

WHBC

# Missions

MAGAZINE



Christy Mahan screws deck board down for Hammers of Hope.

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PICTURE OF HORSE  
AT HILLTOP BAPTIST ON  
LOWER BRULE RESERVATION,  
SOUTH DAKOTA

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# WORLD RECIPES

## Jamaica (Hibiscus Tea) from Guatemala

This is one of our Guatemala Teams' Favorite drink while on mission trips.

- 1 cup dried hibiscus flowers (Jamaica) - about 40-60g
- 8 cups (2 liters) water, divided
- 3/4 to 1 cup sugar, to taste
- Ice, for serving
- Optional recommended add-ins:
  - cinammon
  - a few slices of ginger
  - pineapple

1 Rinse the hibiscus.

Place the dried hibiscus in a strainer and quickly rinse it under cold water to remove dust and debris. Don't soak - just rinse briefly.

2 Boil the hibiscus.

In a pot, bring 4 cups of water to a boil. Add the rinsed hibiscus (and cinnamon/ginger if using). Lower the heat and simmer for 4-5 minutes.

3 Let it steep

Turn off the heat and let the hibiscus steep for 15-30 minutes so the water absorbs its deep red color and tangy flavor. (The longer it steeps, the stronger it tastes.)

4 Strain

Pour the mixture through a fine strainer or cheesecloth into a large pitcher. Press the flowers lightly with a spoon to get all the liquid out.

5 Add water and sweetener.

Add the remaining 4 cups of cold water to the pitcher. Stir in the sugar until fully dissolved. Taste and adjust - if it's too strong, add more water. If too sour, add more sugar. Add fruit like pineapple if desired.

6 Chill and serve (can also be served as warm tea).



### Ways to help send our team!

Give financial support for a team member. This trip cost the team \$1,880.00 per person.

Pray for our team. Pray for the members that are going to serve at His Hands and Feet Ministry.

This team will be helping with children's day camp activities with His Hands and Feet Ministry GUA. They will also be visiting villages to pray with families and share the hope of Jesus.

Glowing skin made easy with these simple care tips!



# Homesick for Southeast Asia

BY MISTY VINEYARD

It's a strange feeling — being homesick for a place that isn't your home. Yet, that's exactly how I feel about Southeast Asia. Somewhere along the way, this island and its people have captured my heart. I truly believe that God Himself planted that love within me — a love that stirs a desire to go, to pray, and to give. It's a gift from Him.

As Bro. David has been preaching through Acts and challenging us with the question, "What now?" I can't help but think how clear the answer really is: to go, to pray, and to give. Jesus Himself commands us to go — whether that's across the street or across the ocean.



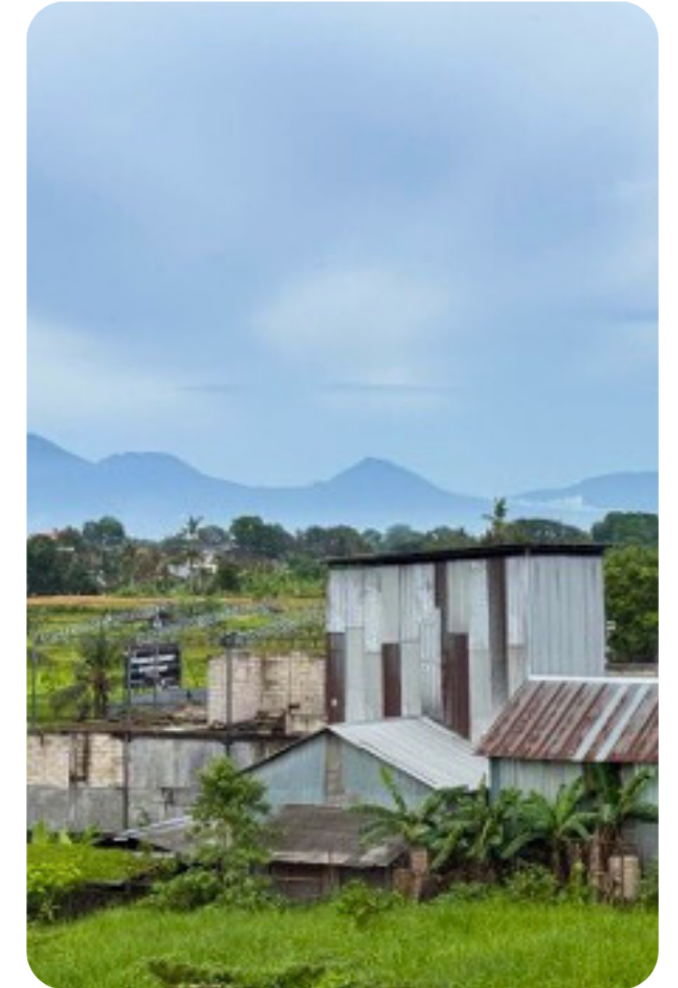
PICTURES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA  
LANDSCAPE

