

Back In the Bush 2017 mission letter #3 God's Precious Children

1/5/2017

Greetings from Liberia!

This is Andrew Hostetter, one of God's Precious Children's board members, and one of Gary and Deb's helpers this year. It has been a very good week for us here in Liberia. New Year's Eve was very memorable for us. We have befriended some doctors who are volunteering several months of their time in Phebe hospital, and got invited over to their house for a New Year's Eve feast. Everyone brought something, and all of the food was as satisfying as our enjoyable company. We then went to St. Luke's Lutheran Church for their "Watch Night" service. New Year's Eve is actually a bigger holiday for them than Christmas. It is a time where they thank God for God's provision and protection. After Ebola and the civil war in the not too distant past, getting to see another year is something no one takes for granted. It was sort of an open mic-night where anyone was invited to share their thanks to God, say a prayer, or sing a song of prayer. There of course was also much dancing and laughter as well, which were the icing on the cake of this wonderful night. We left at midnight, but many danced and sang for many more hours.

After New Year's Day, we got right back to work. This week it has been a bit slower. We reregistered a majority of the students last week, so this week we have had just a slow trickle coming to our door. This has given us time though to talk with our Liberian friends and helpers, and to play with the kids coming to our doors. Every year we draw a large crowd of parents and kids who want to get on the program, and they sit outside our door for hours, and many come day after day. As we have gotten to know them better, Sarah, my wife, has started to color with them, and she and I introduced them to some new games: duck-duck-chicken (they don't have geese here) and red-light-green-light. It was great fun, and the kids really enjoyed it.

We also got a chance to visit the leprosy colony, which is about a 15 minute drive from Phebe hospital where we are staying. Sarah and I visited them last year, and were shocked by the level of poverty we saw there. As a team we went back and visited with the leaders of their village, and they many kids who came up to greet us. We felt led by God to add some of the kids to our program, so we signed up 20 of them. It was very rewarding to see their gratitude.

Tomorrow we leave for our 4 day trip to other schools, where we will be reregistering more kids and sharing a skit with them. We will also be meeting with a school about trying to start a sustainability program with them. Many of the schools we serve have a large portion of their budget coming from outside donors, so the sustainability program aims to have schools raise their own funds through starting school businesses. Schools will teach their students the basics of business, and the special skills needed for whatever business venture they are undertaking, and students use what they are learning to run the business. We are very excited about this project, and excited about all of the great things God is doing in the schools here in Bong County.

Please keep us in your prayers that our last week here in Liberia would be fruitful and safe. Please also pray that we would keep listening for God as we discern what God's will is for this ministry.

Your friends in Christ,

Andrew and Sarah Hostetter, and Deb and Gary Winters