

# International Missions We Support

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Preacher: Matthew Garrett

[0:00] Okay. Today we're going to take a special opportunity to talk about international missions that we personally are involved in.

And that's not to minimize local missions. We're very involved in those. And we often talk about those. But today we're going to focus on international.

But as I was back there thinking about how we love to tell the story, I thought about, wow, we've got at least one person who's in our church who is on local mission right now telling the story.

And I want us to take a moment to pray for him. Brother Sandy, he's not here today. He was not here last Sunday because he's been invited to go share a devotional at a ballpark with traveling ball teams.

And, you know, God bless the traveling ball teams. I kind of don't like that they meet on Sundays, but they do. And so Sandy's able to be there this morning.

[1:01] And he's right probably at this moment preaching the gospel to them. So let's stop and pray for Sandy, what he's doing. So, Lord, we just praise you for local missions, for a chance to tell our neighbors, our community, the surrounding area, every opportunity we get.

And we thank you for Brother Sandy, Pastor Sandy, that you have in our midst until you open another church for him or whatever your plan is for his life. And we pray that you bless him greatly now as he tells people who may not hear it anywhere else that Jesus Christ died for their sins and that God will forgive.

So, Lord, bless him, bless him, put your words in his mouth, open the ears and hearts of his listeners and let God be glorified in Jesus name. Amen.

Well, we support a lot of international mission work. In fact, just through the Lottie Moon Christmas offering that we'll be doing in December, we're supporting probably just short of 4,000 missionaries around the world.

When you give to that offering, all of that money goes to support missionaries around the world. And in fact, in my presentation today, you're going to see at least some things that the Lottie Moon Christmas offering is supporting.

[2:21] And earlier this year, we were blessed. We had a man in Columbia that we support named Leonel. Pastor Leonel was with us, I think, in February and told us about the work he's doing.

And then in July, Jillian Nash, who's a Virginia girl who is serving in Columbia, South America as a full-time Baptist missionary.

She came and talked to us about the work she's doing. John Adams was here in August and talked to us about the work going on in Haiti. And Courtney was here in September.

Courtney Mathis told us about the work in Bolivia. We send money and support to all of those people. And I'm not going to repeat much of what they're doing today because they got to come and tell us what they were doing.

And then if you were blessed to be here in Sunday school this morning, and I think I was remiss really in getting the word out. But we were really blessed to have Julio and Emily come in Sunday school and tell us about their mission and ministry work.

[3:26] And what they're doing all around the world. Julio, I was astonished. You have 47,000 followers online. He's an influencer.

He is. He is an influencer. He's like a social media celebrity. And I never knew it. He has been recognized in public. We were in a Christian bookstore in Mexico City.

And the employees came over and said, are you from blah, blah, blah? They knew him from online. Oh, my word. Oh, my word.

And that was just marvelous to hear. But I think, well, maybe it was even more important that in this year so far, you've had over 500 Christian counseling sessions between the two of you with people who need somebody to talk to about things they're dealing with.

God bless you and your work. So anyway, you've told us what y'all are up to. The only thing Julio didn't share, he is the only person from Venezuela in the world who does not drink coffee.

[4:33] So I had. We will pray for him. So anyway, he's entitled to one mistake in his life. There's grace. It's okay. I don't drink coffee.

It's nasty. Uh-oh. But you're not from Venezuela. So, okay. Well, for most of these folks that we're going to be talking about this morning, our church kind of averages sending them about \$150 to \$200 a month.

And we send it to them. It saves money. You have to pay every time you send it. So we send it to them about every two or three months. So then we don't spend as much on the process of transferring.

They get to keep more of the money. And so I'm going to show you. During the year, you don't hear much from them. But I am really blessed because I'm connected with them through, you know, my telephone, something called WhatsApp.

And they send me photos and so forth. And so the pictures I'm going to be showing you today are things that they've sent me during the year of work that they're doing. So let's begin with another prayer.