Though our trips there are short-term, the national team we partner with continues the work long after we return home. They are faithfully planting seeds and reaping the harvest. I'm constantly amazed by their boldness and their daily commitment to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The local missionary leads a team known as The Bali Project — a name used to protect their identity in a country where open evangelism is frowned upon. His team has made it their mission to share the Gospel with at least five people every day. Since July, the Bali Project has welcomed eight new interns who are being trained and equipped for long-term ministry. Excitement is growing as other ministries begin to partner with them, helping these interns find permanent places of service once they're ready to launch.

Recently, two of the team members relocated to the eastern edge of the island, where they've witnessed an incredible response to the Gospel.

The number of new believers there is overwhelming — a beautiful challenge that reminds us that God's Word never returns void.



The team is diligently following up with each new believer, trusting that the Lord has a plan for every heart that chooses to follow Him.

Please pray for these new believers as they grow in their faith and knowledge of Christ. Many of them know firsthand what it means to count the cost of discipleship. For some, choosing Jesus has meant losing their family, their home, or even their job. Yet, their joy in Christ remains steadfast — a testimony to God's transforming power.

As I reflect on the work God is doing in Bali, I'm reminded again that missions is not just a trip; it's a calling. Whether we go, pray, or give, we all have a part in God's global story. And for me — though Bali is far away — it will always feel a little bit like home.

# Hammers of Hope

By Susan Brown

## A Ministry is Born:

Have you ever found yourself in a circumstance beyond your control? We as believers in Christ know that no matter the situation, our God will be present and will walk with us through the problem. Titus 3:14 states, "And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unfruitful." God uses those of us who are Christ Followers to be His hands and feet to serve others. It is through this scripture that Hammers of Hope "nails" this belief into actuality.



Hammers of Hope is a ministry that was born after several disaster relief mission trips. While serving in such places as Louisiana; North Carolina; and Smithville, Mississippi; founders Jeff Cooper, Johnny Pettit, and Randy Young realized that this type of help should be offered not only to a remote community but also to those living in their own area of Pontotoc. The purpose of Hammers of Hope is to repair homes or build wheelchair ramps for those in need. These repairs vary from those affected by natural disasters or through life circumstances.

At the heart of the repair is the desire to share the love of Christ.



## How it Works:

Individuals needing help must apply through the Hammers of Hope website. Once Hammers of Hope is notified of a potential need within sixty miles of Pontotoc, a coordinator meets with the homeowner to assess the repairs necessary and discuss funding for material costs. Because all labor is voluntary and materials are donated, there is no cost to the recipient. Hammers of Hope completes one project per month. All approved projects are placed on "the list" in the order in which they were received. The ministry tends to stay booked several months ahead. All projects and assistance must be approved by the Hammers of Hope Board of Directors.

## Who can help:

Anyone who desires to work will have an area in which they can serve, be it carpentry, plumbing, or cleaning up materials. No carpentry skills are needed, merely a servant's heart. Minors under the age of 18 must have a family member present on the project and/or a waiver form. Follow the Hammers of Hope Facebook page or check out their website to see upcoming projects!

Unable to physically go but still want to financially support this project?

Prayerfully consider donating funds to help with materials. All donations are appreciated and will be used for the purchase of materials for projects. Donations are tax-deductible. Hammers of Hope is a federally approved 501c3 non-profit organization. Gifts can be made to Hammers of Hope at Renasant Bank or you can find a donation link on their Facebook page.





