

Greetings to all from Sanoyea,

This letter is a bit overdue because of a hectic schedule here. We are working 12 plus hours a day trying to bring the renovation of Curran Lutheran Church and parsonage to completion. Needless to say, my spare time for writing is limited. I thank God we have work crews that like to start their day at dawn and finish when sun go. When you contract a group to do a job the work moves much more quickly compared to paying someone a daily wage. As they say in Liberia "more day, more money". We are in the finishing stages of interior carpentry and painting on the parsonage and mostly painting on the church. I am sitting on the floor of the parsonage with painters and carpenters working all around me as I write this letter. Deb is in the last week of her teachers' training workshops here at Kirsten Marie Jensen Lutheran School. She is very pleased with the 9 teachers she has been working with and has started preparing for their graduation ceremony / celebration.

Sunday Deb and I will leave Sanoyea and head 2 hours down the road to Phebe Hospital. After worship at St Luke's at Phebe we will train our 5 TSP info gathers on some new changes. Deb and I received 2 small note pad computers and will incorporate them into the student info gathering process. The 2010/2011 TSP will have between 1550 and 1600 students. Amazing! Praise God!! And thanks to all of you who are helping to make this happen.

Sunday Jan. 31st Deb and I drove back to Day Memorial Church located on the banks of the St Paul River. Right across the river is the site of the first Lutheran Church in Liberia, Reed Memorial Church, established 150 years ago. There was a special service at Reed Memorial Church celebrating the youth of the church and Deb and I were anxious to attend. In the early years one pastor would serve both churches and crossed back and forth on the St Paul River in a dugout canoe. It was in just such a dugout canoe that Deb and I were taken across the St. Paul to reach Reed Memorial Church. Really neat! I am glad it was not the rainy season. After a 4 hour service we walked behind the church to look at the tombstones of early missionaries. I am always in awe of God's servants like David and Emily Day, especially when I see their great loss of children and still remaining steadfast to God's calling for them. Gilbert Day died 10/06/1877 at 6 month old, Florence Day died 2/08/1879 at 9 month old, Leila Day died 4/17/1890 at 9 years old. What a sacrificial life these early missionaries lived.

One of my close missionary friends, Ken Kahler, has said many times, "one always brings back home from a missionary adventure more than they leave behind." This is so true. Sitting and talking with Samuel Bundo, one of our masons, I have had the pleasure to get to know him quite well. Have you ever walked into a room of strangers and by somebody's actions you just knew they were a Christian? Well, that was what I felt with Samuel. I am not only impressed with Samuel's workmanship but his honest, soft-spoken, humbleness all speak of a Christ like attitude. As we were walking and talking, I asked Sam when he became a Christian. Without hesitation he said, "From the time I was a little boy. My Pa would say you not go church you not eat that day and you carry water Monday". Today Samuel is very active in his church.

In this frustrating Liberian environment of rush-rush to get things done in the short time I am here and then the 101 setbacks we encounter being back in the bush, it is a God-sent to have Sam by my side to inspire me and remind me how important it is for people to see Christ in us. I pray I can carry his humble attitude along back with me.

Please pray for our continued progress and safety in the tasks God has given us. Pray for God's blessings on our brothers and sisters as we all are changed in Jesus Christ.

In His service, gary & deb