

Back in the Bush Mission Letter #42006

Greetings to all,

Things are fine here. We have not seen rain, to speak of, since our arrival. This is the “dry season” but often times the rains can come and hum-bug construction efforts. We have been blessed with great weather.

Our area of reconstruction at Curran Lutheran Hospital is the outpatient/lab wing, maternity/delivery room wing, and operating theater with attached rooms. Some 9,000 sq. ft.! As of Sat. Feb. 4th, 80% of the roofing metal is on and we should start painting and wall tile replacement this week.

Fri we were just about out of material to keep the job going. Scratching my head, I started to think of plan “B”. I had the material ordered but delivery is so unpredictable with the condition of the roads, and reliability of delivery trucks. When you drive the 3 hours of dirt road to the first coal tar [macadam] road you see, there are broken vehicles resting all along the road.

Well, we were just about out of material and I was thinking what are we going to do, when up the long washed out road towards the hospital comes a large diesel truck belching black smoke, leaning and swaying as it crawled in and out of the ruts in the road.

Man! Did you ever want to hug an old dusty diesel truck? OK ---- maybe not. I think I've been here too long!!!

I know God's timing is perfect, I just wish He wouldn't cut it so close sometimes.

On Fri we needed to buy some additional lumber for the last roof extension. All of our lumber comes from local people in the many villages around Curran Hospital, who saw up trees to sell lumber. We headed out to Fisebu, the next village past Zorzor, and found the lumber I needed. There were a number of little children standing by watching us, trying to get my attention. “White Man!! White Man!!” they would yell. I thought they were talking to me since I was the only white man for miles, so I would wave to them. While my helpers were loading the wood, it gave me some time to go over and talk with the children. I held out my hand and they, cautiously at first, grabbed mine. Those of you who know the Liberian hand shake, with the two middle fingers of the shakers sliding and then snapping as they part, can picture this. Well, it was so neat to see their tiny little fingers in my hand trying to make the snap. I cherish these small times out in the villages with the people, especially the kids. On the job, ashamedly so, I get so one minded on pushing the job, it is nice to get out once and a while and clear the mind.

Last Sunday Jan 29th was a great get a way for our American team. We loaded everyone into our vehicle and headed out over 2 ½ hours of dusty road to visit the children at Children's Ministry Orphanage. For those of you who have seen the video, “On the Road to Balama” you already know the place. As we pulled up to the mud and stick building Korpo, the lady in charge, came running from the cook house jumping and yelling. She was so happy to see us. As she was hugging us and welcoming us the tears were coming to her eyes, mine also.

One of our jobs this day was to evaluate their needs and to see what we could afford to do. Some people back home have sent money with me and we will address their most critical needs.

Korpo told me that every day the children, without prompting, pray for the “white people“. Awesome! The orphanage has grown to about 52 children now. It was great to see the familiar little faces and meet the new ones.

We will be returning to the orphanage on Sunday Feb 12 to share our gifts with them.

Taking my first break from the work here at Curran, tomorrow morning I am headed to Phebe for two

days of work on the 2006/2007 Tuition Sponsorship Program. This year's program will include about 850 to 875 students. Praise God!!

Please continue pray for our safety and work in mission, both in construction *the temporary* and changed lives *the eternal*.

In His service - gary