# Cristo Vive

BY EMMA RITCHIE



Are you aware that roughly 7% of Pontotoc County's population is Hispanic? That may not seem like a large number, but that's about 2,300 people. All too often, our Hispanic population falls through the cracks of ministry. That's why, in 2001, Bro. Dan Robertson and Bro. Rocky Tzib had the vision to plant a church called "Cristo Vive." Cristo Vive is a Hispanic Southern Baptist church, right off Highway 9. I'm sure you've heard of Cristo Vive, as it is undoubtedly one of West Height's biggest mission partners.



Pictured: Bro. Rocky Tzib and Bro. David Hamilton (WHBC)



Baby dedication in the "Old Cristo Building"

We often combine our efforts in outreach, hold worship services together, and take up offerings to support them. In fact, Cristo Vive seems to be growing exponentially! Just last year, they were able to get their own building and move out of what is now our "Missions House." However, this does not mean that they no longer need our support.

Every church plant faces a variety of challenges in its growth, and Cristo Vive is no different.



While they were first starting out, the challenges that Bro. Rocky faced were time, money, and transportation.

It was difficult for Bro. Rocky to find time to do the things he had to do, considering he worked seven days a week. There was also the issue of getting people to and from church who didn't have any transportation. Though they've overcome many of their initial obstacles, now their struggles look different. Finance and immigration are the two biggest challenges Cristo Vive faces.

Many people in the congregation find it difficult to support Cristo Vive financially because they are struggling themselves.



Others face immigration fears since Bro. Rocky estimates only approximately half of the congregation immigrated to the US legally. At any time, they could leave. Although, Bro. Rocky does not condone illegal immigration and strongly encourages legal immigration, he knows that everyone needs the truth of Jesus. He feels a strong need to continually shepherd the people God has given him.

Bro. Rocky specifically asks that you would pray for people to be faithful to God and the church. He states many have come hearing only a "feel good" gospel. He also asks to pray for them to love Jesus above all else, and to serve Him in the community. Finally, Bro. Rocky asks us to pray God will continue to give energy and boldness to him as he proclaims the real gospel.



# Pictures from both South Dakota Vision Trip and construction trip to North Dakota for Pontotoc Baptist Association



This picture speaks to the hopelessness and grief that is found on Native American Reservations across America.

## Pictures from vision trip to Lower Brule, SD.



Planting, sewing, and horses for outreach into the community.



# Construction team to Fort Totten, ND Indian Reservation



Members from Ecru Baptist and WHBC worked together to finish the outside of the church building at Dakota Baptist Church.



# BODOCK FESTIVAL



Pontotoc Baptist Association hosted a tent at Bodock Festival to share the gospel. The gospel was shared around 200 times..

whbcmisionsmedia

# PONTOTOC CHRISTMAS PARADE



West Heights Missions entered a group into the Pontotoc Christmas Parade to share "cardboard" testimonies in order to share how Jesus Changes Things.

# A Day At Redemption

by Casey Russell

In October 2025, Matt Clingan, Allen Maxey, and I went to Coldwater, MS, to sit down and have lunch with Sam Henderson of Redemption Church Coldwater. Matt and Allen were also able to tour Redemption's facilities for the first time. This was a working trip for me, as I planned to interview Sam for this article as a follow-up piece to the interview film we did with Sam for West Heights Baptist Church's YouTube channel. Search for (@westheightsbaptist5483). I was not sure what angle to take, but it really felt like the Lord was desiring for us to showcase Redemption's story in this magazine issue. Throughout the day, our group's discussions made me consider what it takes to start a new church. It may sound like a simple task, but in reality, it is very challenging. Drafting a mission statement and bylaws is the easy part; the real test is getting things moving. That takes more energy than you can imagine—it demands time and effort to get started. It is a mission from God that has to be energized by God.

Some churches start with a group of people that look for a leader, and some start with a leader that looks for a group of people. Both beginnings have challenges and advantages, but the pieces have to come together. There are also traits or "marks" that a leader should possess to be a good fit for the job.



