



STEPHEN & LAURA HOLT

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN THAT NOTHING BE LOST JOHN 6:12

MARCH – JUNE 2008 PRAYER LETTER & MINISTRY UPDATE

Dear Praying Family and Friends;

Proverbs 25:11 says “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” We regularly pray for opportunities to be an encouragement and blessing as we meet people during our journey. While passing through Kenora, Ontario on our way to Thunder Bay, we stopped to fill the gas tank and my coffee cup. The gasoline was expensive and the coffee pot empty, so the attendant, Curtis, asked me to wait while he brewed a fresh pot assuring me it would be ready in less than five minutes. While the coffee was brewing and in between customers, I took the opportunity to strike up conversation with the young man regarding our “business” in the area and he seemed genuinely interested. As the customer volume increased, the opportunity to continue our conversation was lost. I thanked him for the coffee, left him a few tracts, and then returned to our truck. As we made ready to pull out, Laura suggested I go back inside and leave him one of our prayer cards. About a week later, we received an e-mail from Curtis thanking us for being an encouragement to him. He told us that he was a Christian but had been out of church. My few minutes of being “held up” waiting for the coffee and our brief conversation was just the encouragement this younger brother needed; he is getting things right in his relationship with the Lord and is back in church.

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS: We were very blessed and privileged to minister in Sullivan, Indiana in late March. Because of a “miscommunication” we arrived at Bible View Baptist a week early. We then learned that many members of the church, including Pastor Kimmell, were terribly sick with the flu. He was, however, grateful to have us there early to assist with the public ministry on Saturday and to give him a little recovery time by helping to cover Sunday school as well as the preaching services. On Wednesday, Laura and I worked with their children’s Bible Club outreach ministry. Every Wednesday evening they bus 25 to 30 children in to the church house and have a two hour program and activities with them. Laura prepared some African food for the youngsters to sample and we showed them our children’s Power Point presentation along with a lively interactive discussion about life in Sierra Leone. It was such a thrill to our hearts to see these young ones experience a “taste of Africa”. After assisting in the church for the week, Pastor Kimmell said that our “miscommunication” was God’s perfect communication all along.

Due to this unexpected schedule shift, we were able to arrive at our next stop early which was a very special blessing to me. We stayed in Beaver Creek, Ohio with a dear friend whom I had not seen for 13 years. Patrick Murphy and I were stationed in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in the early 1990s and together we ministered in some unusual situations. Having the unexpected extra time with Patrick and his family was a shower of blessing the Lord graciously orchestrated for us just because He is able! That Sunday, unaware to me, Patrick was to be ordained and made assistant pastor at Charity Baptist Church and I was privileged to be among the men who prayed for my friend.

Continuing northward, we had an outstanding meeting and great fellowship with the church family in Hinckley, MN where the first graduate of The DeLand School of the Bible, Matthew Moris, is the pastor. This is a good church in a town of about 1300 people. Matthew is a dedicated brother who lives about three hours from the church where he helps care for his aging parents. He is in Hinckley every Thursday through Sunday to pastor this small but faithful church. Please join us in praying for this body of believers as they labor for the Master among the religious lost and cold hearted.

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A MINISTRY OF
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WEST AFRICA

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Wednesday, April 30 marked the 50th church we have visited. We had a great time at Woodcrest Baptist in Minneapolis, MN presenting the ministry on Wednesday evening. On Thursday morning we had the opportunity to address the elementary students of Woodcrest Christian Academy using the Power Point presentation with approximately 125 inquisitive students in attendance.

On May 10, Laura had the privilege of addressing the Mother and Daughter Banquet held at Golden Plains Baptist Church in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Using the account of the "little maid" in II Kings 5, Laura encouraged the moms to be diligent in preparing their daughters for service in whatever capacity the Lord chooses. The feedback was positive with several of the ladies telling her they had been helped. And to her amazement, she even survived the traumatic ordeal of public speaking!

Pickle Lake, Ontario and Thompson, Manitoba are two of the more remote areas in Canada we have been blessed to visit. On May 20, as we drove from Thunder Bay to Pickle Lake, we had snow for most of our 350 mile trip! When we left Pickle Lake on Monday, May 26, the temperature was 27 degrees and it had snowed again the night before! We have thanked the Lord many times for the used Suburban we purchased back in January. The four-wheel-drive has proved its worth as we have towed our 18 foot home over snow and rain-slicked gravel roads to reach a number of remote Canadian churches.

As we schedule meetings, we purposefully try to be at each church long enough to serve with the church family in their outreach ministries. We count it a privilege to help in nursing homes, assist with visitation and tract distribution, and help with work projects at the church house or at pastors' homes. We are so grateful for these opportunities to develop relationships with the church families along the way. Individuals have been encouraged to whole-heartedly serve the Lord, pastors have been refreshed, and a few churches have indicated that they are going to begin regular public outreach ministries - Praise the Lord!

NEWS FROM SIERRA LEONE: A slight shock rippled through my heart when I heard a CNN report declaring that the price of gasoline had soared to an astounding \$18.42 *per gallon* in Sierra Leone! My online research corroborated this news. Fortunately, I was able to contact Michael Mansaray in Freetown, the capitol city, and he assured me that this was not at all correct. The gasoline price in Sierra Leone has remained fairly stable at an average price of \$6.00 per gallon. The only conclusion we can come to regarding the inaccuracy of this report is that there was an error in the conversion from Leones to Dollars. Brother Michael did tell us that a 105 pound bag of rice has increased from \$11 in 2005 to \$35 in 2007 and now costs \$70, this in a country where the average income of wage earners is less than \$200 annually. Brethren, they need our prayers, hungry bellies make for hot heads that are easily provoked to evil and wickedness.

TRAVELING SCHEDULE: As of the writing of this letter we have presented the Lord's work in Sierra Leone at 57 churches, and our tour through the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan is quickly coming to a close. During July we will be in Alberta for three weeks and then return to the States visiting churches in Montana, Idaho, and Utah. At the beginning of October, we will spend 10 days with family in Connecticut and Rhode Island. My Dad will celebrate his 90th birthday in September and I am grateful for this time to visit with him. Our third grand daughter, Rachel Lee, will have made her grand entry into the world in mid July and Grammi is eager to hold the new little addition to our family! Following this family time, the journey resumes taking us to Ohio, Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Alabama. While on the road, we have added 17 meetings to our schedule and our calendar is full through the end of January, 2009. Our first quarter financial report puts our support level at approximately 45% and several pastors have recently indicated that their churches will be bringing us on board for support. We are now praying about leaving for Sierra Leone in the spring of 2009 but the Lord knows when the time is right; Psalms 31:15 "My times are in thy hand" and Psalms 90:12 "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Please pray for my wisdom and sensitivity to the Lord's leading in this regard.

Please be sure to scroll down to view some photos from our deputation journey. We are very grateful for every one of you, our prayer partners; you are in our prayers as you labor in love for our Great Savior.

By His Grace;

Stephen and Laura Holt



Interactive discussion about life in Sierra Leone with children's Bible Club group in Sullivan, Indiana.



Serving the children and workers samples of food typical in Sierra Leone.



On the street in downtown Sullivan, Indiana with members of Bible View Baptist Church.

Preparing to "tract attack" downtown Dayton, Ohio with my friend, Patrick Murphy, (center), his one-man army of five sons, and other members of Charity Baptist Church.



Woodcrest Baptist in Minneapolis; our 50th church!

Addressing the elementary children at the church's Christian Academy. Approximately 125 students were in attendance. Fun was had by all!