

Greeting and a Happy New Year to all,

Another year has passed and it is time again to pack my bags for Liberia.

Deb and I are headed to the airport Dec 30th and thank God for this opportunity to serve our brothers and sisters in Liberia.

We will be spending most of our time in Zorzor, Lofa County. It is quite beautiful with its lush vegetation and mountains. It is also quite rural being over 5 ½ hours back in the bush from Monrovia, the capital city.

I am excited to say this trip there are 7 seasoned volunteers returning to help the people of Zorzor rebuild from 14 years of civil war destruction. Notice I say help them. We go not to do for them but to help them do for themselves. We go to coordinate and share some small skills God have given us but at the same time learning from our Liberian brothers and sisters. A deep love and appreciation for the culture and people of Liberia has grown inside me over the years. In a mission experience you get so much more in return than you have ever given.

Just like in Malachi when God is reprimanding His people on the lack of tithing or you could say giving of yourself, God says trust Him. *"I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in."*

Deb and I certainly have been blessed!

This year we have volunteers giving of their talents in 2 areas.

We will have a construction team and an education team working in Zorzor.

The construction team will consist of:

Butch and Jim Foster from Livingston, Montana

Carl Dierksheide from Bradner, Ohio

Joe Kanagy from Belleville, Pa.

and myself

There are a number of projects waiting for the construction team.

At Curran Hospital there are numerous out buildings to be rebuilt. These will function as housing for doctors and nurses.

A waters system is still needed on certain parts of the hospital campus.

A kitchen is still needed to help with total patient care.

At St John's Lutheran Church we will be building trusses and putting a roof on the church.

We will also be building pews and an altar.

The educational team will consist of:

Deb Winters from Reinholds Pa.

Barb Dierksheide from Bradner, Ohio

Sandra Nelson from Trout Run, Pa.

These ladies will be conducting teacher training workshops at Zorzor Lutheran School.

There is a great need to teach teachers how to effectively teach. We are hoping that teachers from other local schools will join the classes.

Deb was also asked to do a 1 week course at Louis T. Bowers Lay Leaders and Ministers Training Center in Totota.

Besides these projects keeping all of us busy we will be working on our “icing on the cake” projects. We hope to be working with Childrens Ministry Orphanage and Feleta Childrens Orphanage providing much needed help for their ministry.

Deb and I and our Liberian TSP helpers will be looking closely at the Tuition Sponsorship Program (TSP) monitoring the program and trying to get a futuristic look where God is taking us. This is the 10th year of the TSP and we have grown from 135 students to over 1240. Praise God!! We never want to get so big that we loose our accuracy and effectiveness. By treating everyone fairly and paying tuitions with great reliability the TSP has grown into a program looked up to by many in Liberia as a jewel. We never want to loose that and always want to be good stewards with God’s money.

We ask for prayers of safety in travel and work, productivity and wisdom extending the hands of Christ.

In His service
gary winters

P.S. even during our time away any communication can be done through this e-mail address.

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We are not sure how often we will have access to e-mail in the bush.