A few that stick out are:  
 - strong vision and the ability to get people to buy in to it.  
 -be someone who will welcome strangers into your home and life.  
 -emotionally tough as nails. (This is not necessarily someone who likes to fight, but someone who can continue to weather personal and church-wide disasters on a monthly or weekly basis for years at a time without giving up.)

Certainly, like any good pastor, you have to be a person of prayer and godliness, but these first three are make-or-break with church planting. Sam fits this description. Sam and his wife, Natalie, have relied on God through some very tough years in church planting and have not quit. Sam's story strikes deep in your heart because you realize that this is someone of strong courage and faith that immensely trusts God. If you think about it, we tend to draw near someone of strong courage and faith, especially when there are years of paper trial to prove it. There were two highlight moments from the day. The first was an encouraging line from Sam when the group was discussing a healthy church.



Allen Maxey had just asked some highly insightful questions about Redemption's growth (he's insightful, no sarcasm). The reality is that Redemption's growth has been a lot slower than Sam and their team had expected, yet God is working. Sam said, "I've always been told that you can tell if a church is healthy if it has men singing and babies crying on Sunday morning. Well, our men sing very passionately." I sat back and smiled as I watched my friend say that so proudly. It was good to see God shine favor on a work that has been so difficult to get the train rolling down the track. The second highlight of the day was being privileged enough to witness a very sentimental moment between Sam and Matt. Matt has been Sam's point of contact for our church's missions committee. Although they have only briefly met in the past, they have texted and talked over the phone a lot. Sam, almost in tears, thanked Matt for the text and calls. He said that within God's providence, Matt always seems to send the most heartfelt prayer or text when it is the most difficult moment, and that means the world to him. I think we all probably got a little teary-eyed.

