

GO!

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[0 : 0 0] Well, thanks for joining us today. I'm Pastor Steve Frenzenmeyer, one of the pastors here at First Christian Church in Greensburg. And it's going to be a little bit different today than what you're used to seeing if you've joined us before.

Today we have a panel discussion going on. We have three of the ladies from our church just got back from a wonderful mission trip to Liberia. And they're going to share their experience with us today.

So if you would, introduce yourselves to everyone, introduce yourselves to the world. Hi, I'm Laura. Hi, I'm Carol. I'm Shelly. Okay. I'm going to ask some questions and they're just going to give us some straight, honest answers about their experience.

So this first one is for all of you. Okay. And give you a second to think about it. What was the funniest thing that happened to you on your trip? And we'll start with you, Shelly.

What comes to mind is we were, it was kind of a team building expedition. They took us on a hike around the perimeter of the campus, which actually was a hike in the jungle, which was challenging.

[1 : 0 3] You had to jump from rock to rock through rivers, things like that. Well, about halfway through, we decided to be, you know, nice to get a group picture of some of us. So we're standing there taking this picture. And all of a sudden, one of the ladies, there's Jenny's going, I feel something in my pants.

Oh my gosh, it's biting me. What is it? We're like, look down. We were on a fire ant area. So she's running out. She says, I'm going to have to take these pants off. So she's shaking him and trying to get it out.

She didn't have to take her pants off. And the guy behind me goes, phew, because for a minute there, we went from survivor to naked and afraid. All right, Carol.

Okay. Well, I didn't have any really big, one big funny story that happened to me in Liberia. However, God does have a sense of humor a lot of times if you choose to see it that way.

It was our first day of VBS with the children. And Lexi, another girl that was with our group, she wanted to teach the children a Bible verse before. Well, and before she got the second word out of the Bible verse, all the children rattled off the Bible verse perfectly.

[2 : 1 0] In other words, they had already had it memorized. So they, it was just, we just kind of all stood there and looked at each other and kind of laughed because, you know, we think our purpose is to teach them about the word of God, but they often teach us so much more.

And their knowledge and love of God was so evident that we were just there to share in it with them. I had one other story I wanted to tell real quick.

We also had the honor of participating in the nightly devotions with the foster children before they went to bed. There was a definite ritual about how this was done.

Each child would individually stand up and say, praise God. And then everyone else in unison would say, amen. And then they would say, I would like to give my testimony.

And they would begin reciting a scripture, singing a song or both. And then of course, each of us visitors were expected to do the same and share something with them too. But the funny thing was that someone, when someone would say, praise God, many of us visitors would repeat, praise God.

[3 : 16] And then some of the older children, they would just kind of look at us real funny, like, don't you know that you're supposed to say amen? And so it was just kind of funny. So as the week went on, we had to practice and we got better and better and knowing how it was done.

That you say, praise God. Amen. Some of us. All right. And Laura, what about you? Oh, funny. I guess going to the beach.

We went to the beach Sunday afternoon and you're going to get wet at the beach. Well, the thing of it is, is to go there, we're in the back of a truck. And there was four of us in this back of the truck.

And it started off light rain. It's like, okay, no problem. We're going to get wet. And then one of the guys, JP, says, oh, you know, this isn't bad.

You know, it's just not pouring down rain. Well, a few minutes later, it is pouring buckets of rain. And we're in the back of this truck on the side looking at him. It's like, JP, just be quiet.

[4 : 20] He goes, it's really not that bad. I mean, it could be hailing. A few minutes later, this is Liberia. You've got to realize it's 85 degrees. Tink, tink, tink, tink, tink.

We're getting slinked. And it's like, JP, just shut up. It's not like it's going to have a tornado or anything. It's like, really?

Well, that's when the hurricane started on the coast of Liberia going to there. And it's like, just shut up. So we go to the beach. And the beach is not calm and quiet.

It's sort of like if you would go to a place to go surfing where the waves crash over. The beach isn't nice and flat.

