

Dear Loved Ones,

October 2013

It's been a month since Sherrie and I returned to Haiti. Construction is going on in almost every area, especially in the Port-Au-Prince area. When we left for the States in May, many areas had road rebuilding projects in process. A few of these projects have been completed and for the most part the new roads are very nice. While some of the work is being done with big equipment, the bulk of the work is hand labor. Picks, shovels and sledgehammers. The number of men that have a job is very encouraging.

The work continues at the hospital in Dessalines. The new maternity wing is getting close. Jim Donnelson, a retired electrician, and I met with Burt McDonnell earlier this week about the electrical needs. Burt and his wife Sandy are living in Dessalines. Burt is the project manager and Sandy is helping with the accounting. They plan to spend eight months a year in Haiti. The goal is to move to the new wing in a few weeks. The next phase will be to build two new OR's plus remodel the old maternity wing to meet other needs.

Jim, Sherrie and I traveled to Balan, last Friday. Balan is the site of the new university we've been helping with. Again, one of the main topics was electricity. There is no utility power in this area. As the campus continues to grow we need to plan accordingly. Pastor Jean Marc informed us they are at capacity already and need more dorm facilities. Last May before leaving for the States, we were able to put together a "building kit" using a metal frame and truss system to be used for a cafeteria. This is common in the States but fairly new here. I was able to prepare the metal and provide a pattern for the trusses. Sergo, the project manager for HPU and I spent a couple of hours just going over how to assemble the "kit". Sergo speaks less English than I speak Creole, so it was hard to know if he understood me, but his finished building is beautiful. Lower cost and faster completion times make this type of building an attractive choice for the immediate future.

Pastor Rick Ireland, mission administrator, and I traveled up north to a small mountain town last month. The church family there have been meeting in a little tin building maybe twice the size of an average living room. Typical attendance between 150-200. Getting to this little burg was an adventure, ten water crossings and steep rough mountain roads. Along the way we passed a rum still, I believe if a picture of that facility was circulated, rum consumption would fall dramatically.

The reason for this trip was to do site evaluation for a new church building. For me, this project is very important. Not just because of the need. Last April, while in Haiti preparing for a work team, a dear friend of ours, Larry Judy, had made this same trip to look over the site in preparation for leading a team to build this congregation an adequate church. Larry had promised the pastor he would return in September and get started. I had stopped and visited with Larry about his plans. As always, we laughed and shared about life here in Haiti not knowing that Larry would have a fatal heart attack later that same night. Larry and Alice his wife, have been coming to Haiti on work teams since the early eighties. They moved here a few weeks after the earthquake to manage the relief team efforts. For the next two years they dedicated their lives to helping in whatever way possible. Just prior to their return to the States, Larry and Alice were

honored by the Haitian Church for their service of thirty years and the countless people their lives have touched. I still can't believe he's gone.

In the mission house where Sherrie and I live, it's quieter and less crowded than most places near Port. Next to us is a field that a man and his family try and farm. It's steep and rocky, they try and grow corn and other crops but mostly he makes charcoal. He and the boys cut limbs and poles and then bury them in a make-shift kiln. The work is hard and the pay is low. One of his young sons comes to our gate almost every day wanting water and food. Sherrie is usually the one who talks to him. After a couple of days of me being the one that went to the gate, he asked about Sherrie. I tried to explain (he speaks no English) that she had a sore foot. The little guy returned a couple of hours later with a whole handful of "home remedy" plants for various ailments. The little guy's gesture touched my heart. Things like that make me love being allowed to do what I do.

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