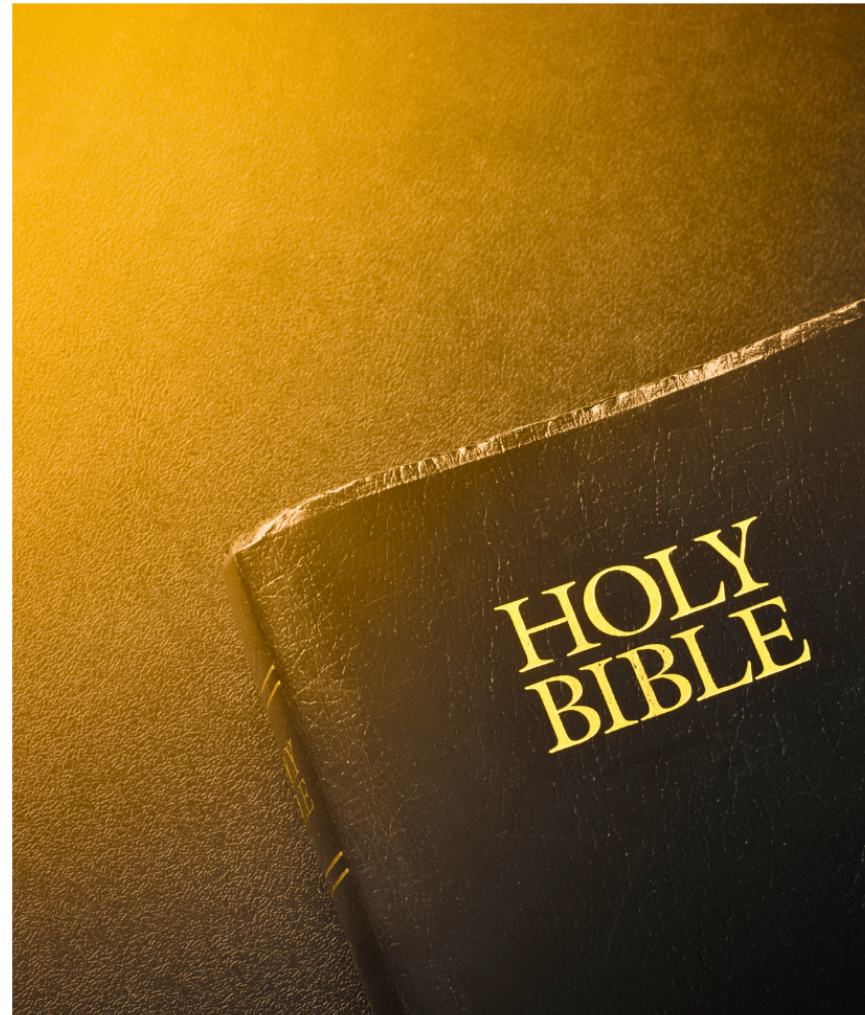


I hope you, as the reader, understand how much it means to a missionary or pastor to have people say, "How are you doing today?" For a church planter, sometimes it's life or death, make or break. Sometimes the loneliness is too much, and they walk away because the island is too remote from others. May our established churches always be ones that get on isolated islands with missionaries and church planters, taking up their cause, and being fruitful partners in gospel work.

# Bible Teachers

BY JEREMIAH HUGHES

As someone who recently moved into the Pontotoc area, within the last two years, I was excited to hear that the school systems had a Bible Program that allowed students to be connected and surrounded by a Jesus influence during their fundamental years. What I have learned since then is that the program continues to build on its rich history. The program started in the 1980s when some concerned residents of Pontotoc had a desire to fund a bible program within the school systems. It started as a one teacher program in Pontotoc City School only. Over time, the program has expanded to reach all county schools within Pontotoc County with eight teachers in total in the program! The number of children reached by this program in the last several years is phenomenal.



This year alone in the Pontotoc City Elementary Schools, Jesus is shared with 900 students on a weekly basis. A low estimate that I received for total county students who participate in the program is 2,300 county wide!

The reason that these two numbers are so important is twofold. First, for the students who come from a Christian family background, it gives them a more stable foundation in what they believe. In a way, it could be said that this bible program is like an extended Sunday school class where students can dig into the word and learn more about God. Older students have something to ground themselves in whenever there is pressure to turn to more sinful behavior. The second reason that the increasing involvement in the school bible program is so important is that it counteracts the already decreasing number of families who are involved in Christian activities. This program allows for children to hear about Jesus and his love and grace in the case that their family is not sharing it with them. While researching for this article, I had the pleasure of hearing multiple stories of individuals, whom had no prior knowledge of Jesus, taking the steps to accept Jesus into their hearts and lives strictly because this program was available to them!

**“Jesus is shared with 900 students on a weekly basis.”**



The program is growing and evolving with the needs of the students that come into the program. We **MUST** pray for the continuing success of this program. There is no doubt that eventually someone or some group will oppose the program, so we must pray for a hedge of protection around this program so that it can continue to plant seeds for Christ. I believe this program has not only a positive impact in our children’s hearts and our churches but also on the community. Our church has and will continue to support this program financially, as well as in prayer, and I hope that you will consider praying if you are not already!



At what lengths have others gone so that you may hear the gospel? Did you listen? For the team that visits Millcreek of Pontotoc Adolescent Treatment Center on Sunday nights, they have to be creative and intentional to share with the children of Millcreek. Attention spans are short, and suspicion can be high, but that has not stopped our team from walking through the doors of Millcreek and working hard to share the good news of Jesus.

# A Piece of Candy

by Brett Crawford

Brett, Dan, Josh, Tammy, Anita, Lauren, and Stephanie spend time each week thinking through a lesson. On the boy's side, they usually bring some type of real live illustration to capture their attention.

So...

Imagine you are there as they tell the lesson:

It is a Sunday evening with the Millcreek kids and the "church people" (the kids' term for us 😊)

As the team walks in, some of the boys are in their rooms and some are not. Some are hesitant to come out and listen, so we show them what we have brought for them to see. Boys have curious minds, and whatever object we bring helps to break the ice.

*We say,*

*"What do you think this is? Does anyone know?"*

*"We will give an extra peppermint or butterscotch to the person who makes the best guess of what this is?"*

*(the kids) "Knife, part of a cross, pusher thing."*

*"You are close. It is a helper for pushing lumber through a table saw. If you use it correctly, it keeps you safer or keeps you from getting harmed."*

*"Our Bible verses today tell us about some things that help you have a better life. And these things apply for a person who has already surrendered their life to Christ. Let's talk about the first part of II Peter chapter 1: (read through verse 8) Goodness..., knowledge..., Self-control..., Perseverance..., and Godliness.... Can you have some of these traits if you are not Christ followers? Certainly!"*

*"Do the leaders up here already teach you about some of these traits? Of course they do. Why do you think God wants us to have these traits? Because He knows what is best for us. What does that wood pusher do? It keeps you out of trouble. What does the Bible do? It gives you knowledge about what God wants. It shows you the good and the bad and the consequences for both."*

As the team share Bible messages with the kids, they also take time to receive questions. Sometimes, this time is hit or miss, but sometimes the questions are deep.

