



ADVENTURE JOURNAL

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Living the Adventure Ministries guides the way to a growing relationship with Jesus through mission experiences.

Connect to Living the Adventure Ministries

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Jamaica: The Partnership Begins

As our flight landed in Montego Bay, we noted blue tarps still on some roofs across the mountainside. Hurricane Melissa struck Jamaica on October 28 and we landed three months later with a clear mission: get the Duncans Manse under roof so the pastor could move back to the Circuit of churches she is called to serve.

The team (Jerry, Micah, and me) was warmly greeted at the airport. The weather change was evident. We left temperatures in the single digits and 13 inches of snow and when we landed in Montego Bay, the temperature was in the upper 80s and everywhere you looked it was lush green. We traveled to Falmouth, Trelawny, where we would lodge for the entirety of our trip. We met our wonderful cooks, the local pastor, the Circuit pastor, and the Circuit Superintendent. We received an in-depth report about our project and began to discuss the feasibility of completing the task.

Our first day of the trip was filled with getting the tarp off one-third of the roof and making decisions about what materials we needed. We placed our first order and started putting 2x4 boards on the roof where the zinc roof panels would be screwed to the roof. We quickly saw this job was going to be much more involved than we previously believed. We were given the option to hire two young men from the Falmouth community who had worked with previous teams. Steven and Seymour were a blessing to us and because of their work added to our team's work, we were able to complete the project in the five days we were scheduled to work.

On our last day of working, the forecast was for rain to interrupt our work in the afternoon. As we stopped to eat lunch, I prayed, "Lord, please hold back the rain or direct it away from our location. We would really like to complete this project and get this house fully under the roof." We saw the clouds begin to build, but they never came our way. The Lord answered our prayer and we give God thanks for giving us those additional hours to complete the project.

On our last full day in Jamaica, we visited the other churches in the Duncans Circuit. The rain did not hold off, but we were able to witness the damage each of the

churches experienced. The worst was the Warsop Methodist Church. The roof was torn off the church and one exterior wall collapsed. The fellowship building also had its roof torn off. Our team discussed the possibilities of making this location a priority so the congregation can once again meet together.

Finally, the day we were scheduled to fly back to the United States, the Circuit Superintendent, Ernest, took us to York Castle High School. A beautiful facility with over 1300 students and 200 staff. It is a prestigious high school and its connection to the Methodist Church in Jamaica is longstanding. We were blessed with a great conversation with the Principal and look forward to possible future partnership.

Overall, the trip was a great experience. We wished we could have spent more time with people in the Duncans and Warsop community, but know it will be possible in the future.

Mission Opportunities

We are excited that God is opening doors for our mission ministry in this new year. We are working on two more opportunities to serve in Jamaica. Our next Jamaica trip is tentatively planned for April 22-May 1. We plan to work in Warsop, a village in the mountains of Trelawny Parish. We will work to replace the roof on the fellowship hall so the local congregation can once again gather for worship. We will also do some need assessments in the community for future ministry opportunities.

On July 20-28 we have another mission opportunity in Jamaica. We do not have our full plan together for this opportunity, but will be focusing on creating a team of people who cannot travel during the year because of school or work.

Then in August 7-August 22 we will be traveling to Malawi, Africa, where we will lead a Christian Ashram for couples and families. We will also lead seminars on leadership and discipleship. Finally, we will check on our microcredit ministries.

If you would be interested in receiving more information, please contact me (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

Lent 2026: Rejoice in Suffering

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:3-5, 10-11, 19)

Words used together that are opposites is called an oxymoron. When we read, "Jumbo Shrimp" or "Bittersweet" our minds do gymnastics to understand the juxtaposition of these two words and how they apply to our lives.

During the Lenten Adventure, our weekly emails will focus on Romans 5. This week we begin in verse 3 with an oxymoron. We read in the first part of Romans 5:3, "*More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings...*" Now hold on... rejoice in our sufferings? This is not our normal experience. When we experience suffering, struggles, and trials, we tend to fight the depressive emotions of sadness and defeat. We tend to wallow in our suffering taking into our lives the thoughts of "woe is me" and blame, seeking to find understanding and resolution.

In the previous verses of chapter 5, Paul has been placing our focus on our justification through Jesus' sacrifice. We are reminded of the peace, grace, faith, and hope we have received. He writes in verse 2, "*we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*" Our ability to rejoice in our suffering is based in our understanding of the gift Jesus has given us through our justification and new life. We recognize we were not promised life would be easy when we chose to follow Jesus. We were told to prepare for issues and struggles. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught, "*Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you*" (Matthew 5:11-12). Jesus also taught, "*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33).

We rejoice in our suffering because we know we are not alone. Our Lord and Savior experienced suffering, yet he used that suffering to bring life. In the preface to E. Stanley Jones' book *Christ and Human Suffering*, Anne Mathews-Younes writes, "Jones' book moves beyond answering the 'why' questions we so often ask of suffering

and on to sharing just 'how' suffering can be used to further personal transformation. Jones affirms that we can *make our sorrows contribute to transforming ourselves and others*" (Page 9).

As we continue through Romans 5, we will see how Brother Stanley's words are applied to our lives. When we change our perspective and mindset toward suffering from something to solve or "figure out," to a place of rejoicing in suffering, we will soon discover new growth in our lives. We move from problem solver to receiving life in its fullness.

Are you experiencing suffering, struggles, or trials in your life? Are you wallowing or rejoicing? Wallowing places my focus on the problem, while rejoicing focuses me on the God who cares and will use my present condition to bring new growth.

Prayer: Lord, thank you that in my hope in you, I can rejoice in suffering. When I lose my focus on you, remind me how you bring transformation and growth as I walk through each trouble I face. Thank you for being with me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Pray for New Opportunity

God is opening up a wonderful opportunity for Living the Adventure Ministries to expand its reach in ministry. Please join us in prayer as we consider this opportunity and how it will help us "guide the way to a growing relationship with Jesus." We hope to share more about this opportunity in upcoming Adventure Journal editions and on our Facebook Page.

ACH

Living the Adventure Ministries has a new way for people to come on board as regular financial contributors to our ministry. We can work with your local bank for your regular contribution to be drawn straight from your account to Living the Adventure Ministries. If you would like to know more about ACH and how to become a regular financial investor in LTA, contact Matt (matt@livingtheadventure.net or 618-830-6670).

The Guide

Each week Living the Adventure Ministries sends an email devotion and prayer focus for the week. It is our hope to provide an encouragement in the middle of the week and to share information about Matt's travels and upcoming events. There is no cost for the weekly email. We only need your email address to add you to our list. We know you receive many emails each day, so we seek to only send one per week. If you are not receiving The Guide and would like to connect with us, you can send your email to Matt (matt@livingtheadventure.net) or you can go to our website (livingtheadventure.net) and click on "The Guide Sign Up."

Upcoming Events

Mar. 1 Bridgeport Methodist Cross Connection
Mar. 12-14 FAS Evangelist Gathering
Mar. 20-21 Xenia Christ United Revival
Mar. 22-25 Carrier Mills Methodist Church Revival
Apr. 11-12 Oblong Evangelical Lock-In
Apr. 17-19 Alabama Christian Ashram
Apr. 22-May 1 Jamaica Mission Trip

Haitian Art

We have new Haitian Art for sale including pottery and metal bowls. These items can be purchased at our office (652 Illinois Route 15, Albion, IL) during normal business hours. Or, you can contact Matt to set up a time to shop (618-830-6670).

Each purchase supports our ongoing mission work in Haiti and around the world.