

Greeting all,

Back in the Bush?? Well, on my way to the bush, would be more like it.

After many weeks of preparation, Tuesday I am leaving for the airport to start my return journey to Liberia.

Yes, "Back in the Bush"

The excitement and anticipation of seeing so many of my good friends again is what keeps me moving ahead as late nights of getting ready are draining my energy.

I need a vacation!!! Did someone say, Liberia? O - Well, so much for a vacation.

The project I will be working on has been in the planning stages for almost a year now. During my time in Liberia last winter, Butch and Jim Foster, ELCA missionaries from Montana, and I did a fact finding visit to Curran Lutheran Hospital in Zorzor, Lofa County.

The Foster's heart went out to the people of this area who have no hospital. Curran Hospital stands in ruin, just a shell of the vital hospital it once was, another casualty of the Liberian civil war. Can you imagine a parent pushing a sick child 100 miles to the next hospital in a wheel barrow? The need is great!

Once back in the States, armed with a floor plan of the hospital, video of the destruction, and a burning desire to make a difference, Butch and Jim secured a sizeable grant to renovate a portion of Curran Lutheran Hospital.

And here we are today, bringing yesterday's dreams to today's reality. Well, it's not that easy.

Now comes the job of making it happen. Now comes the job of getting building material to Curran over 5 ½ hour drive from our suppliers in Monrovia. Now comes the job of hiring people who know which end of a hammer to hold. Don't get me wrong, there are wonderful craftsmen in Liberia, who can do miracles with minimal hand tools. Let's pray they will be among our crews.

Even with some anxiety, I am confident that God will provide what and who we need to accomplish our goal.

January 10th the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the ELCA is sending a team of about 18 volunteers to Liberia for 5 weeks. Four of that team will join our crew of Liberians. Joe Kanagy from Belleville, Pa. - Paul Shaner from Hughesville, Pa. - Marvin Johnson from Mpls, Minnesota - and Jonathan Tuke from Wyomissing, Pa. all will be a blessing to our teams progress.

Some of the most rewarding missionary experiences have come from projects where we work right alongside our Liberian brothers.

One never should go with an attitude, "I am going to show you how to do this!" In many ways we learn so much from our Liberian brothers as we share our knowledge with them. It's really, really neat!

At noon each day we will all sit together and share rice and soup. This is a great time of fellowship and bonding.

Being foremost devoted to the Curran project, there are a few other "icing on the cake" projects I will get into during my spare time.

We will make a visit to Children's Ministry Orphanage in Balama to assess their current needs and do our best to provide what we can do. I have been to this orphanage numerous times and love the experience of seeing in person our aid reach the needy hands. In this case little hands.

I will also work with The Video Ministry, a group of Liberian evangelists who travel out to remote villages with a TV, VCR and a generator, sharing God's word through Christian videos with village people who some have never seen a TV before. Awesome!!

I will also work with the Liberian helpers of the Tuition Sponsorship Program [TSP], checking last year's work and looking ahead to our 7th year with preparation and information gathering for the 2006/2007 TSP. The 2006/2007 TSP will help over 800 students.

I ask that you kneel with us in prayer for our productivity in things of internal value as well as our construction project at Curran.

We pray for safety in travel and at work and a growing bond with our Brothers and Sisters in Liberia and their deepening relationship with "He" who made all this happen. Praise God!!

In His service ... gary