Here's a few the kids have asked:

*"If I sin and keep on sinning, will He let me into heaven?"*

*"Who is God?"*

*"What is a Bible?"*

*"What are you talking about when you say dying on a cross?"*

*"Who made God?"*

*"Is the devil real?"*

*"If I said, I hate God, can I still go to heaven?"*



As the team has continued to think through this ministry, they say,

***"Sometimes we don't know the answer to their questions. The Bible says to be ready to share about the "Hope" that is in you. These kids are looking for something. Let's give them Jesus."***



# MISSION TEAM TO MISSISSIPPI STATE FAIR

## Just Jesus Inc 5K Race

September 27, 2025

The primary purpose of Just Jesus Inc is to give Bibles to those without one, distribute copies of Hope in Jesus to children around the Earth, and distribute copies of Be Free in Christ to men in recovery programs, jails, and prisons throughout the Earth. We exist to demonstrate the love and hope of Jesus Christ by bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to others and share Jesus's hope with others through these books.

[www.justjesusinc.com](http://www.justjesusinc.com)



West Heights entered a large team into the 5K race to raise funds and awareness to the Just Jesus cause.

Join our team this fall!



# COLLEGE MISSIONS

BY ALAINA WEEKS

I grew up my whole life hearing, "Put your "yes" on the table and see what God will do with it." That level of surrender is easy to put in words, but it is much more difficult to live out. The call to serve on the mission field began to heavily burden me in high school, which began a path of saying, "yes" to many opportunities to serve. Each time I said "yes" to a week or a month to serve, my heart was burdened that I couldn't invest more time in those relationships.



This longing for deeper connection led me to search for longer placements. I had the opportunity to serve through the summer missions program provided by the Baptist Student Union. My placement was a 3-month partnership with a local church in south Spain. This church needed assistance in church planting in a lesser evangelized portion of the city. Three other college students and I joined with a team of missionaries to engage the local people and begin the groundwork for this new church plant.

Historically, Spain is a Catholic nation. The influence of Catholicism is still very present; however, it has become a cultural concept for many of the people – not touching their hearts or their spiritual lives. Many of the people we interacted with have moved far past actively practicing a religion to it now being merely a cultural concept or label. If you've heard me share about this experience, you heard about the many events that we developed to engage with people in the community. We lived in college dorms, hosted game nights, shared on college campuses, taught English in the park, walked the streets passing out flyers, initiated conversations with strangers, prepared community outreach events, etc. – anything to engage with people and show them Jesus. This ministry didn't come without its own share of hurdles to overcome. We were foreigners, in their country, under their language, under their customs, in their culture, addressing their worldview, and attempting to communicate the importance of a religion that isn't prioritized or seemingly "needed" from there worldview. Sharing in a culture like this is difficult. I knew these barriers would exist, but I did not realize the extent to which it would impact the ministry we were doing or the extent to which it would impact my walk with the Lord. We were separated from strong Christian community and support; saw constant closed doors; felt the effects of being treated as outcasts for our faith, worldview, and lifestyles; and experienced loneliness while being in the middle of a HUGE European city.



Through all the hard things that we experienced, it made the sweet things so much sweeter. We saw new relationships formed, and we connected new friends to our long-term team. We saw the foundation of the church plant begin to form and talked with SO MANY college students. We had innumerable Jesus conversations and covered the city in prayer daily. We intentionally encouraged the local believers and experienced our faith being challenged and refined.

I was challenged to not make excuses based on measures of time or depth of relationship. My heart that was discontent with week-long placements was convicted by the opportunities I pass up daily here because of the opposite effect of ample time. Whether it is a day, a week, a month, a year, or a lifetime, I learned (and am still learning) to not pass up opportunities to speak the name of Jesus with the people right in front of me because I'm not guaranteed another interaction with them.