It's like a 50-degree angle. So you go down there. The crash is in. You're in the sand all the way. And you, I mean, I'm covered in sand.

[5 : 18] Then, of course, we have to play with, make a sandcastle. And I'm head to toe covered. But you can't go in the water. Usually at a beach, you go in the water, shake everything off to get the sand off.

Nope. Can't do that because of this thing. But they had this big pond beside it. So I go over there and try to get wet. And everybody's leaving. And one of the Liberian mamas was there.

And everybody leaves. And we're trying to get the sand out of us. And we look at each other and just start laughing because nobody's around. And then we start shaking this thing. And between the two of us, we're just cracking up because we think we're alone.

One of the security guards come and say, are you guys going to come? Are you guys playing in the water? It's like, okay, we'll be there. So we walk around and every couple of feet, we go like this and try to shake things out because we are covered with sand.

And they look at us like, what are you guys doing? You're dancing? It's like, yeah, we're dancing. Okay. All right. Laura, this one's going to be for you.

[6 : 22] What was the one thing that God showed you on this trip? How lucky I am. You go to a third or second world country, you expect poverty.

Been to a lot of third world, Mexico, Guatemala, Haiti. There, the poverty, the malnutrition, just, they don't have anything.

I mean, everything's dirt floors, everything. But these people are so happy. They, the kids share. We went and took mattresses to orphanages.

And then we went back and gave them a thing of popcorn and a juice and things like that, sharing with the kids and stuff like that. And going back from one of them, we're coming back and this kid ran back.

Because we gave it to the orphans, but the village kids around there, we gave some too. And this kid ran back to his three brothers and sisters.

[7 : 29] And they're sitting there eating the one bag of popcorn. They had a sucker. They take a sip and they pass it around and they shared. These people have nothing.

These kids have nothing. But the first thing they do is share. And of course we stopped and we gave all the kids one. But that's not how we are.

We think of me and I need to give more. I need to be more giving because that's what we're here for.

Thank you so much. Thank you. And Carol, we'll kind of switch gears a little bit here. Why did you decide to go on this particular trip? Yeah, I've been thinking about this.

Why do I go on a mission trip? So the short answer, but most important answer, I think, is simply to glorify God. And I glorify God by showing love to others.

[8 : 27] Like Mark 12, 30 and 31 said, Jesus said that the most important commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

So I can show love to others by meeting people's practical needs around us. And we can do this at home or we can do it with our brothers and sisters throughout the world. I had such an opportunity in Liberia to meet practical needs like food needs, medical needs, shelter needs, spiritual needs, with things like passing out food, mattresses, and even these little crocheted crosses to the nearby orphanages.

And we were able to participate in nightly devotions with the children at the mission. And we also got an opportunity to love on children with our three-day mini VBS, spending time in the school with them and helping our nurses give deworming medication and fluoride treatments.

I also go on international mission trips like Liberia, I think, because I enjoy the adventure. And I think it's important to experience a new culture and learn about what their life is really like by living with the people, even if it's for a little while.

There's something very impactful about holding an 11-month-old baby that weighs only 10 pounds and see the lifelessness in their eyes. There's something very impactful about holding hands and worshiping and praising God together with people who seem to have nothing by our standards, but they have great riches in their love for God.

[10 : 05] There's something very impactful about giving your last hugs to the children that you've come to know by name. And see the tears come down their faces as you have to say goodbye, children who have been abandoned before.

So all these experiences abroad further prepare you for the ongoing mission of your life. And so I probably close with Shelley's favorite verse, Isaiah 6-8.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? And I said, Here I am, send me. I love that verse. And Shelley, we're going to end with you.

Shelley oversees all of our mission programs here at FCC, and she is a mission trip veteran. She's been on I don't know how many, but she's been literally all over the world and just has brought medical missions to our church and has done so much.

So Shelley, let's end with this. What missions do we support here at FCC? We support local missions is one of the things we look at.

[11 : 15] We have several like Bread of Life, the Kids Closet, several local missions that we support. And by support, we provide monthly, actually it's semi-yearly now, is how we've done it with billing, to help get their programs up and running and to support them with that.

