



ADVENTURE JOURNAL

SEPT/OCT 2023

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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What Time is It?

From the late 1940s until early 1960 there was a TV show called "Howdy Doody." I was introduced to this marionette and show when a 40th Anniversary special was presented in the late 1980s. I remember the commercials announcing the special using the well-known jingle, "Say kids, what time is it?" and the response back from the children was, "It's Howdy Doody time." This simple question and answer were ingrained in my mind because of those commercials and, as I remember, the 40th Anniversary special's repetition of the saying. Even today when someone says, "Hey, do you know what time it is?" I tend to want to respond, "Why, it's Howdy Doody time..."

"What time is it?" can be understood as a question of clocks or as a question of obedience or action. In Luke 9:59-62 we read, "To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God'" (NRSV).

Jesus, in calling people to follow him, focused on the unequivocal response where the time was not in the future to obey but was in the present. When we hear the voice of the Lord calling for us to follow, we are invited to turn from our present undertaking and seek the Lord's direction for our lives. Whether it is Abram in Genesis 12 being called to "go to the place where I will show you," or it is the disciples who were at the lakeshore who dropped their nets and followed, we are called to be timely in our obedience.

Too often we have excuses and some of them even seem to be spiritual reasons we need to delay our response. In Bob Roberts, Jr.'s book, *Transformation: How Global Churches Transform Lives and the World*, he writes, "For some strange reason today, instead of being a power source, prayer is the excuse for not doing anything, always

'waiting on God' to do something but it never happens. 'Wait' always wants more information to delay pulling the trigger. The church of the future will be characterized by a different word altogether: risk" (131). How does this work? When we have been praying for God to give us an opportunity to serve and someone asks us to serve as a Sunday School teacher or as a worship leader or as a meal preparer for the Wednesday night ministry and we respond, "Let me pray about it." God is answering your prayer, but you are not being obedient. The time is NOW to respond, but you want to delay your obedience.

Jesus' invitation is for us to follow and in following him, we will receive all the details and empowerment as we travel with him. In our desire to know all the details or our desire to make sure we control the situation; we tend to delay our response. Our excuses may seem noble, spiritual, and responsible, but they are still excuses. My prayer is that we will be ready to respond in obedience when the time comes. What time is it? It's time to respond in obedience to God's call.

Prayer: Lord, my desire is to follow you wherever you lead, but I confess my fear. I know you will provide, and you will give direction at each step of the way. I surrender my will to your will and pray when the time comes to risk, I will be ready to say "Yes." In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Night of Prayer and Praise

The invitation to worship and to begin our New Year with a focus on Jesus and prayer is the purpose of a Night of Prayer and Praise. Over the past four years, Joyful Noise and Living the Adventure Ministries have partnered to host these special worship events at local churches. As we look to establish our dates for the Night of Prayer and Praise, would your congregation or community like for us to come to your location to share a powerful evening of worship and prayer? Contact Matt (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670) to learn more.

Traveling in India

As you receive this edition of the *Adventure Journal*, I am in India at the Sat Tal Christian Ashram. It has been four years since I was last in India, so this trip serves as an opportunity to reconnect with the Sat Tal Christian Ashram and the people I have met on previous trips. We are scheduled to visit the Nur Manzil Psychiatric Hospital and some of the other ministries and sites where E. Stanley Jones served in ministry. I look forward to sharing my experience once I return home. We plan to travel again to India on September 24-October 12, 2024. This trip serves as a discipleship/study/tourism style trip. We visit sites tied to the culture, history, and religions of India, while also participating in the Sat Tal Christian Ashram for a time of study and discipleship where we experience the Kingdom of God in a powerful way. If you are interested in traveling in 2024, please contact me (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

Malawi Report

Stepping off the plane in Malawi was a surreal experience as I set my feet on the soil of a country where God called me to travel. The path to get to Malawi was unorthodox for the way I have previously traveled internationally, but it was a faithful response in obedience to an invitation. I spent my first night in a hotel in Lilongwe, preparing for a bumpy and hard trip to the site of the conference in Northern Malawi. We successfully arrived to the area around Chintche Nkhatabay where I had the opportunity to lead two sessions with pastoral leaders and members of the local church. I spoke on revival and the role revival plays in the life of the church.