[5:40] Okay. Lord, now we're going to talk about your missionary work around the world and our part in it. God, help us to stay motivated in supplying the needs of those who are out on the front lines in other parts of the world.

Let us be their supply line. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, I think when we talk about missions, Becky, I can't believe I've come here without any water.

Would you mind slipping back? You have a bottle right here. No, but I guess I could drink it. Does it look? Okay. I probably don't want last week's leftover that somebody else drunk out of.

But I have been thirsty enough to do that before. Okay. So I think I want to start off by saying, why do we as a church go on mission trips?

And why do missionaries go? And the answer to that is real simple, just right out of the scripture. Because Jesus went. And then Jesus told us to go.

[6:46] And the scripture says, Jesus said these words. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. We don't have a lot of choice.

The CEO said, do it. Now, I don't know who you worked for. But if the boss came to me and said, do it, I did it. So the boss said, go. Make disciples.

He said to baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And he said to teach them to obey everything that he has commanded. And so that's, thank you, dear.

That is why missionaries go. Some people feel the call of God to make that their life's work. Others feel the call of God to go to Tennessee or wherever for a week.

Some feel the call of God to go to their local school and help out in some way in the name of Jesus. We go. And every person should be involved.

[7:44] If you are a believer and you are at all able to, you need to be going, sharing, ministering when you have the opportunity. Well, then another question might be, so why are we sending money to these folks?

Well, I think that that's also straight out of the scripture. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said, Now, Paul was funny about this.

He spoke out of both sides of his mouth. He would always say, don't muzzle the ox that's treading the grain. That meant that the person who's preaching and teaching the gospel should receive support through their work.

And then he would always add, but now I don't ever do it. You know, I'm not going to be a burden to you and I'm not going to let you pay me. I don't want you to think I'm into this for money.

So, you know, Paul was maybe giving two messages, but I think both messages are good. The message is that if you're in the Lord's work full time, it is reasonable and normal to expect that God

will meet your needs.

[9:03] And he's usually going to do it through the church. And then there will be those folks who feel blessed in other ways to be able to serve and receive no compensation for it.

And then there's going to be a lot of the ones we're going to talk about today that are somewhere in the middle. They serve the Lord close to full time and then also work to help support their family and themselves.

So all of those are good, but it's good for us to be sending money. Now, the first person I'm going to tell you about is in Venezuela. And she lives in the town of Merida, the little red dot up there, the red letters.

And her name is Bibi or Bibiana is her full name. Her nickname is Bibi. She's been in our church before and she happens to be Julio's sister and our church regularly supports her.

And so she has actually sent me a letter and photos to share with you. So I'm going to kind of read her letter at the same time that you get to see her pictures.

[10:12] So there's Bibiana and her 17 year old daughter, Lyseth, who just goes by Lys, and they serve the Lord together in Venezuela.

And so I'm reading to you from Bibi, who has been in our church, who has spoken to us probably three years ago now. Dear brothers and sisters of the Moncure Baptist Church, I send you our warm greetings from the mountains of Merida in Venezuela.

First of all, I want you to know that I am very grateful to the Lord for your lives and your faithful generosity to us during this year.

I don't know how to thank you enough. Brothers and sisters, I cannot deny that this past year has been a very difficult one.

It has required a greater effort on my part to balance between helping my father during his treatment for cancer, being able to continue to serve the Lord through our church, and then being the mother of a teenager who is studying at home.

[11:22] However, as I sit down to write this letter to you, I can see the privilege that I have to know and serve a God as loving as ours.

So I invite you to listen to a little bit of what we have been doing that was possible because of your support. Now, the first thing she talks about is her father's health, but I'm going to skip that part because Emily just kind of told us everything that she put in her letter.

But he is doing much better, and Julio was able to go down and visit. And so praise God for that.

Then she wants to tell us some about her ministry, which is mostly done through her church.

Now, her church name in Spanish is La Gran Campaña de Fe, which means the Great Campaign of Faith. There's a picture of her church. I believe that's her closest to us right there in the middle of the picture.

