagers love to watch the shows. We were able to go with the tribe to the river one afternoon and fish. They made us feel like we were family. And truly we are. In coming to help them, it seems that we received the greater blessing. Yes, the bugs liked us too, and although bug spray didn't seem to discourage them, the team did not complain and served with joy.

Worshiping on Sunday was a real treat as well. And though we did not always understand what was said, the expressions on their faces told the story of their love for our Savior. Christianity has changed this part of the world, and we were grateful to see the power of God. The people of the village were examples to us with their humble, servant's hearts. It was refreshing and rewarding to serve the greatest Master in the jungles of Ecuador. What a privilege to labor together with God! ❧

Scott Nordstrom is an elder at Northwest Bible Fellowship in Omaha, Nebraska.

Scott has organized several trips to Central and South America over the last 10 years, all of which have proven to be life changing for those who have gone.



Top - bottom: A Mashient child; Arrival day in the jungle; The team - Dan Rogers, Nate, Lorenz, Scott, Jonnique, Jackie; Bible study and journaling; Pablo cutting boards; Eating palm heart and Armadillo; Jonnique giving a hug; The team at work.