We have several, and actually we have a display of, and an ongoing display of what we support out in the Holy Grounds. We also do national, and one of our big ones is crew, which is at Vol State, the one we support with Bridget.

And it is the Christian influence at Vol State. We have several international. We have the Greaves that are in Brazil. We have the Fries that are in Zimbabwe.

We have, oh, let me look at my notes because I knew I'd forget them. Josh and Abigail Meadows, who are the newest ones, they're going to Japan.

And what they're going to do is work on making home churches and introducing Christ that way to the Japanese people. The Fries are in Zimbabwe. Greaves are in Brazil. We have Morning Glory School in Guatemala, and we're looking at how we can support Psalm 82.3, the mission that we went with this time.

[12 : 33] Very good. So how can we, not only as a congregation here, but how can we as individuals support and be involved in missions? There's a lot of opportunities.

If you want to join the mission team, the World Outreach Team, come see me. We need people because there's so much more that we can do, people to lead local mission trips, people to be involved in work days, things like that.

One of the things that right now that we're doing is, this comes from our experience in Liberia. Carol talked a little bit about it. We saw malnutrition.

I've been on a lot of mission trips, but I've never seen malnutrition like I saw there. The baby that we sent two babies, we took two babies, transported them up to the malnutrition clinic in Monrovia, two hours away.

The first little baby, S2, was our 10-month-old, whose most of her weight was from swelling in her hands and feet because her organs were shutting down. We got her up there, and she probably had less than a week to live by the time we got her up there.

[13 : 39] But she's doing well now. She had an IV transfusion of blood. She's had food. Our other little guy was Harris, who was a 15-month-old that couldn't even sit up, and he weighed 10 pounds.

I was afraid even to try to stand him on his legs because they were like spindles. He's been released in his home. So one of the things we're working on is we want to send formula.

And they have a shipment container going down the end of August to Liberia. So I am doing a drive. We'll have a container out here at the Holy Grounds, dry formula that we can ship down because I'm working with Psalm 82.3 to get a malnutrition program up and starting that not only meets the physical needs but the spiritual needs all in one.

And the board is talking about that and how we're going to get that going. Those are being involved financially if you can't buy formula, if you can give a few dollars, whatever works for you.

But if you're interested, come see me. We will use you. Well, ladies, thank you so much for contributing today. And I know that all three of you definitely have the heart to serve the Lord in this area.

[14 : 51] And we are grateful that we can help you go. And we look forward to other ways that we can partner with other missions to spread the love of Christ and the gospel of Christ throughout the world.

So get involved. You have the opportunity. They're just regular people like you and me. But they answer the call to serve the Lord. So thank you.

We'll talk to you soon. God bless you. Thanks for joining us today. I'm Pastor Steve Frenzemeier from the First Christian Church in Greensburg. And I'm glad that you're with us today. And our setup today is a little bit different than normal.

We just had, you just saw our panel discussion with several of our mission team members that just got back from a trip to Liberia. And we're excited about the work that they were able to do there and some of the things that they have planned.

So I want to talk about missions today. And I want to talk about, so why are missions so important? And why are missions so important to FCC? Well, there's many reasons.

[15 : 57] But primarily because it is important to Jesus. In fact, it was one of the very last things that Jesus talked about during his time here on earth. The leadership here at FCC believes missions is so important that we have created a budget of over \$75,000 just for missions.

And Shelly and her missions team do a great job of finding and supporting missions that share the gospel of Jesus around the world and even right here in Decatur County and in Indiana.

Not only sending money, as we heard earlier, but we send people to work, to teach, to provide medical care, and most of all, to show the love of God wherever they go.

And we all can be a part of this great ministry. Matthew 28, verses 19 through 20 says, Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. Jesus could have talked about anything, any number of things, as his last words to his disciples, his dearest and closest friends.

[17 : 24] You know, he could have encouraged them by saying, Guys, stay strong and hold firm to my teachings. Or he could have said something like, Hey, the world's going to be rough out there.

