



November 4, 2014



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## November, 2014

Dear Loved Ones,

We've been back in Haiti for a month. The rainy season is not leaving quietly. It seems at least three nights a week, lightning, thunder and of course, a downpour. Not some distant flash and a muted rumble. Here you are surrounded by the light and the noise. A quick scramble to get the windows closed as the wind picks up.

Quite often when in the States I get asked, "Is there any progress"? Yes, we see progress. I'll give you an example. A tent camp we were at last spring was being forced to move. The land they were on had been sold. Each family would receive a small compensation payment. Many of the families in this camp decided to pool their funds and buy some land together. By working together they are taking a huge step forward. I know that on a national level this is small, but when you know the names and see the people involved as individuals it means a great deal.

A team from Quincy, WA came to work on the electrical portion of the hospital project in Dessalines. Thank you Jerry, Jayden, Carrie, and Roy. They were assisted by Jim from Arlington WA and Mark Olsen, a friend here in Port. Thanks to the team, the new OR's, the ER and the X-ray rooms are one step closer to being ready. The old maternity is being remodeled now. The new maternity is in use and looks to be a very busy place. I have to admit this area of a third world hospital is not a place I'm comfortable in. Way too public if you know what I mean. With the expanded services of this new maternity comes some unexpected challenges. Most of the families taking advantage of this service have no concept of "running water". The new patient showers are a case in point. Teaching the basics of when and how to turn the water on and off has been added to the nurse's job description.

Our son-in-law Josh came to help me for a couple of weeks and the timing was perfect. The day before he arrived I was informed that the mission water system was not working. This water system serves the Haitian offices of International Child Care, the Free Methodist Seminary, denomination





headquarters, FOHO guest house as well as a large church and school. With Josh's help, they now have a system that supplies water to the entire complex. With some built-in features to protect the system. Thanks Allison for sharing your husband!

The Quincy VBS raised money to purchase clothing for the children of TiBois to wear to church this past summer. Before we returned to Port Au Prince, Sherrie and her friend Cathy, from QFMC, purchased clothing for 150 children. That's a lot of dress shirts, ties, slacks, dresses, etc. to purchase. On their return trip from Dessalines, we met the Elmore's in Montrouis and headed up the mountain to the little community of TiBois. We set up three long tables outside thinking it would be cooler rather than inside the stuffy little church where they hold classes for the children. We were wrong, it was still very hot, but it didn't matter when you saw all the smiles on the children's faces. The kids loved their new clothes, toothbrushes, stickers and cookies. The Elmore's, their team and our son-in-law Josh, were a very welcomed help and they got to see firsthand what our VBS children will see next summer through videos. After we finished with the distribution the children sang for us – it was so loud it was ear-plugging deafening. They know how to sing!



The work at the University (HPU) continues. The construction of the new men's dorm is almost finished. It's very satisfying to tour the project after being absent four months and seeing the work that's been accomplished. There is still much work to be done. A new classroom building, cafeteria-kitchen as well a maintenance building to house the electrical equipment needed to run a campus. The new power line to the campus is almost finished. While this will not provide power 24/7 it will be a huge improvement from running diesel generators anytime power is needed. On the farming front, we are slowly making progress. About a year ago, we partnered with a church in Michigan to raise funds for some farm equipment. A new tractor and attachments for EGO (the orphanage in Dessalines) and a new tractor with tillage equipment for HPU. We are getting very close to seeing this happen. Please keep this in your prayers!

We ask that you remember us in prayer in the days and months ahead as we seek to come alongside those we serve here. That God would grant us strength and wisdom for the jobs and situations ahead. That we would always remember to give Him the glory.

Russ & Sherrie Cole  
Port Au Prince, Haiti



May 13, 2014



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## News from Haiti

Dear Loved Ones,

The rainy season has arrived, Thunder, lightning & down pours, the works. The hills that for many months were brown and bare are now turning a lush green. Those that live in the mountains, terrace and farm these steep slopes. They depend on these rains.



One of the missions we work with is considering a land purchase. An interesting process here. After looking at a nice piece of property we met with the owner. We were told that lot was sold but the two next to it were available. Back to the area we went and discovered it was a tent camp! Thousands of people jammed together on a piece of land smaller than a city block. Tents and plywood boxes were their homes. Mark, one of the men in our group, had worked in this area for the last three years. He knew many of the families. He was greeted warmly by many we met. I could not get comfortable with the idea of being the reason these families would be forced to move. On this tour we passed a small 12' X 24' building with a dirt floor and tin roof. A man wearing a white shirt and black slacks was sweeping the dirt floor. I asked Mark about this. I was told that the man is a teacher that felt God calling him to teach the poor in this camp after the quake. The school is free, he has trusted God to provide for his needs while he provides for the needs of the children. Mark said that he could count on one hand the number of times the teacher had approached him needing food in three years. What an incredible example of God taking care of those who step out in faith and follow His call.

Work continues at the Dessalines hospital. The inverter system I've written about in previous newsletters, is powering the new maternity as well as the water purifying system, including the well pump. This way the hospital can have water available 24/7.

The inverter system consists of several banks of large deep cycle batteries that are used to produce 120/240 volt power if the utility power shuts down, a common occurrence here. In fact a day with eight hours of utility power is a good day. That is why at least one of the new OR's will be using this system. The inverter can also start the generator automatically if the batteries need to be charged. It's been an interesting, satisfying process putting this together.

I was asked recently, "Do you ever get used to life here"? The answer is yes and no. I hope I never fail to see the strength and determination I witness here. Driving up behind a man on a bicycle, I thought something seemed odd. He had two legs, but the right one was only a few inches long. A tiny bare foot hanging just below the bike seat. How did this guy even learn to ride, much less on these roads? I've seen hundreds of examples even more striking than this. I hope I'm a little slower to complain about my aches and pains.

