



### **DAVID & DAUGHTER GO TO SCHOOL**

Alix, Gertrude, Rose, Anaya, and I (David Klassen), took a trip to the Dominican in February. Rose, Anaya, and I heard a lot about the private Haitian school in Dominican Republic started by principal/pastor Noelson and made possible because of the financial support of several Canadian couples. The goal of the school was to teach children who otherwise would not have access to an education to learn the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. The secondary purpose of the school was to keep the children from being recruited by the local gangs to do their dirty work. The third purpose of the school was to provide at least 1 meal a day to the poorest of the poor in this part of Sosua, Dominican. Therefore, we found the school that started with approximately 30 children a few years ago now comprising of 74 children. We were quite amazed at what we found at the school. The children were all wearing a uniform, were very well behaved, very friendly and courteous in their behaviour. The school itself was clean and orderly in appearance, and packed full of excited, smiling, beautiful children.

Six-year-old Anaya thought it was important to bring a piñata to the school for the children to enjoy. My what fun the children had being blindfolded and trying to hit the piñata so the candy would come tumbling out. Each child had a turn starting with the youngest and when it got to the older children it did not take long for the piñata to burst and a sea of children clamoured for the spilled candy. We made sure those with lots shared with those with none and it was a great time for all!

Anaya, Rose and Gertrude then made a craft with all the kids. It was a bracelet with various coloured beads representing the salvation message. Some kids went home and brought their younger siblings and asked if they too could have a bracelet! The following day at the church service Pastor Walter Warkentin gave a message translated by Alix and *numerous children and adults asked Jesus into their lives*. One fellow 'Congo' – who spent time in jail and had quite a colourful past, was one of those who committed his life to Christ. Congo later told Alix he could have saved himself a lot of grief in life if he would have done this sooner. The service was followed by a hot meal of rice and beans, a piece of chicken, macaroni salad and cucumber salad that was provided to the entire church family and many others in the community were invited to participate in the meal as well.

But along with all this joy, there is also a deep sadness and concern for these children. For various reasons none of these children are registered to live in the Dominican Republic. Without registration, these children cannot go to school beyond the 7<sup>th</sup> grade provided by Pastor Noelson's private school. If they were registered in the Dominican they would have access to further education by simply writing a standard state exam, which they are all well qualified to write and pass.

The only thing preventing these children from completing their education is being registered in the Dominican. (I have not mentioned that these families that are unregistered Haitians living in the Dominican are also subject to possible extradition back to Haiti. So, registering them in the Dominican not only assures them of an education, it also provides them with the security of not being forcibly sent back to Haiti. We are doing the best we can to feed the children, pay the teachers and keep the school operating and are looking for some financial help to get the children and their families registered in the Dominican? The cost of registration is \$ 150 per person. Please pray for the ongoing work of caring for these children. If the Lord lays it on your heart please support the project financially as well. DK



### **HANNA GOES TO HONDURAS**

Ernesto and Marina could not go with me, because they still had other plans in Winnipeg. Since I had the connection with people in Honduras from last time, I organized everything before I left via e-mail, and God has been good. It all worked out perfectly.

I left on January 9<sup>th</sup> arriving in Honduras during a heavy rain. My friend's son picked me up from the airport and took me to his parent's house where I stayed. During the first week, I spent some days in Puerto Cortes where I met with a group of fifteen ladies in a church for two days sewing, needle work, crochet, etc.

During the second week, I went to Cucuyagua, de Copan. It is more than a four-hour drive through the beautiful mountains. Francis and his wife Sandra have a restaurant and I stayed with them. For the next two days I met with thirty ladies every day, and taught sewing, needle work, and crochet, etc. We also did Macrame, (making flowerpot hangers). This is where I met with a 28-year-old widow with two young girls. Her husband got shot on Nov. 10. She was 2 months pregnant at that time. She's expecting her baby in May. I asked her how she managed, and she said she had God, and He is her strength that she is holding on to. I admired how strong she was in her belief. She also got help from the church. On Thursday I met with twenty ladies to teach baking. We made four recipes in one day. We baked outside in a big mud-oven.