It is all because of me. It's going to be rough because of me, so watch out. Or he could have even reminisced with them, saying, Hey, guys, do you remember the time I walked on water?

He could have talked about any of those things, but he didn't. And out of all the things that he could have talked about, Jesus gives them a mission. He gives them a purpose.

He gives them a command. From now on, until your time on earth is done, here is what you are to do.

Spread the good news of Jesus. That's what he told them to do. Spread the gospel. The gospel of Mark says, Jesus' last words were very similar.

[18 : 28] Mark 16, 14 says, Jesus was talking to his disciples at this time, and he says, Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Jesus said, Go.

Don't wait around. Go right now. I'm sure that when the disciples heard Jesus say this, they were probably cringed. I mean, now?

Right now? After all that's been going on here in Jerusalem, you want us to go out? Shouldn't we wait until things kind of calm down around here?

But Jesus said, Go. Go where? Jesus said, Everywhere. And do what? Jesus said, Teach the good news, the gospel of Jesus.

And go they did. Historical data shows that Peter and Bartholomew went to Rome. Andrew, John, and Philip spent time in Greece.

[19 : 28] Peter, excuse me, Thomas went to India. Matthew went to Ethiopia. Thaddeus and Simon went to Lebanon, while the two James stayed in Jerusalem.

And wherever they went, wherever they were set to go, they preached the good news of Jesus Christ. They started new churches wherever they went.

They trained new leaders and teachers of the gospel. And it sounds like an overwhelming task, doesn't it? That is, taking Christ to every corner of the world.

Does that sound impossible? Well, if you say it's impossible, then I think that we sadly underestimate our God. Sometimes we want to put the work of missions on someone else.

Missions isn't for me. I don't want to fly halfway across the world and be in the jungle. That is part of missions, but it is everything. Chuck Van Ingram says it this way, The church doesn't do missions.

[20 : 34] The church is mission. Do you get that? The church is mission. So if we take these words to heart, who is the church?

Well, we are. As a member of Christ's church, I'm not necessarily talking about just the church here at FCC, but I'm talking the big C church, the church of all believers all around the world.

You know, I have a very dear fraternity brother from college who is a part-time associate pastor at his church. And his full-time job is he works on the line at the Toyota truck plant in Princeton, Indiana.

He says that his workplace is his mission field. You know, we also have a very similar person right here at our church. Brad Spurgeon works at Honda.

And every morning he arrives at the plant just a little early and asks God to direct him who he should talk to that day, who needs encouragement, who needs to hear God's word.

[21 : 40] And then during the day, during breaks and at lunch, he purposely positions himself to speak with those people. Brad tells those, whoever the Lord has laid on his heart, about Jesus.

And you know, I have lost count of how many people Brad has invited to worship services and to men's breakfast. Brad's mission field is where God has placed him.

Where has God placed you? Where is your mission field? Before I came back to FCC a few years ago, the church I was at was paired with an inner city youth mission in the heart of downtown St. Louis.

And several times a year, a group of us would go out and just do work projects. And one time I can remember, a group of us went out. We were demolishing an upstairs area of a building the mission had just acquired.

And they were going to prepare that area to be a living space for families that were in need. And I can remember us tearing out the old countertops out of the kitchen.

[22 : 54] And as we were carrying the countertops to the door to throw them away, there stood James at the door. James was about eight years old and lived in the building next door.

And James ended up spending the better part of the next two days with us. He went to the hardware store with us several times. He ate lunch with us. We took him out to dinner with us.

And he just enjoyed being around us. And we enjoyed his company as well. But when it was time for us to leave, we were there just a couple of days, James asked if he could come back to Indiana with us.

I can remember vividly, I can see it in my mind right now, when we were loading up and getting ready to leave, we made Jesus, excuse me, we made James an official member of our crew.

One of the guys gave him a tool belt. Another gave him a tape measure. Another safety glasses. Another gave him a hammer. Another work gloves. Another a pair of pliers.

[23 : 59] And another even a screwdriver. And I can vividly remember, when we were parting, we had just finished talking to James, and James was walking back to his house.

