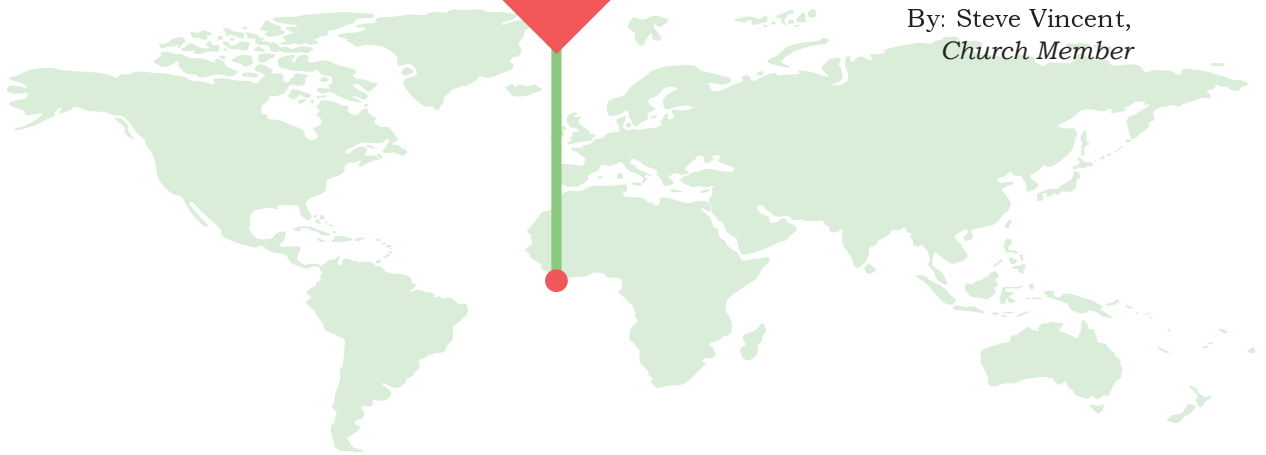


PAY IT FORWARD... AWAY FROM HOME

By: Steve Vincent,
Church Member



You read in the newspapers on a regular basis about how people are beginning to pay it forward. You go into a restaurant, or in for a cup of coffee, and someone you don't know has already paid your bill. Is that great or what? You just got something for nothing. You got the best of that deal!

Acts 20:35 says, "... remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Really? If I am a Christian, am I to understand that the person who doesn't know me and just paid for my meal is being blessed more than I am?

Ok, so... it appears God wants us to not just read his word, but to get off the couch sometimes and give away money or things. The part about reading the Bible is a good thing though. There are helpful clues in the Bible. It talks

about taking care of widows and orphans, and after the disciples were anointed by the Holy Spirit, they went around healing people. Many people go to the Bible and consult with God to discover what talents God has given them and how they are supposed to use them.

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus tells us the story about talents. The message is that we are given opportunities and abilities to serve our neighbor and bring glory to God. Some people will bury or not use what God has given them, basically adding nothing to God's glory, sort of 'dust to dust'. Others understand that Jesus is telling us to spend our time and efforts in advancing God's efforts.

If we develop a close relationship with God, we may find our calling is not what we expected. We may discover that God is also interested in

what goes on outside our neighborhood and he wants us to be his hands and feet in another neighborhood.

Have you ever read the book of Acts? What an exciting adventure story. These guys did more than just stay home and only minister to their neighbors. The descendants of their neighbors have remained anchored in the Jewish faith and did not make the transition to Christianity. Seeing how it all turned out, aren't you glad the disciples believed in paying it forward away from home?

And for those of you who are United Methodists, there were plenty of souls to be saved in England in the 1730's. John Wesley and his brother, Charles, responded to an invitation to become chaplains for the colony of Georgia. Neither was happy in the colonies and they soon returned to England. The experience was discouraging and unsettling for Wesley's faith and the questions raised resulted in his "heart strangely warmed" experience at Aldersgate. The Aldersgate experience was the inspiration behind the United Methodist Church.

The bottom line is, as Christians who love God, we are drawn to do his will, not our own will.

About seven years ago, Power From The SON was formed to engineer, procure, and construct efficient electrical systems for hospitals, schools, and missions in the developing world. In that time, our members have journeyed to Liberia five times and have had a small part in saving the lives of many faceless Liberians through a war-torn hospital where the doctors previously operated on patients without the use of anesthesia machines. We have electrified a seminary where future United Methodist ministers learn to preach the gospel to future generations. This



5789 MILE MISSION: Progress on the New Hope Academy in Liberia.

June, we will journey to Honduras to electrify a United Methodist-sponsored orphanage. We have spent time trying to evaluate the value of our work, but we have no way of knowing how many lives we have touched. However, we do know that our own lives have been changed.

In September, Power From The SON and FUMC of Arlington will go to Liberia to complete the K.H. Warner New Hope Academy, the dream of Former Liberian Vice President and United Methodist Bishop, Bennie Dee Warner. Bishop Bennie has donated the land and started building the rural school. It is 15,600 square feet with six classrooms, health office, teacher's lounge, principal's office, lockers, a multipurpose area, and space for agriculture.

I agree, there is plenty of good that needs to be done around here. But, I am certainly thankful that the disciples and John Wesley followed God's will for their lives. Because they chose to go where the Spirit led them and pay it forward away from home, we have been taught about Christ and his wonderful gift of saving grace.



HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There are a variety of ways you can pay it forward at First United Methodist Church of Arlington. Contact Michelle Clark, Director of Mission & Outreach, for mission opportunities, and to find out how you can put your time and talents to work.