



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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Love for Self

Lent is a time focused on fasting or “giving something up” for a season to focus on our relationship with Jesus. The emphasis placed on personal discipleship and growing in our relationship with Jesus, invites us to take stock or inventory of those objects and practices that may, at times, draw us away from our relationship with God. The struggle that arises at times, though, is whether I pick up these objects or practices again once we get to Easter.

Over the past several weeks and months, I have been challenged to consider my work ethic, schedule, and how I spend my time each day. The invitation has been for me to consider how I am taking care of myself and how I view myself and my identity.

In our Christian culture or Church culture, self-care has been too often set aside with phrases like, “I will rest when I die.” Or “There are more souls to be saved and people to be helped.” I will admit my own use of these statements. Yet, a quick look at Jesus’ ministry and God’s command for us to rest, challenges us with the very words of Jesus as he shares the Greatest Commandment and then states, “and the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

When our culture of “do more” is our identity, we find our worth in what we do and not in who we are. We view our lives through the lens of acceptance, pats on the back, and commendations, instead of seeing ourselves through the eyes of God. In 2 Corinthians 3:1-6 we read,

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new

covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

When we allow the world to define who we are and measure our “success” through the world’s lens, we miss out on the truth of our identity in Christ. As we seek then to live out of the worldly identity it makes it difficult for us to love our neighbor or to live in peace with those with whom we disagree. We hold tightly to our plans, our desires, and our identity of who we are, creating a defense mechanism which unintentionally creates an egotistical attitude.

Jesus’ instruction to us to “love your neighbor as yourself” places how I view myself and how I love myself as a precondition of my ability to love my neighbor. If I limit my acceptance of myself or love for myself on what I can accomplish, then I will apply this same principle to my relationship with my neighbor. The truth written upon my heart is that I am a Child of God as I seek to daily follow Jesus. The truth written upon my heart is that God loves me and has a plan for my life.

When I place God in control, I may have days when I falter and do not live fully into the person God has created me to be, yet, I do not turn against myself...I fall more deeply into Jesus.

How do you need to love yourself better? Where are you trying to find your identity in doing, instead of being? As we soon come to the end of Lent, what is God teaching you about yourself and how God desires you to live your life trusting in Him?

Prayer: Lord, sometimes when I look into the mirror, I don’t like what I see. I thank you that you see more deeply than I do, reminding me of your plan for my life. Forgive me for the times I don’t love myself in the way you love me. Give me the grace I need each day to love myself for who you created me to be. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Malawi Ministry

The micro-credit opportunity in the villages of Nkhula and Mwala we Mbila in the Nkhotakota region have started. We are grateful for the opportunity to invest in this ministry where there is a great need for seed capital to start a new business. I look forward to hearing the reports of how these funds are being used in the coming months.

Also, while the micro-credit training was occurring during the day, there were evangelistic meetings in areas near these villages. 29 people made the decision to follow Jesus, seeking forgiveness of sins and baptism. These 29 new disciples are being taught, encouraged, and disciplined in their new faith. God is on the move in powerful ways.

I will be traveling again to Malawi on August 30-September 9. We will likely depart on August 29 to arrive in Malawi on the 30th. The trip will feature opportunities to meet with micro-credit recipients, new believers, and to work on developing more leadership and discipleship programs. We will also lead a Christian Ashram in the southern part of Malawi and participate in an ordination service. Finally, we will spend time listening to the needs of the villages and local churches in meetings with different leaders at various points throughout the trip. The cost of the trip will be between \$3,000-\$3,500 depending on flight costs.

If you are interested in learning more about this trip or our growing ministry in Malawi, please contact Matt (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

Guyana Trip—Team is Forming

We had to make a change to our initial plans for our Guyana Mission Trip. The dates are the same: June 24-July 2, but the Circuit where we will be working has changed. The pastor with whom we have worked over the past two years is taking a 3-month Sabbatical and vacation during the normal time when we travel. We have been introduced to a new pastor in a different circuit and we are excited for the new possibilities.

We are working on the final plan for our travels and what work we will be doing. The Circuit has asked for us to focus on Church Renewal and Mental Health along with working on some construction projects. We will seek to meet with the youth of the Circuit during our visit, in hopes of better understanding life in the Circuit.

If you or someone you know is feeling the call to mission ministry, please contact Matt (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670). The cost of the trip will likely be \$1,500-\$2,000 per person.

India Trip

I have received the itinerary for the 2024 India Trip. We will once again begin the trip with tourism to some of the beautiful and historical sites of India. This will include the Taj Mahal, the Maharaja's Palaces, a rickshaw ride through

the old market of Delhi, and the mathematical genius of the Jantar Mantar. We will also visit a few ministry sites where Brother E. Stanley Jones served, including Nur Manzil, the psychiatric hospital Brother Stanley started that is still serving the community and nation.

We will head to the Sat Tal Christian Ashram where we will join the Winter Christian Ashram. This seven-day experience incorporates time for Bible study, reflection, fellowship, and rest. We will hear powerful teaching from leaders in the Church in India.

We will wrap up the trip with a jungle safari at the Corbett National Park before heading to Delhi to depart for home.

The dates for the trip are September 25-October 11. This means you will need to arrange your flights beginning on September 24 in order to arrive in Delhi on September 25. The cost is finalized once we know how many people will be traveling. At this time, it looks like the cost will be no more than \$3,000 per person, not including your flight. If you have questions about this trip or would be interested in traveling on this trip, please contact Matt (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670). You can find the itinerary under the Mission Trips tab.

Haiti News—Broken Heart

The images continue to flash on my screen and the headlines continue to break my heart, as I witness the ongoing battle, violence, and insecurity in Haiti. The overall situation in Haiti has degenerated to absolute chaos with no government in charge and the gangs taking control of all ports of entry (port in Port au Prince and the airport). The situation has become dire, stealing life every day.

My son, Micah, and I had the opportunity to meet with David Draeger who has been living in Haiti. He returned to the United States for a fundraising tour before returning to Haiti. Unbeknownst to him, he was on the last flight out of Haiti on American Airlines. His description of the situation is similar to the reporting on television. He will likely not be able to return at this time because there are no flights taking people into Haiti. Micah is working on a feature report about the situation in Haiti, which we hope to share when it is completed.

Continue to pray for Haiti. The food insecurity is becoming increasingly problematic as there are ships in the water outside the port, but the port is not open. Once the ships are able to come to shore, it is uncertain if the gangs will allow the food and necessary items to get to the people. They may take them for the gang members, but not for the hurting people in the country. We are staying in close contact with the church leaders we know in Haiti and will give more information in the coming days and weeks.

Upcoming Events

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

March 24 Xenia Christ United Church Palm Sunday
April 14 Nepton Community Church Revival (KY)
April 28 Norris City Baptist Church (AM/PM)

Haitian Art Store Open

We continue to have our Haitian Art Store open at Herschel Johnson Implement (652 IL Route 15, Albion). The store features unique artisan gifts made in Haiti. We have a wide variety of metal art hand made from 55-gallon drums. There are hand made bracelets, earrings, and necklaces. The sale of these gifts support Haitian artisans and Living the Adventure's mission ministry. Check out some of the items on our Facebook page.