On the way home from Providence University late one afternoon the road was blocked by a student demonstration, it seems the government hadn't paid the teachers in a few months. Rather than sit and wait for the road to clear, I back-tracked and followed a local through the back alleys and side streets through some interesting neighborhoods. I see some very intriguing things while sitting in traffic. This day I watched as two children, one maybe five years old and the other around eight, walked along holding hands. They stopped occasionally to pick up something from the garbage they were walking through. The older one was wearing a pretty school uniform; the other is naked. In their reality this is not strange. I hope I never forget that more people live in these conditions than the one I lived in as a child. A reminder to be thankful.

Providence University of Haiti. This entire update could be about the work, the goals and impact of this project. The new men's dorm is progressing nicely and several other buildings are in the planning stages. Tomorrow after helping load supplies for a team coming this week to build a school up north, I plan to go out to HPU and check on the progress and do some work on the irrigation system. The way the crops are growing is very encouraging, for example, papaya normally produces two or three fruit per tree. The ones planted at HPU have ten on average.



Plentiful Papayas

HPU is more than a small university getting started. It has turned out to be a vocational training center as well. Most of the men in this remote area were unemployed when this project started. Now many of them not only have a job, it's a good paying job. Some are learning a new trade, all are learning faster and stronger ways to build. This small and humble project, in the world's eye, will touch thousands of lives for the future. Families that could not afford to send their children to school are now making plans for their children to attend HPU. The goal of bringing electricity to this area is also underway thanks to the leadership and supporters of HPU.

Sherrie and I travel back to Washington State in a few days. We are looking forward to spending

some much needed time with family and friends. We plan to return again to Haiti in September. We thank you so much for your prayers and support. May God bless you for your effort and sacrifice in this, His work. If you would like to support us financially, support can be mailed to our home church in Quincy, WA at the address below. If you choose to support us prayerfully we will be eternally grateful.



Pastor Jean Marc Zamor – New dormitory

Blessings to you all.

Russ and Sherrie Cole

Quincy Free Methodist Church, 301 I St. SW, Quincy, WA 98848

Write "Cole Haiti Mission" on the memo line of your check.



February 23, 2014



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## Haiti Update – February 2014

Dear Loved Ones,

The rainy season is getting close, in fact we were blessed with a rain shower last night. The hills are brown and bare, the patches of land that are farmed are waiting for rain. It's amazing how fast the hills will green up after a week or so of rain. Out in the Artibonite region, there is a canal system that provides water for the crops. I've been told there are almost eighty thousand acres

in the very flat fertile area. We travel through this farmland when we drive to Dessalines. On our last trip a couple of weeks ago there seemed to be even more activity, more men working in the fields. For the most part the harvest is finished, just the women drying the rice on large concrete slabs, walking back and forth stirring it with their bare feet. In the evening they will bag it and repeat the process until it's dry enough to keep. The men were busy planting the next crop, often working in standing water and mud almost to their knees. After the ground is prepared, they will plant the rice very dense on small plots. When the rice is about a foot tall, it's pulled up and tied into bundles then replanted in a larger field. This method gives them more time to prepare the larger fields (most of the ground work is by a hoe) and saves water by using a small tract to start the rice.

Once again I want to mention the number of buildings that are underway, the amount of men working. We see a shift in some areas, in stores where we very seldom see many Haitians we are seeing more and more. This tells me that their income level has risen, they have more choices now. Very encouraging to see. There are articles written about plans to build manufacturing plants here, not just in Port-au-Prince but in other areas as well. Mole St. Nicolas is rumored to be getting a new industrial park. There is a deep water bay that is suitable for a shipping port. Having opportunities available outside the Port-au-Prince area will hopefully draw some of the folks back to their home area and lessen the congestion here.

At the hospital project in Dessalines the walls for the new X-ray room are going up. Sherrie and I plan to travel to Dessalines this week to install an inverter system for the new maternity/OR. In the past, the practice has been to start the generator before starting a surgical procedure because if the public power was on, you never knew when it would go off. Not a good thing to lose all power during surgery. With the inverter/battery backup system the OR can be used knowing that if the city power goes off the battery backup system will instantly provide power. We hope this will lower the amount of hours on the generator and lower diesel use as well.

The new dorm construction at the Providence University continues. One of the pastors here is a civil engineer. We've been working with him on several projects. The concrete portion of the dorms is his design. The metal part is my design but most of the welding is now being done by Haitian welders. It is a very good feeling to be able to step back and watch a group of young men take ownership of a task.

The Parc Cretian church in Port-au-Prince has been forced to reduce the size of their building. The city has decided to widen Delmas, one of the busiest streets. The church had to vacate almost fifty feet of their property, unfortunately this included about thirty feet of the church building. In the end, our hope is the building will actually seat more due to balconies being added to each side and the other end of the building being expanded. Sunday service at Parc Cretian starts at six am and goes until around nine. Attendance runs around forty-five hundred people in the building, three or four hundred outside watching at the windows and doors. Think about that for a minute, do we have that level of commitment?

On more than one occasion I've witnessed something that humbles and touches me. I'll see a person here in this "poorer than most" country sitting along the street hoping for help. Usually it's someone physically unable to provide for them self. I've watched as a person that looks to be not much better off, stop and dig out a few coins, give them and continue on. It reminds me of the story Jesus told of the widow and the two coins. We don't have to be wealthy to make a difference in someone's life. Just willing.  
God Bless  
The Cole's