

Welcome from Liberia, West Africa!

It is hard for me to believe we have been here exactly one week. For Sandy Nelson, Gary and I, it is good to be back to see old friends and to make new ones, and it has been fun to watch Ed Brzoza and his daughter Hanna both adjust to life in Liberia, (a developing country), and to begin to enjoy the Liberian people and their culture.

Our adventure started off with a few missteps as the house we were assigned to at Phebe hospital had someone else living in it, we managed to leave Gary behind at a wayside gas stop, and Deb forgot to introduce Sandy and our driver John at the church service we attended at Curran Lutheran Church in Sanoyea, but all-in-all our first voyage out was successful as we registered students at four of our schools and saw small signs of improvement everywhere we went.

Gas stations are popping up all over the place along with more cars and motor bikes which equals more traffic and traffic jams like any major city and neon lights are all the rage in Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. In a country where people had eaten any animal they could find to survive the war, not only did we pass goats and chickens as we drove by village after village, but for the first time we also saw a man riding a horse, a herd of cattle grazing in a village, a family of pigs, and a weasel crossed in front of our car. Instead of children playing with plastic bags tied together as a football (soccer ball), we saw children playing with real tennis balls and soccer balls and riding bikes for fun.

Despite all the signs of improvements, there are still signs of real need in Liberia. As we were registering students I asked one student (I would guess to be somewhere between the ages of 7 and 9), what she would like God to do for her? She replied, she would like God to provide enough food for her and her family to eat. There are still so many basic needs to be met. And, when word got out that the Tuition Sponsorship Program of God's Precious Children was at Phebe Lutheran School registering new students, Gary found himself surrounded by desperate parents who wanted their children to be on the TSP so they could get an education and a bit of a riot broke out, but I'll let Gary tell you what happened in his own words in next week's mission letter!

Thank you for your prayers and for the work you are doing to help sponsor these children so they have a better chance at a brighter future in the name of Jesus to not only provide for their own families, but to also be a part of the development of Liberia to the glory of God.

Your friends in Christ,
Gary and Deb