Anyway, her church has six services on a Sunday morning to get all the people in. They have about a thousand people attending, and they are truly experiencing a great revival.

[12:33] And it's been going on, frankly, ever since the really hard times have hit Venezuela. And Venezuela is in terrible hard times if you listen to the news any.

Everything there is so scarce. But anyway, let me tell you about some of the work she's doing there. She says, first of all, the Lord has allowed her, allowed me to work as a team with the leaders and pastors of different ministries in our church.

Together, we organize, train, and attend small groups of Bible study in our church. Thanks be to God, we have managed to keep at least 130 Bible study groups active around our city, which has a population of 300,000 people.

And our groups are spread out across the city. On Saturdays, I also go to a town outside of the city called El Vaje. It is a beautiful place in the middle of the mountains.

I am teaching two small groups there. One is for new believers, and another is for people who have been in the church a long time. The second group are solid Christians, and we are training them to be teachers and leaders of more small groups in their area.

[13:55] So you see, they've got a real multiplication going on. And, you know, we're pleased that we have two really good small groups. And then if you count our Sunday school classes, we've probably got about six good

small groups.

And somehow, Bibi's job, she is in charge of organizing, coordinating, etc., 130 small groups in her church. She's also, she says, I am more and more focused on serving and leading our ministry to the women of our church.

And then she goes on to say, So far this year, we were blessed to baptize 120 people.

We're asking the Lord to help us to disciple them so they can grow in faith and learn to share their faith with others. I have also become a church leader to obtain basic supplies for the maintenance of the church and food for the church.

This is due to the shortages in Venezuela, the instability of the economy, and the fact that I own a dependable car. So I have been getting more and more involved in purchasing for the church.

[15:11] And so she puts a picture in here, going to the grocery store, and her car loaded with stuff. And she makes mention of, she said, as she sent me stuff, she said, Be sure to say thank you to the church, because some of you helped her buy that car.

And now she's using that in ministry there every week. I love to shop. She's a woman to heart, right? Yeah. Okay.

You didn't say that. I didn't say it. And strike that from the recording. We did. Somebody else said that. Okay. It has been a challenge to my faith every week.

It takes a lot of faith to trust in the supernatural provision of the Lord to be able to buy enough with limited funds and to be diligent to get the best prices and good quality.

So this is something she has to pray a lot about when she goes out shopping. Now, what do they do with that food? They have a program in the church. I'll just read to you. The food purchases are mainly for our Children of Hope program, which serves meals to about 120 impoverished school-aged children three days a week.

[16:28] And while the children are at the church eating lunch, our church serves their parents or other relatives with parenting workshops and discipleship classes.

Then she goes on to say that they do some real social relief work. In the month of June, especially, some of the main rivers near Merida overflowed, causing great damage to many homes and leaving many families homeless.

As a church, we got involved with taking clothing, food, water, and the message of the gospel to these people who were going through such adversity.

Kind of like what we were doing, you know, with the Helene Hurricane recovery work. Similar work that her church is doing there in Venezuela. Except in Venezuela, there's probably not a FEMA-type organization because the government's broke.

So they're probably not able to do as much. And so a lot more probably falls on the church. I don't know that for sure. That's a wild guess. What would you say, Leo? Well, if it comes for the government, maybe you can get something.

[17:46] There is so much need, but there's not enough resources. So, like here, the government does some work, like FEMA. It's not enough. The society, the churches, people who care have to pitch in.

Okay, then, this will be a surprise to you, Julio. God gave me the beautiful gift. Oh, I skipped a paragraph. That's coming up next.

Here's a paragraph. My daughter, Lise, who is now 17, has grown into a beautiful young lady. I still can't believe how fast she has grown. She has been helping in the children's Sunday school class at church.

Currently, she's making a great effort to be able to finish her high school studies by the end of December. Please pray that God will continue to work in her life and guide her future.

