

Podunk Ponderings: All Guts, No Glory

“What was it like? What did you see? I bet that was amazing!” These statements, and others like them, are the statements that would follow many of the short-term mission trips I took part in through my late teens and early twenties. The Lord gave me a heart for missions in my late teens, and while I was going through Bible college earning a mission’s degree, I took every opportunity I was given to go on a mission trip. Holiday breaks and summers took me to Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, Australia, Central America, and various parts of the US.

The impact those trips had on my life was great, but one of the greatest impacts was something I did not expect. I grew up in a Christian home, in a Bible believing church, and looking back, in one of the more Christian communities I’ve ever been in. Our little town of 500 boasted a cumulative church attendance, in 5 churches, of around 500. I am not trying to say everyone in town was a Christian. Many of these people came in from the country and neighboring towns. However, comparatively, that community was one of the most church going communities I have ever been in.



What I did not expect, was that once I began to leave this community and get out into both the world, and other parts of the US, I started to see a need that I had not before. I would come back from a nation where there was one small church trying to serve ten thousand people in a place like Nepal, and all of a sudden I realized that there were one or two small churches trying to serve a Native American population of ten thousand people 20 minutes from where I grew up. I also started to realize that not all small towns were as church going as my hometown.

God started to open my eyes to see the need all around me. God opened my eyes to see that you don’t have to get on an airplane to find someone who has NEVER heard the Gospel. Yes, there is a need for missionaries overseas. I still wonder if the Lord will call me overseas someday. Yet I can no longer ignore the need in my backyard.

God has opened my eyes to see the need in the United States, especially in rural communities. The home mission front is sorely in need of Gospel messengers. Especially ones with missionary hearts. Serving in rural communities is not easy. You cannot hide from the problems in rural communities like you can in the suburbs. The poverty is all around you. The drugs and alcohol abuse are right in front of you. The brokenness is in the aisle in the grocery store. You cannot go to Costco and hide from it.

What rural communities need are ministers who are willing to make the sacrifices of overseas missionaries, without any of the glory. People look at you with wide eyes when you tell them stories of scaling the Himalayan Mountains looking for unreached Buddhist villages. Nobody looks at you with wide eyes when you tell them you’re going to a rural, midwestern community. What is sorely needed right now, are ministers of the Gospel, who love the Lord with all their heart, who will go wherever God sends them, regardless of what the world sees as glorious. What the American church needs right now, are pastors who live their lives for the glory of God, in whatever capacity God calls them, and wherever God takes them.

Sincerely,

A Podunk Pastor

-by Pastor Josh Emmel, Faith Baptist Church, Kenmare, ND