On Friday, we went to another poor town, called Corquin, where we met with another twenty ladies. We did not have enough fabric so I went and bought more. They were all so thankful that I came. *I always share a testimony as to what God has done in my life and how I felt like God called me to do this ministry with women.* There is so much hurt of abuse amongst the women. Friday evening I was invited to the pastor's house, where they had a surprise, farewell party for me.

Saturday, they drove me back to Lima, de Cortes again. I had a very bad cold all week. When I came back, Rosario, the lady of the house where I stayed, got me some antibiotics, for my cough. During the third week, I did some visitations with ladies, that I had met last time. On Friday, Pastor Trejo, from El Progreso, de Yoro, came to pick me up for their church where I was the last time. I wanted to reconnect with the ladies there. We baked some cookies and then enjoyed them with some coffee and sharing of our lives. The next day, the local Pastor Roberto from Lima, picked me up and took me to his church. It was a blessed time reconnecting with twenty ladies as we baked and ate some cookies and cinnamon rolls together. The last few days we went to San Pedro Sula, and I did some more baking with a few more ladies. Thank you for your prayers...Hanna Hiebert



## The story of Demelash Ahmed

Pastor of Doni Church, Ethiopia: *Berhanu Returns from Ethiopia.*

The story of God's intervention and reception in a human wrong choice, poor decision, deception, rejection and depression.

This story happened in the south east rural remote part of Ethiopia, in a place called Sole Haji Shalie 40 years ago. A young man named Ahmed Adem started dating a young girl named Tegwad Asnake, from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church priestly family. Ahmed did not reveal his Muslim background to the young girl he was dating. Though his name was indicative of his religious background, he pretended as if he was converted to Orthodox faith. He knows that their relationship would not last if he reveals his real faith background. So, instead of jeopardizing the relationship, he had concealed his true background intentionally. The relationship developed, Tegwad conceived and the truth surfaced that Ahmed is a Muslim. Tegwad felt that she had been deceived. She realized that her choice was wrong and her decision was poor. It is too late. She gave birth to a baby boy and named him "Demelash", which means "Avenger" in Amharic. Four months after she gave birth, Ahmed died, she became a widow and the baby boy, Demelash, became fatherless. Tegwad raised Demelash as a single-young-mother by herself where there was neither child tax benefit nor any other social services. When Demelash grew up, his mother sent him to the Orthodox Church with the hope that he would be ordained as a deacon. Due to his Muslim background he was denied ordination. His mother felt deceived and Demelash felt rejected. He joined his father's relatives who were known to be robbers in that part of Ethiopia. After three years of life as a bandit, he surrendered to the government and started living as a farmer.

He was struck with wounds all over his body. He was sick for two years, hated life and prayed that God would end his life. Contrary to what Demelash prayed for, the Lord showed him a dream in which he saw when his Muslim friends and relatives were chasing to kill him. "As I was running away from those who are chasing me, I saw a house in a desert", says Demelash. "I heard Christians were singing in this house and the house was guarded by a tall red man with the double-edged sword in his hand. When I came closer to the house, the red man invited me into the house where Christians were singing. Accepting the invitation, I entered the house, got refuge, felt safe from those who chased me and I woke up" says Demelash with tears in his eyes as he finishes off his brief story.

Following the dream, Demelash went to the Christian Church in Kela, Ethiopia and accepted Christ into his life in 2000; but backslidden due to lack of teachings. By God's grace his relationship with the Lord was restored and he recommitted himself to the Lord and started ministry in 2005. He moved to the place called Doni in 2013 where he is currently serving as a pastor.