And then, here's the little surprise for Julio in here. God also gave me the beautiful gift of enjoying the company of my brother Julio, who came to visit us for a couple of weeks in September during my dad's recovery, which also coincided with my birthday and made it more special.

[19:02] Finally, thank you again for giving us the opportunity to tell you in this small report about some of the activities that you supported in 2025.

We pray that our good God will continue to bless your lives and that you will be able to reap even more of what you have sown into our mission work here.

Well, praise the Lord for B.B. and what she's doing. And I'd say that our little \$150 or \$200 a month is being put to mighty good use in her hands.

It makes you feel good about it. In fact, let me say something here about why I even do a report like this. Three or four years ago, I believe it was Roger, might have been some others, said, how do we know what these folks we support are really doing?

I mean, should we just forever send them money? And I thought, that's a really good question.

We've got to be responsible, good stewards of our money. And so since then, I have really tried to stay in better contact and give you an annual report of kind of what all these folks are doing.

[20:12] So I think this is the third year maybe that I've given an annual report like this. Okay, well then, our next place to go look at is going to be right beside Venezuela in Colombia.

And some of you that are kind of new to our church, you may not know that our church, people sitting right here, took 28 mission trips to South America over about a 12-year period from 2012 to 2023.

And we still support the mission work there. And the main emphasis of that work is to go to indigenous people. In other words, Indian villages. They are the poor, neglected people of Colombia.

And we go into those villages, the missionaries do, the people we support. And they help plant churches. And they work with the folks. And that's the main focus of our Baptist missionaries there right now.

So let's talk through this together. And I don't have any notes on this one, so I'm going to have to look at the pictures with you. First of all, this is the last time I was there.

[21:18] Just so happened that all the pastors that we help support were in this picture. So I thought I'd like to give them a start with. This fellow, Roberto, on the left, we'll be talking about him.

He pastors in a place called Apartado, which is really close to the airport we fly into. The next guy, Leonel, is the one who's been in our church three or four times. And whose daughter, Suri, was with us last spring.

Then next comes Jillian, who is the Virginia girl that we've gotten to know well. And who's a missionary there. And then folks from our church who were there on that mission trip.

And then Demas, our interpreter, who's always with us. Beautiful guy. And then Manuel, who pastors a small mission church. And then it looks like German, but they would pronounce it Hermann.

And Hermann, or we would say Hermann, wouldn't we, is pastoring a church in the town of Kurilau. So all of these guys work also a job to help support their work.

[22:24] Their churches are not that large. The people are not wealthy. And so they receive some compensation from their church. Not enough to support them.

In fact, the ones I know about, I'm not sure what Roberto does on the side. But I know he's got something going to help make ends meet. I know that Leonel is a farmer.

And so he's raising bananas and plantains and hardwood forests and whatever else. He's a farmer. And then Jillian, of course, is a full-time missionary supported by your offerings to, especially the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

Demas does what I, he's sort of the side hustle expert. He just kind of goes around and whatever needs to be done, he can jump in there and make a dollar doing it.

He often connects tourists with day trips on boats or whatever. He lines up arrangements to stay in hostels or hotels.

[23:26] And he gets a little kickback from any time he refers people to do stuff. And so somehow he makes a living, gets by doing it. And I know that your offering to him helps him to make ends meet.

And then Manuel repairs cell phones. And Hermann teaches music lessons. He can play four or five instruments.

And so that's how he makes ends meet. Well, let's talk about each one of them a little bit. Pictures I got from Hermann, there he is preaching. There's his whole church gathered in front of a mission church that they helped with.

And he wanted me to show you this picture. He said, I have never had any motorized transportation that I have owned in my whole life.

I've never had a car, never had a motorcycle, nothing. And he said, because of your help, I kept saving up and I was able to buy a used, this motorcycle.

[24:30] And he said, now I can get around to the church people and go visit them in the hospital and carry supplies. You wouldn't believe how much stuff they can put on a motorcycle in Columbia.

