



# STEPHEN & LAURA HOLT

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN THAT NOTHING BE LOST

JOHN 6:12

JULY – OCTOBER 2008

## PRAYER LETTER & MINISTRY UPDATE

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Dear Praying Family and Friends;

October 2008 concludes the 14<sup>th</sup> month of our deputation journey. We have traveled 34,600 miles; visiting 17 states and six Canadian provinces. On Sunday, October 19, we presented the Lord's work at Anchor Baptist Church in Cranston, RI, Pastor Alex Martinez; this visit marked our 80<sup>th</sup> church. Our last financial statement put our support at approximately 80% and we have since had several churches and individuals indicate they, too, will be supporting us financially. We have also had many churches pledge to support us in prayer for which we are most grateful. We are rapidly approaching our departure for Sierra Leone!

**MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS:** The month of July was full and busy – just the way we like it! Our three months in Canada concluded in Calgary, Alberta. We appreciate the gracious hospitality of Western Baptist Church, Pastor Michael Martin, for allowing us to park in their church yard for three weeks while we visited several churches in the area. This was a great time to be in Calgary as the annual Stampede was in full swing. This western-style Mardi Gras-type event brings thousands of international tourists and boasts the second largest parade in the world (the Rose Bowl being first). We figured that they all came to hear the Gospel and were more than happy to oblige with tract distribution and street work.

On July 20, we returned to the States into Kalispell, MT. Thank you to Pastor Don Bergstrom and Grace Baptist Church for the three weeks spent with them while also visiting other area churches. We were especially blessed to assist Brother Bergstrom with their Vacation Bible School by organizing the game sessions. They were expecting 10 children but the Lord truly blessed the efforts with 35 children in attendance! We were very humbled when we were told that the week's mission collection would go to us. This money will go directly to Brother Michael Mansaray to assist the children's Sunday Schools in Sierra Leone. A special bonus for us was a youth group trip to Glacier National Park, 45 minutes from Kalispell.

Early in August we left Montana for Idaho where we visited 12 churches in six weeks. A special highlight to us was our time with Fellowship Baptist Church in Blackfoot, ID. Here we assisted with a week-long tent meeting and presented the ministry on Sunday, August 10. We also greatly appreciate the wonderful fellowship with Pastor Chep Day and his family. We later received an encouraging e-mail from Pastor Day saying that their church had been challenged by our visit to begin a public outreach ministry. They recently sent some pictures of their first effort during the large county fair in their town, holding scripture signs and distributing over 3000 Gospel tracts!

Our tour of the Wild West concluded in Layton, UT at Wasatch Baptist Church, Pastor Darren Smith. In addition to our regular DVD presentation, we also had the privilege of showing our Power Point presentation to the students attending Intermountain Christian Academy. We always enjoy the opportunity to give young people an exposure to what life is like for their counterparts in Sierra Leone. We are grateful to Pastor Smith for allowing me to work on the truck and trailer in the church parking lot in preparation for the 2400 mile trip back east.

A MINISTRY OF  
HELPS IN  
WEST AFRICA

Bible Baptist Church • 872 Glenwood Road • DeLand, FL 32720 • (386) 736-9274 • Pastor James W. Knox

(386) 740-7113 • holtfamily1611@gmail.com • www.gatherthefragments.com

While making our way eastward, we visited with two of our supporting churches. It was a blessing to be able to report on our progress at Twin Pines Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids, IA, Pastor Ken Koske and Gospel Light Baptist Church in Gates, NY, Pastor Vince Giardino. Though the time was brief at each church, we truly enjoyed the fellowship and renewed friendships.

A very special highlight from our trip back east was the four days spent in upstate New York with the Brockett family who adopted three children from Sierra Leone. Thabeh, the oldest, regularly writes to us and we were thrilled that our journey would take us near their home and church. Special thanks to their pastor, Steve Pawley, at Antioch Bible Baptist Church in Lockport, NY for allowing us to show our DVD presentation on short notice. Our visit there was delightfully concluded with an African Night where Amy Brockett and Laura, with much assistance by the children, prepared an African meal. With the home decorated and each of us wearing traditional Sierra Leonean clothing, the pastor and his family were treated to a night in Africa! The children sang some hymns in Krio, their native language, and then we all joined in with our favorite familiar hymns. The next day was a tearful good bye to our dear friends.

**NEW MINISTRY DEVELOPMENTS:** "No chance meetings" has become a favorite expression as we see the Lord directing our path. While presenting at Beulah Land Baptist Church, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Pastor Joe Newman introduced me David Webster, a bush pilot who services the remote regions of Canada. He has been asked to fill in for a pastor who regularly makes trips to Liberia to train indigenous pastors and church leaders and has invited me to assist him in this effort. After Liberia, we will travel to Sierra Leone to assess the feasibility of staging an aircraft in this region to facilitate the distribution of Gospel literature to the English speaking countries of West Africa. David has graciously offered his time and talent to assist me in getting my pilot's license. This is something I had prayed about while still in Florida but quite frankly had put out of my mind due to the expense of flying lessons. In His time, the Lord has brought the right contacts into my life. Additionally, I have been invited to attend the 31<sup>st</sup> annual conference held by Wings Bearing Precious Seed, a missionary aviation organization of which David Webster is a member. At the end of October Laura and I will travel to Green Bay, WI to First Bible Baptist Church, Pastor Harley Keck, who is hosting the conference.

**TRAVEL:** *2 Timothy 4:6 "For I am now ready to be offered [as a living sacrifice], and the time of my [our] departure is at hand."* During the months of November and December, we will be in Louisiana, Alabama, western Florida, South Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. In mid-December, we will return to our home church in DeLand, FL for several weeks during which time we will apply for our long-term visas and begin packing for our move to West Africa. Our deputation journey will conclude with a conference in Tennessee at the end of January.

Our time back in Connecticut and Rhode Island has been very dear to us as we visit with family. It is one of those bittersweet times that can be difficult to express. While we are so very glad to be here, our hearts are in Sierra Leone and we are eager to be there. My trip in March to Liberia and Sierra Leone will be the spring board to our move as I will be making arrangements for housing, banking, and other necessities. Laura will remain in Florida and when all of these preparations are in place, I will call for my bride and she will join me in the Lord's harvest field of Sierra Leone.

We have no words to adequately express our deep gratitude for your faithful giving of time in prayer and financial support. We are humbled by your generosity, kindness, friendship, and trust. We truly are your missionaries sent by all of you and representing you in a far country. Thank you for so entrusting us. Please be sure to scroll down and view photos from our recent church visits.

By His Grace;

*Stephen and Laura Holt*



With David Webster, preparing to preach at a Stampede event sponsored by Olde Tyme Baptist Church in Calgary, Alberta



Tract distribution at the Stampede Parade in Calgary, Alberta.



Down town Calgary, Alberta



Explaining the “rules” for a water balloon game during VBS held at Grace Baptist Church, Kalispell, Montana.



Interactive discussion and Power Point presentation for students of Intermountain Christian Academy, Layton, UT.



Visiting the Brockett family with their three children adopted from Sierra Leone.

Left to right are Amadu, Adama, and Thabeh.