Who would have thought that the seed of deception, a rejected and depressed young man who preferred death to life would become a pastor and serve in God's Kingdom? But in His mercy, the Sovereign God intervened in his life, invited, accepted and ordained Demelash to serve in His Kingdom. This passionate young man wastes no time. Rest doesn't exist in his vocabulary. Three days a week, he travels 8 km on foot to villages around Doni to preach the Gospel. Demelash has never received any financial support since he came to Doni as a pastor. He lives on his wife's earnings. He is one of the recipients of financial support during my mission trip. Praise the Lord for the financial donation God's people gave to help Ethiopian churches to spread the Good News. (BA)



## ***ALIX & GERTRUDE BACK FROM HAITI & DOMINICAN***

My recent experience during our last mission trip in Dominican Republic and Haiti led me to believe that if we, professed Christians, behave like James said, if we translate our faith into powerful spiritual action, our world would be different. Forgiveness, grace and hope would permeate our communities, would guide our communal relationships and the world would claim the light. For, where there is light darkness disappears.

I have experienced this truth in a practical way during this last mission trip. Anaya is six and a half years old. Her parents took her to DR for a mission trip.

She was the youngest missionary I have travelled with and she was an example of the faith of a child. Anaya and her parents have prepared an activity using different colored beads to teach the Gospel of Salvation to the students in our school in Sosua. The students were very involved in making their bracelet while reciting the significance of each color. Then Anaya sang a song at the end to illustrate the message.



the police complaining that Congo threatened her life. She was afraid of him. So the police picked him up and since he was Haitian without legal documents, he was put in jail. To make a story short, his son did know where he was and thought he was dead.

Pastor Noelson used his computer to search the many jails in the region until he found where he was. Three to four years in jail because he did not have the \$60.00 to plead his case. Pastor Noelson was able to set him free. Since his release from jail, he was a model citizen trying to make a living by doing odd jobs. Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 he accepted Christ as his

personal Saviour.



We are planning a mission trip for April 24<sup>th</sup> to build bunkbeds, picnic tables, to do some carpentry, and to look at an irrigation system and to up some solar panels. If you want to be part of it, give a call to Alix or e-mail him at [alixjeanpaul@msn.com](mailto:alixjeanpaul@msn.com).

Our mission team: David, Rose and Anaya, Gertrude and Alix, want to thank you for your prayers during our last trip to DR. We were blessed by our interaction with the students, their parents and the many communities we visited. David and Alix with Pastor Noelson were able to make a short trip to Haiti to meet Pastor Namphy and his team, to see our new vehicle and to assess the construction progress. I have been inspired by Galatians 6:9 as a good reminder: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up (NIV).

Sam I Am Center in Haiti is building a wall. The leadership out there call it a security wall. We are making a difference. Our emphasis is on ministry. The Center is a very busy place. Weekly Bible Studies for adults, follow-up activities for selected children who have made a decision to follow Christ as their personal Saviour during VBS last summer, music lessons and leadership training for young people, keep the Centre alive. As a result, 14 individuals have made a decision to follow Christ in the last two months. The whole voodoo priest's household is attending church service, four of his children have made a decision. Pastor Namphy is preparing many couples for a group wedding in the near future. Michael and his fiancé hope to be part of it. We are looking for sponsors to make it a community celebration.



## Central America: Pastors /Leaders Retreat March, 2017

It has been a month for me since I came to Honduras. Ernesto left Winnipeg a week prior to me to work on the last-minute details for both retreats in Guatemala and Honduras. I have been fighting a strong cold/cough for the last 3 weeks that sent me to the doctor, and I'm still not over yet.

In **Guatemala**, we had an attendance of 52 couples that gathered in Panajachel, to be part of the 15<sup>th</sup> retreat that have being organized by the Emanuel Ministry led by Fausto and Miriam Cebeira. This time churches from Nebaj, Chimaltenango, Jocotan, Guayacapan, Peten, Champerico and a group close to the border of Honduras -that are part of the Emanuel Ministry as well- were represented. The president of the Emanuel Ministry, Pastor Max, opened the first session with the Bible scripture from Ephesians 5:21-33.

Ernesto shared about 3 foundations that reign in a marriage: Respect the rules of the home; Trust; Mutual Acceptance. Dr. Terry Lewis gave power point lectures on the Biblical Principals of Marriage and the Biblical Principals of Parenting. The contributors to C.E.O. Ministries helped finance these impoverished pastors to attend this retreat and receive not only encouraging and training. Thank you for helping these pastors and their churches.

