

Greetings to all,

It is with great anticipation that I am packing my bags readying for another trip to Liberia leaving from JFK Jan 16<sup>th</sup>.

In the aftermath of 14 years of civil war and now stability returning to Liberia, I go to help rebuild, encourage, and mentor.

I will be traveling with Ruth Koble from Sunbury, Pa --- Sandra Nelson from Trout Run, Pa --- Marlee Yant from Springfield, Mo.

Ruth will lead this team of ladies doing adult literacy training at Lutheran Training Institute, Lofa County.

Also traveling with us is Frank Morano from Mt. Laurel, NJ who will be with part of my team.

And rounding out our team are Butch and Jim Foster from Livingston, MT, who are already in Liberia.

Our project this year is to roof the second half of Curran Lutheran Hospital in Zorzor, Lofa County ... very rural Liberia. A picture right out of National Geographic. Absolutely awesome!!

My plan is to have about 25 to 40 Liberians working to complete this project. Their personal involvement in rebuilding Curran gives them a tremendous amount of pride and personal attachment to the health care facility they and their families will use for many generations to come.

A Liberian coworker of mine, Joseph Kollie, has been my right hand man during construction projects at Phebe Hospital for 5 years. Joseph has learned to monitor tools and materials to prevent loss, and guide our manpower to make a job run efficiently and smoothly. A relationship of love and respect has grown between Joseph and myself and I am very proud of who he has become. A little more than a year ago Phebe Hospital hired Joseph as head of the maintenance warehouse and second in command in their maintenance department. Way to go Joseph!!

For a couple years I have had my eyes on a young fellow from SKT to be Joseph's replacement in my work. I can see a potential for leadership as was evident in Joseph. It is vital to me and my work to have a trusted Liberian close to me to help watch for potential problems. I plan to have our new apprentice, Robert, helping me at Curran.

In addition to construction at Curran, I will be in Bong County to do some training of our Tuition Sponsorship Program [TSP] workers and monitor their information and picture taking. This will be the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the TSP and we are reaching close to 1,000 students. Praise God!

I will again be doing some work in orphanages in Bong County. 14 years of civil war breaking up families and AIDS snuffing out the lives of young parents has increased the orphan population and strained the resources of many orphanages making poor conditions even worse. Visiting these orphanages has been one of my most humbling and precious experiences in my life. I pray some relief and encouragement can be brought their way. I have a couple videos of our work at Children's Ministry Orphanage and if you're interested, I would be happy to send you a DVD. Just let me know when I get home.

I ask that you lift up our team in prayer for safety and productivity in things both of this world and eternal. Pray for the continued healing and reconciliation of the people of Liberia.

Not related to Liberia but something of great noteworthiness; a tragedy that has happened close to home this summer has weighted heavily on my mind and I just want to take this opportunity to share my thoughts.

The horrible shootings at an Amish school in Lancaster County this past summer devastated so many lives.

One of our tasks as Christians is to strive to be "Christ like" in all we do and say. Pretty tough job,

ain't now?

When a disaster happens, such as the school shooting drawing national media coverage, the whole world is watching how you react. People watching to see if you, a known follower of Christ, would still have a "Christ like attitude" in the face of such unjust horrific actions against your precious children.

As the nation watched, the forgiveness that flowed from the Amish community was awe inspiring. Numerous Amish went to the family of the shooter and extended forgiveness and sympathy for their loss.

The loss of husband / father. Wow!!! Could ..... I have done that??

Many monetary contributions were coming in to help the Amish families.

In recognition of the donations one of the Amish leaders said [paraphrasing] *we could handle all this ourselves*, and pausing for a moment continued, *but who am I to stop God's blessing on the giver for what he gave.*

WOW!! How neat! I am so proud to call these humble brothers and sisters in Christ my neighbors.

In His service.

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