Along with not making excuses based on time frame, I also don't want to make excuses based on differences. Because of our Christian worldviews, our lives were counter-cultural to the people we met. John 15:18-19a is Jesus speaking, and He says, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own."



Jesus taught that we would be alienated for our faith just as he was alienated for his life. We as followers of Christ will be viewed differently, but we can and should use those opportunities to bring glory to His name. Jesus modeled what it was like to be an outcast and still love people deeply. He was referred to as friend of sinners. He learned to sit with people that were not perfect and to speak truth in love.



Jesus sought out Zaccheus, a rich man who was un-convicted by the sin in his life. Jesus sat with him and told him of truth. Convicted and compelled, Zaccheus made a life change (Luke 19:1-10). I want my life to look like that: to be known as a friend of sinners. I pray my eyes are continually formed to see people like Jesus sees people.

That summer challenged me in SO many ways. I gained a renewed burden for the lost and learned great humility and dependence on the Lord. I rest in knowing that He loves the people of Spain more than I ever could. He loves the nations more than I ever could, and He has a great desire for them to have a genuine, life-giving relationship with Him. In all the discouragement we experienced, it is worth it, for the sole purpose of furthering His Name and Gospel to the nations.

# A Cowboy Rides to Sturgis

BY CASEY RUSSELL

This past fall, James Scott put on his cowboy hat and made the trek up to Sturgis, South Dakota, returning to the ministry that started it all for him. I have heard James say before that years ago, he was invited to the motorcycle rally in Sturgis and after having participated in the evangelism tent there, he thought, why couldn't we do this at a rodeo. A new ministry was born. This year, after taking a 3-year break from Sturgis, James returned in true cowboy fashion.

I sat down with James over a video call to hear the story of how God worked through his time at Sturgis. He gave me the skinny on a brief history of the ministry there, some numbers of how things went, and a couple of stories to boot.



JAMES SCOTT SHARING GOSPEL AT STURGIS, SD.

This ministry was originally started by the Dakota Baptist Convention, but having made the decision to stop, it was passed on to a group called the Faith Riders. The Faith Riders have continued it to this day. James said that a person has to be spiritually mature to endure a mission trip to Sturgis Festival and it is not advisable for those that struggle with lust to go. Nudity is just a reality at the festival. Even as James preached on Friday night at a local tattoo shop, a topless woman came into the shop right next to Rebekah (his wife) and him. James kept preaching the gospel.

I asked James about his favorite memory or story from his years of going to Sturgis, and he shared the tale of a lady “without public decency” walking into the evangelism booth and meeting a sweet grandmother that loved Jesus and loved people. He told me that he was working the booth that day when this uncovered lady walked by. The person out front of the booth greeted her and was able to steer her in. James told me with a grin, “Now if you can, picture a Southern Baptist grandmother in her late 70s, who seems to have never even sinned; I mean, she's almost sinless. Of course she had sinned, but you know what I'm saying.” He said that he could see all the signs of “Please Lord, let this girl go somewhere else” on sweet grandma's face, but there was nobody else to share with the lady. And so, the front man said, “Here you go, here's Mrs. so and so.”

James said that he chuckled as he thought, “this is going to be good.”

As he was telling me the story, he got a little more serious and leaned in to say, “And then, it happened.”

With heavenly intent, the “grandma Baptist” woman began to share the gospel of Jesus with her, and of course, a three-minute story turned into ten or twelve minutes. With excitement, James told me that the undressed lady suddenly borrowed a shawl to cover up, and tears poured down her face.



Possibly for the first time, this lady knew that what she was doing was wrong. The sweet, Christian, “grandma” woman led that lady to the Lord. James said, “Even though it was ten years ago, I remember so vividly. This woman had no hope, but now she did.” Sometimes ministry is tougher than we ever imagined it would be, but Jesus calls us to be obedient to GO. The promise is that “lo he is with us to the end of the Age!” (Matthew 28:18-20)



## WHBC MISSIONS MEDIA

### **Love God, Serve People**

*29 Jesus answered, "The most important is Listen, Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. 31 The second is, Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these."*

*Mark 12:29-31*



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