We've seen them carrying washing machines on motorcycles. I mean, it's amazing. So he is so pleased that you helped him buy that motorcycle. Here's his church in action, top left picture, a youth rally of some sort.

Sunday school meeting in the top right. And that's the classroom that a year ago we sent like three grand to remodel completely a part of their building so they could have a nice Sunday school room. And here they are, some kind of a feeding program that they do in the community. So that's stuff that Hermann is up to. Now, Roberto Cabadilla, this is on the left over there is a picture of him, his wife Rosa.

There are two children. His daughter is involved in mission work in Columbia. At the top right, you see their church people on a Sunday. He's got kind of a small church and a tiny little building.

[25:42] His building, the whole building is about a fourth the size of what we're meeting in right here. But boy, do they do a lot of work with children. Every week, two or three times a week, they're out in different neighborhoods leading like little vacation Bible school programs and so forth.

Really good, good folks. And he sent me this picture very recently of a baptism they had. And for baptism there, I don't know if anybody much has a baptismal tank or pool.

They usually go to the nearest river or pond or whatever. And so they went down to the river. And as I was looking at this picture, I thought, what's on those guys' shirts? They all got the same shirt. So I blew up one and focused in on it.

And I realized, oh, that is Galatians 2.20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And what an appropriate thing to wear for baptism.

You are being crucified and buried with Christ. And now you no longer live, but Christ will live in you as you are baptized and walking with him. So good work, Brother Roberto.

[26:51] Now here's Brother Manuel. He is in the water there, the tall guy with the bald head. And that's his church. His church has a very interesting name.

December 24. Apparently that neighborhood is called, you know, we would call it Christmas Eve. Apparently that's the name of that neighborhood. So that's what they named the church. And in the water you see him with Hermann, the other pastor we already just talked about.

Because Hermann is kind of his mentor as a pastor and is helping him. It's his first church. He's a new pastor. And he's helping him along. So anyway, they're doing a lot of good work there.

And then we've got to talk about Demas. Oh my goodness. If you've ever spent time, the next time he's here, if you haven't ever spent time with him, figure out how you can get a chance to be with him.

The guy has a gentle heart that you just can't help but love him. He's never met a stranger. One time he was here. And we're treating him as a special guest.

[27:59] And he spoke. And afterwards, I saw him helping some folks moving some equipment up here. I said, Demas, what are you doing? Well, they needed some help.

It's just, that's in his nature. And so Demas is always helping somebody do something. Here's a picture he sent me this year of an Indian church, an indigenous church that he likes to attend. Meets in most of their buildings in the indigenous villages are just poles and a thatched roof. And they have to replace them about every four years because the termites eat them up.

And so they were in the midst of rebuilding the church. And so he just jumped right in there. Let me help you. They're cutting down poles in the woods. And they're going to carry it back and rebuild the church.

And he says, they can rebuild the church in about two days. You know, just get the materials together and do it. Here he is teaching an American who was down there for three months named Jake.

[28:59] And he's working on a project of some kind with him. And he's teaching him Spanish. And he told me he would meet with this guy about three times a week and just teach him Spanish. We've never really talked about this journeyman program.

But the Baptists have a lot of opportunities to serve, more than I'm aware of. And they have this great opportunity. If you had the free time and the inclination and everybody's got some kind of skill, they've got this journeyman program.

You can go for two months, three months, six months, almost to the country of your choice. They'll hook you up with a missionary and you'll serve and work. And it's a really great thing that college students often do.

Here's Demas and Brian and Omar. Brian is our missionary there full time. He has also spoken in our church before from Texas.

And you see Demas there. And Omar on the far left is one of the few Indian men who has truly become a pastor trained by Brian.

[30:05] And he has his own church and he preaches and ministers and so forth. So that Sunday their project was they were picking orchids in the jungle and going to give one to every woman that was in church that Sunday for what they have.

Woman's Day, they call it. So anyway. And Omar, I'll say another thing about him. Some of you were involved in, the first time we met him, he was missing a front middle tooth.

