



ADVENTURE JOURNAL

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Living the Adventure Ministries seeks to work for the transformation of the world through the awakening of the Church, evangelistic preaching, and Christian people putting their faith into action through mission experiences around the world.

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Pleasing to God

In John 21 we read about Jesus asking Peter three times, “Do you love me?”. After Peter has responded to these questions, we read, “Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, ‘Lord, who will betray you?’ Peter asked Jesus, ‘What about him, Lord?’ Jesus replied, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me’” (vv. 20-22).

During a highlight moment in Peter’s relationship with Jesus, it would seem Peter’s vision for Jesus’ call on his life to “feed my sheep” would be the focus for his attention. Yet, Peter loses his focus and Jesus must bring him back to what is most important.

In an earlier experience, Peter walked on water in Matthew 14:22-31. He did well until the wind and waves grabbed his attention and he began to sink. He lost his focus on Jesus. He cried out, “Lord, save me.” Jesus grabbed him and said, “You have so little faith. Why did you doubt me?”

On both of these occasions, Peter took his focus off Jesus and Jesus’ call on his life. Jesus invited Peter to walk out on the water and Jesus called for Peter to “feed my sheep.” The vision was firmly placed in front of Peter, but the worries of the world or his struggle with comparison became a distraction. He was more worried about the wind and the waves and how other people’s lives would be lived than he was on focusing on Jesus.

Over the past few weeks, the Holy Spirit has been speaking into my heart about the struggles of losing my focus on Jesus, especially in matters of comparison. I find myself at times falling into the trap of wishing for the experience someone else is having or wondering if I am enough.

As I was journaling on this topic recently, I was drawn to 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 6. “For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts...As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else.”

As we continue in our Lenten Journey, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to focus us on Jesus’ invitation to “follow me.” It may be easy to become distracted with the winds and the waves or with the looking around at other Christians and their experiences. Let me invite you to “turn your eyes upon Jesus” as we move toward Holy Week and the celebration of Easter. May everything you say and do be for the glory of God and not the glory of anyone else.

Flood Recovery Trip

As you read this a team of five people are in Eastern Kentucky on a mission trip with Living the Adventure Ministries. Prior to departure, the team was given the task of cleaning up a mudslide and cutting back the hillside to stop the mudslides. Once we have this project completed, we will work on building steps and a landing/deck for the homeowner to more safely access her home. Please pray for Sam, Dan, Mike, Jason, and Matt as they travel. They will return to Illinois on Saturday, March 18.

If you are interested in future domestic mission trips, please let me know (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

Guyana Trip—Deadline

We are working on finalizing our team to Guyana for our trip July 27-August 5. The trip will feature an Art Camp for children and youth, an opportunity for ministry to adults, and possibly some construction (depending on the skill level of the team). Each person on the team is required to have a valid Passport and up-to-date inoculations (including a few not required for public schools). We will finalize our living accommodations once we have the total number of team members. The cost for the trip is \$2300 per person, which includes lodging, food, flight, in-country transportation, and project costs. If you are interested in traveling with the team this summer, I need to know by March 31, 2023. You can contact me (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

Tourism and Discipleship

In the last *Adventure Journal*, I wrote an article entitled: "Making Disciples." In the article I wrote, "In 2023, I seek to focus more on discipleship in obedience to God's call to use the platforms He has given to me to share His love, mercy, and grace, while inviting people to live the Kingdom of God way of life." The platforms include proclamation/speaking, writing, mission teams, and discipleship adventures. The India Trip serves as a discipleship adventure. The trip includes tourism to some of the greatest sites of North India, including the Taj Mahal, a rickshaw ride through Old Delhi, a Maharaja palace, the Amber Fort, etc. There is an opportunity to view and purchase some of the beautiful crafts and creations of the various Indian artisans.