He had to hold his work belt, that was around his waist, because he was too small for it. And James would take about eight or ten steps, and he'd turn around, stop, and just wave to us.

And then he'd take another eight or ten steps, stop, turn, and wave to us. He did that the entire block, as he walked down.

He turned to the corner, and then he was out of sight. You know, somehow this group of guys made an impression on James. But even more so, James made a tremendous impression on us.

And I know we didn't have time earlier this morning, but I'm sure that Shelley and Carol and Laura could have told story upon story of how the people of Liberia made a lasting impression on them.

[25 : 06] You know, the time is now for us to go. Jesus tells us in Luke, chapter 10, verse 2, he says, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest fields. Go! I am sending you out. The harvest is plentiful.

That means there is abundance of people that don't know the good news of Jesus Christ. Are they ready for the good news? Absolutely. Will they accept Jesus?

I don't know. And sometimes that may depend on us. I know that the good news is what they need. But how are we conveying the good news to them?

As Christians, the world is watching us and how we live. When the world looks at us, as us being as Christians, as us being part of the big C church, do they see Jesus?

[26 : 17] And all too often, unfortunately, they don't. Because sometimes we don't look too much different from the world itself. We don't love like Jesus did.

We don't do the things that Jesus would have done. We get caught up in our own hypocrisy. And if we are living our lives like that, then why would unbelievers want anything to do with Jesus if we say that Jesus can change their life, but we don't have any evidence of Jesus in our lives?

We often hear these words, all the world needs is Jesus. And how true that is. How true that is. But as Christians, we need to look different than what the world looks like.

The church has the good news of Jesus Christ. The very best thing that we can offer or be offered, we have that at our disposal.

What Jesus offers is radically different from anything, anything that the world has to offer. So yes, all the world needs is Jesus.

[27 : 32] Wouldn't it be great if we could take on the attitude of Isaiah? Isaiah is getting ready to start his ministry, and he hears the voice of God talking to him.

And he says, Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And whom will go for us? And I said, Here I am.

Send me. So, we need to follow the words of Jesus and go. We need to go and be the church.

We need to go and be true disciples of Jesus. where having Jesus in our hearts and in our lives has made a visible change in us.

That as Christians, we are different from the world, and all because of the difference that Christ has made in our lives. We need to go into the harvest fields.

[28 : 31] And all that is is sharing and spreading the good news of Jesus to a hurting world. You know, the world is in a desperate situation.

A desperate need for Jesus. We need to go into the world that we may be sharing with Christ in our workplace, or it could be deciding to volunteer at the Ark, the Esperanza House, the Bread of Life Soup Kitchen, or signing up to go on a mission trip.

Or, right there where you are. When Jesus said go to his disciples, he also meant for you and me to go. All of us.

Every single one of us. If you are a Christian, if you are part of the body of Christ, then that is all of us. You know, all I know is that it is time.

It's time for you, and it's time for me. It's time for you to go. I appreciate you for being here. And most importantly, I pray that you would consider how can you be a part of serving God and spreading the gospel of Jesus where you're at.

[29 : 45] You know, you may not be able to get out. You may be at home and not be able to go anywhere. How can you share Christ's love? Or maybe God's laying it on your heart to sign up to go on a mission trip somewhere.

Or maybe it's going across the seas. Or maybe it's at a local mission here in our community. Where is God asking you to go?

Ask Him. Because I'm sure He's got a place for you. I know He's got a place for you. So before we go today, let's pray, okay? Lord, I just thank You so much.

I thank You for all those that are hearing Your Word today. That, Lord, that You have touched their heart and given them a sense of urgency, Lord, to spread Your Word, to spread the good news of Jesus, the saving grace that only Jesus could offer.

Thank You, God, that You've made that change in our hearts. And we pray, Lord, that You will make the change in so many other lives around the world.

[30 : 53] And God, thank You for allowing us to be a part of that. God, we thank You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Thank You for joining us today.

And if you need to talk more, if you need to know more about the good news of Jesus, please give us a call here at First Christian Church at 812-663-8488.

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