Great guy, huge smile, and a front middle tooth. And some of you provided the funds for him to get a tooth implant or a bridge or something.

And now, you know, it certainly helps him in his ministry. Here's Demas telling Bible stories to a group somewhere in a typical indigenous church.

Poles and a thatch roof. He all likes to travel with Brian, whatever Brian needs him to do. And so here you see a lot of the workers we work with. Demas, Rhonda, and Brian are husband and wife, so they're both full-time missionaries.

[31:13] Jillian we've talked about, and Omar we've talked about. About, you can see two or three years ago, back in 2022, we met this pastor.

We were down there in Chilredo, which is a little town in Columbia. And they were trying to buy this piece of dirt a lot to put a church on.

And we decided, well, what can we do? So we sent them about \$600. And he sent me this picture that here's their dirt.

And, you know, they actually asked us, can you help us some more? And among the deacons and pastors, we kind of felt like we're about fully committed here to what we're able to do right now.

So we didn't send more, but at least we helped them buy the lot. So now, on this other screen, he just sent me not long ago a picture of the finished building and their first worship service.

[32:12] We're not sure if the sound is working this morning. If it's not, I'll narrate it. It might work. So this is the brick building. This is...

The name of the Lord is the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is the name of the Lord.

The name of the Lord is the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is the name of the Lord. Look. Okay, my fellow, right there at the end, that is Pastor Francisco.

And some of us have been in a worship service before they had this building. And what you just heard, we had to sit through a two or three hour service where we didn't know a word being said and trying to stay awake with no hot, you know, no air conditioning and kind of a challenge.

[33:44] But praise the Lord. They got a building built and they're ministering and it's an only Baptist church in Chigurideau and they're doing a good work there for God. And we had a little bit to do with it and

praise God when people come to Christ there, we had a little bit to do with that.

We sowed a little bit of seed in it. Praise the Lord. Well, let's move on. I've got to talk a little more about Leonel, although he did come this year.

Leonel is a farmer and he doesn't have a church he pastors anymore, but he kind of helps plant and oversee churches all over the place. And he works for the convention of Columbia Baptist now. And, but I think he told me they don't give him any salary. They just give him a title. So he still is very much self-supporting and we help out some. Here he is deep in a jungle of an area called Choco.

Choco. And he's there teaching these indigenous people, here's how you can make a better banana crop. Because he's a farmer. He really knows how to do it.

[34:50] But while he's there, he's also telling them about Jesus and trying to, you know, lead some to Christ. Let's get a church started. Here's how he gets there. The old way was, and you still see it, dug out canoes with poles.

They still are like this. But he generally hires somebody with a little boat and a motor. And it still takes four or five days. We're talking windy little rivers and creeks deep in the jungle and then hiking for a day or whatever to get to some of these places.

But Leonel loves it. He goes for that kind of stuff. His wife, Piedad, that's her with the long black hair. She goes with him often and just jumps right in and just lives, you know, exactly like the indigenous.

Cooking, eating with him, whatever it takes. And it's amazing if you've ever met her. She's been here once. She is like a real girly girl. I mean, she is a, you know, super feminine, you know, the fingernails and the cosmetics and the stylish and everything.

What? She's as beautiful as any model you've ever seen. And she kind of, you know, that's her impression she leaves. And yet she doesn't mind.

[36:09] Let me show you their fancy hotel they get to stay in on this trip. There's their hotel. So they're sleeping in hammocks. There's no running water. Cooking over open fires.

And she'll just say, let's go. And that's that missionary spirit. Here is something Leonel did this year. He donated some of his farmland for your Lottie Moon Christmas offerings, the Baptist Lottie Moon Christmas offerings, to build a training center there for indigenous leaders to come from their tribes, from their villages, for training sessions together.

And now they've made some progress on this building. And we just got a video from them about a month ago. And I can tell you that the translation was done by a computer.