In **Honduras**: Our second retreat took place at Yojoa Lake during the days of Thursday to Saturday March 9-11 with 96 people (couples and some singles). Christian from Honduras and Giovanni from New York led us in worship with both very vibrant and quiet music. Pastor Oscar Sanchez from Pasadena CA brought some teaching sessions about the need to disciple and the power of leadership.

Pastor Misraín Fernandez from the Theological Seminary of Guatemala came to share about the Seminary but it was a surprise to me that he also came as a representation of the Seminary to give two PhD degrees to Ernesto: A Doctorate for his long-time service in communications to Latin America and also a Diploma for teaching and equipping pastors and leaders. It was an emotional time for me as in the past Ernesto has received others Emeritus Diplomas, but this was the first time that I was present, and I was happy for him and it reminded me that when we are faithful He will honor us. Some pastors come even from Nicaragua driving 13-14 hours, others come from El Salvador driving 6-8 hours and from Guatemala driving also from 6-8 hours, just because they want to be part of the retreat and be trained. It is a unique opportunity for them.

During this retreat, we hear so many stories: some of them are to be celebrated, but others break our hearts to listen to the pastor's burdens and how they are struggling to keep strong serving in their communities as a consequence of the criminality in this country. Here are some stories:

It was so encouraging to listen to this young couple from Nicaragua as they shared that they wanted to come to the retreat but they didn't have the money to travel and to cover the small amount that they needed to cover the registration fee. They were losing hope as the days came closer and they prayed to God and told Him how much they wanted to come to the retreat. Then they got a phone call from another person who was coming to the retreat and offered to pay for them if they still wanted to come and the young man said "This is what we have been waiting for. It is an answer to our prayer, yes we want to come" so they shared their testimony.

This same couple shared that at the beginning of this year as a New Year's resolution he and his wife decided that they needed to lose some weight so they decided to start jogging every morning, and one day they started noticing that as they were running they were a lot of people sleeping on the street and all they had to cover themselves were some cardboard pieces or newspapers, so the Lord put in their hearts to collect blankets to hand to this people and they have started a new ministry: providing blankets for homeless people.

Another pastor and his wife shared with me that the community they are serving is very dangerous as the gangs have taken control of the entire village and they are fortunate that the gang members respect them but it has taken a long time to gain their trust. They know another pastor who is going through a difficult time as the gang members started extorting this pastor for an amount of 5000.00 Lempiras a month which is about 250 US Dollars. The next month they were increasing the amount to 10,000.00 Lempiras a month so the pastor rejected to pay that amount and he was threatened so he had to leave or he and his family would have been in danger.

After 6 months, the pastor came back thinking that maybe they will no longer bother him, but the gang members have killed 3 leaders from his congregation and they threatened some other members that -if they keep coming to church- they will kill them also. This is a way to punish the pastor for not paying the extortion so they won't stop until they close the church if they don't pay the extortion. I feel that this is like the days from the Bible when the church was being persecuted. These are only some of the stories and it is very painful to hear their hearts and I admire these pastors for their courage to keep serving the Lord in the midst of the danger.

*Ernesto and Marina Pinto*

**Focus on Prayer:** Finances have really dropped off in the first quarter of the year and some major expenditures have been paid out leaving us short of funds. **Thank you** for all you have done and are doing making it possible to share the gospel and help people in so many ways. We need another \$15,000 to purchase restoration house for pastors and then begin renovations. There are several other projects we are involved in. We did not have enough space in this edition to report on Lewis & Naomi in Africa or Dr. Lewis & Brian James in the Caribbean. Grant and Roberta along with Island Breeze and Roger and Marge Armbruster leave for Cuba at the end of the month. We will try and feature those in the next Newsletter...*May God bless you and yours.*



**WE ARE A TEAM...**

*Empowering Ministries to ...*

*Reach the Lost, Revive the weak, Rescue the fallen, Restore the broken, Reconcile the offended, Release the Discipled*

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