On the second leg of the trip, we will focus on the ministry of Brother E. Stanley Jones who served with his wife and daughter as missionaries to India in the 20th Century. We will see some of his legacy along with other Methodist Missionaries' legacies still actively in ministry through the Nurmanzil Psychiatric Center, Warne Baby Fold, Isabel Thoburn College, etc. We will then travel to the Sat Tal Christian Ashram where we will experience the week-long Winter Christian Ashram, a discipleship retreat of getting away from work to experience the Kingdom of God in miniature with our Indian brothers and sisters. During the Sat Tal Christian Ashram, there will be opportunity in the afternoon to travel to Nanital, a resort town with wonderful shops and wonderful views. We will wrap up the trip with a Jungle Safari at the Corbett National Park before returning to Delhi for departure.

This once in a lifetime trip is a beautiful balance of tourism and discipleship as we witness the beauty of God's creation, experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and are introduced to a different culture and hear their stories of faith. I would enjoy having you travel with us on this trip. The trip is September 25-October 12 and the cost is about \$3200, not including your flight. The cost may go down as our agreement with the tourism company includes incentives for more people traveling with us.

God Opens Doors

During the Covid pandemic, I was introduced through a mutual acquaintance to Brother John Chirwa, a church leader in Malawi, Africa. John and I spoke a few times via WhatsApp about the Christian Ashram and about training pastors. We looked forward to a time when I could travel to Malawi to introduce the Christian Ashram and to speak to church leaders and pastors.

As Covid restrictions started to ease and my schedule picked up again, the thoughts of going to Malawi were placed on the proverbial "back burner." On January 10, I received the following message from Brother John: "We are putting together 500 leaders from different churches

in the northern part of Malawi, in Nkhatabay. In the morning sessions there shall be leadership seminars, in the evening there shall be evangelistic crusades. Even crusades we are expecting 4000 attendance in the surrounding villages." He went on to write, "You are the main speaker at this seminar."

I took his boldness and timing to be an open door by God's grace. After prayer and consultation, I agreed to travel to Malawi on August 22-September 2. I will be working with Brother John in seminar ministry, evangelistic ministry, and sharing the Christian Ashram with local pastors. I look forward to how God will use this opportunity. Please pray for me as I finalize travel documents (my flights are already purchased) and physically prepare for the trip, as it will be part of a four continent across three and half-months travels.

Family Update

Life moves at a frenetic pace. Over the past two months, we have celebrated two milestone birthdays in our house. Isaiah turned 16 on February 14 and Judah turned 18 on March 4. On Judah's birthday, Micah asked me, "Do you realize a majority of your children are now adults?" I am not sure if he was trying to age me more or seeing how I would react.

Isaiah got his license on his birthday and now is on the hunt for a good (yet cheap) used car. It is an interesting time to be in the used car market. Judah celebrated his 18th birthday attending a family friend's wedding in the St. Louis area, but he was able to choose the restaurants where we ate on Friday night and lunch on Saturday. Judah has not experienced any additional seizures and his new medication seems to be doing well. Thank you for your prayers for him over the past four months.

Weekly Devotion

For several years, I have tried to get into a rhythm of providing a weekly email with a devotional thought and information about upcoming events or about opportunities for people to get involved in our ongoing ministry. I have failed several times, but am pleased to report that I have for the past ten weeks provided the weekly email called "Riggings." The goal of Riggings is to provide tools for the adventure of following Jesus. Just as the riggings of ropes and equipment are necessary for sail boating and climbing, we need "equipment" for our adventure with Jesus. These riggings include devotion, Bible study, encouragement, and invitation.

The Riggings email goes out each Monday afternoon and we want you to receive it. You can sign up for the Riggings on our website: www.livingtheadventure.net or by sending your email address to Matt via text or email (618-830-6670 or matt@livingtheadventure.net).

Upcoming Events

We are working on scheduling events for 2023.
Contact us to plan an event.

March 12-18 Eastern Kentucky Mission Trip
April 16-19 Oblong Evangelical UMC Revival
April 23-29 Troy UMC Mission Trip to Eastern KY

Prayer Team

Thank you for your ongoing support of Living the Adventure Ministries. Your prayers are much appreciated as I prepare for speaking engagements and plan for mission trips. I am grateful for each person who is part of our Prayer Team. The Prayer Team receives a weekly email with different prayer requests and information about where I am traveling. If you would like to be part of the Prayer Team, email your information to matt@livingtheadventure.net.