And so it doesn't always translate perfectly, but it isn't bad. And we've tried to slow the voice down a little bit. But this is a more recent picture of that building and some description of what they're doing. Let's see if we can get that one to play, Mark. From September 3rd to 7th, a training for indigenous leaders from Antioquia, Chaco, and Córdoba was held. The training center was prepared with shade netting to make better use of the space for both learning and recreation.

[37:34] Around 40 people attended, including brothers from Azenu, Cádiz, Dohida, Bado, and Tuli ethnic groups, as well as national missionaries and IMD members.

One of the activities was learning how to make benches from Kanyaplecha, the traditional craft of the Zenu people. The program included times of prayer, intercession, recreation, and small groups where participants shared stories and learned together.

The biblical story of the crucifixion of Jesus was also filmed with indigenous brothers themselves serving as the actors.

Participants stayed in hammocks and camping tents, and the event strengthened their faith, commitment to evangelism, and unity among the different ethnic groups. The vital passages studied were Matthew 28, 16-20, 1 Corinthians 15, 3-4, Luke 19, 1-10, 23-33-43.

Acts 12, 1-19, Numbers 21, 4-9, Luke 11, 5-13, James 5-14-18. Mark 1-35-38, Luke 6-12-16, Luke 18-10-14, Luke 11, 1-4, we thank the Lord for your lives, for your valuable support, and for every prayer lifted up on behalf of this process of a ministerial project in the cross-cultural work in Columbia.

[39:07] May the Lord richly reward you and continue pouring out his blessings upon you. Many thanks. Wow. So, boy, that computer said a lot fast, didn't it?

And how did you like it turned scriptures into math problems? Like, James 5, 1-14. Okay.

So, anyway, you see the good work that's going on there, and that was a donation of Leonel giving some of his farmland for them to be able to build that center.

Here's another thing. This really excited me. We spent a lot of time in a place called San Pedro. No, very little Christian work there. It's a big, apparently, probably a cocaine drug center.

We found out later it was a very dangerous place to be, but we didn't know it. And Phil went wandering off riding horses with people there and stuff, but, you know, God watches over you when you're on these mission trips.

[40:07] So, Leonel sent me this picture and said, here's the start of a new church that we're planting in San Pedro now. And so, praise God, again, I think we had a little bit to do with that.

We helped open the door, had a reason for him to go there, got him introduced to people, and so that's good. And, you know, just speaking of, Leonel reminded me of Suri, and she spent three months with us this year and I thought, eh, this was the last day she was with us, I thought I'd throw it up there.

Sweet girl. And this is when she got home that night. Her family all showed up to welcome her back at the airport and I wrote to her this week and said, so what are you up to now?

And she said, I'm working on getting my driver's license, I gotta take the exam soon, and I'm getting ready to finally enroll in the university.

So, she'll be starting college real soon. And then I didn't want to leave Brian out. This is a great picture. Brian, this guy's amazing. If you can't tell, that's him in the second boat back there, sitting up at the front and being pushed down rivers.

[41:22] I mean, we're talking days from civilization. You know, no electricity, no, I mean, just out there and Rhonda with him. and they just go wherever they have to go to help spread the good news of Jesus.

And much of the work you've seen, especially, Brian kind of coordinates all these things. And, uh, your Christmas offering helps make that happen.

So, we're going to be asking you about that before long. Um, I want us to end with prayer. And, are there any questions or comments about any of this before we have prayer?

Okay. Well, I have actually handed out to different people here and asked them to pray for a minute or less for these different folks we've just talked about.

So, I don't know who's got what names, but I'll tell you who. And then, if you would, just speak up and pray out loud, lead us in a prayer. Whoever has Pastor Roberto.

[42:29] Father God, Lord, we just thank you for allowing Roberto to be in our lives so that we can see the wonderful things that you're doing, Lord.

And you're doing it through him. I pray that you would be with him, guide him, and push him to continue to do your work so that he can spread your words and you can get the credit that you deserve.