On Saturday, I had the opportunity to participate in the commissioning of Brother John Chirwa (my host) as he became a Bishop. On Sunday, I was given the honor to preach about receiving the Kingdom of God. Fifteen people shared their desire to receive the Kingdom of God, follow Jesus, and be baptized. We were to baptize them on that Tuesday at Lake Malawi, but the lake was unsafe because of high winds and waves. I was also given the opportunity to pray for the healing of several people. I prayed with two young boys who suffered with nightmares every night. I prayed their minds would be set free of any bondage and evil that was causing the nightmares. The mother recently reported the boys no longer suffer with nightmares.

On Monday and Tuesday, I introduced the Christian Ashram ministry to about 70 pastors and leaders from across several denominations and churches. The feedback was very positive. One man said, "My heart has been transformed." Several people shared their desire to have another Christian Ashram in 2024.

Finally, on our way back to Lilongwe, we stopped at a local village where Brother Chirwa has worked in ministry. The church leaders shared their desire to build a church

building which would also be used as a preschool. In my meeting with the congregation and community leaders, there were several needs shared. One of those needs was a desire for microcredit where individuals could take a small loan to start farming or could start a small business. I have committed to Brother Chirwa that I will find five to ten \$100 investors to start this microcredit. If you would like to know more about being one of the investors, please contact me (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

We are making plans to return to Malawi in 2024.

Amazing!

One word can summarize the Celebration Banquet this year: Amazing. As always, the food was amazing; the worship time was amazing; and the fellowship was amazing. As we put together the presentation and worship time this year, we placed a major focus on prayer. Each of us was blessed with Joyful Noise's leadership in worship and the powerful prayers prayed by Board members and the worship team that ushered us into a presentation about the Holy Spirit's work in and through the life of Living the Adventure Ministries.

As we ended, the people in attendance were invited to lay hands on Nancy and me as we knelt at the altar as Joyful Noise led us in the song *I Speak Jesus*. The lyrics of the song include:

*Shout Jesus from the mountains
Jesus in the streets
Jesus in the darkness over every enemy
Jesus for my family
I speak the holy name
Jesus*

Those words washed over me as I realized these lyrics are my heart cry right now. That I would proclaim Jesus in all places where my feet land. I would proclaim Jesus when I am away from home and when I am at home. That I would proclaim Jesus in the dark spaces that His light may penetrate the darkness. Jesus' name is holy and powerful. His name needs to be proclaimed everywhere.

I am thankful for each person who could make it to the banquet this year. We realize we need to get back to the August date, as there were many schedule conflicts this year. I am also thankful for my family who sacrifices a lot as we continue to be obedient to God's call on our lives. God has some really big plans in the works I believe, so continue to pray for Living the Adventure Ministries. We will announce the 2024 Celebration Banquet dates in January or February.

Upcoming Events

We are working on scheduling events for 2024.
Contact us to plan an event.

September 24-October 12 India Trip
October 19-22 Troy Methodist Church Mission Trip to Eastern Kentucky
October 29-Nov. 1 Pinkstaff UMC Revival
Nov. 5-6 Ellen Moore UMC Revival
Nov. 8-13 Uruguay/Argentina Christian Ashram

Grateful

I am grateful to God for His steadfast provision for Living the Adventure Ministries and I am thankful for your obedience to God's call on you to pray for this ministry and financially invest in its ongoing ministry. The Holy Spirit is at work and we are grateful we get to have a front row seat to witness the power of God. As we approach the end of 2023, would you consider an end-of-the-year contribution to Living the Adventure Ministries? Your support is appreciated.