



OUT OF THE RUBBLE OF KATHMANDU

A year ago a massive earthquake hit Nepal killing 9,000 people and severely injuring 23,000 leaving over 200,000 homeless. Continuous after shocks and tremors keep repairs and rebuilding difficult. Current strikes by Hindu's opposing the new constitution making Nepal a secular state is also crippling the country that depends on India and China for resources. India, presently run by a Hindu dominated government has created a blockade of goods to Nepal that leaves the country deprived of the bare necessities.

A recent meeting with Dr. S. Thapa and his wife who operate over 350 churches, a Bible School, orphanage, and a 'rescue home' for young girls from the 'sex slave trade' shared God's providence in the midst of chaos. After the earthquake hit Dr. S organized the Christians to bring food, water, blankets and other necessities to the harder hit areas of the quake. A Buddhist monk who had been a Buddhist for 36 years watched as Christians lovingly cared for the hurt and destitute. He wondered where the government was to help or the Hindus or other Buddhists and why it was the Christians that were caring for them. He asked them why they were doing this and they shared because their God has commanded them to love others and that is why. He declared that he has now changed to Christianity. His wife also accepted the Lord along with 66 other Buddhist monks. Sometime later his two sons who were away at a Buddhist monastery came to find out what was happening and they too accepted Christ as their Saviour and were baptized. This father is now planting other churches. Understand that if you convert to Christianity the penalty is one year in jail and three years if you are baptized so making such a commitment is not done lightly.

It is amazing how God works. We had just met these folks from Nepal on a Thursday and then on Sunday Elizabeth and I were in Sunday School when the leader shared a distress note from a Dr. who operates a hospital and school in Kathmandu. Authorities and hooligans broke into their compound and ransacked their house and beat her, her daughter, her two sisters and brother throwing them out on the street with nothing but their cloths. They confiscated their home and all their possessions. Neighbours stood by and felt helpless in trying to assist them. Sometime later they found them and beat them again. They are now hidden in a rented apartment without the bare necessities for life. Dr. S and his wife were leaving for Ontario the next morning and I was able to reach them and share this distress letter with them. They knew the person well and their homes were only ten miles apart. They would be able to help them and work with them to try and retrieve some of their losses. It goes beyond circumstances for us to meet these folks from Nepal and hear a distress from someone in Nepal in a church service in Winnipeg and provide that information to their friends that were about to leave.

NEPAL CONT'D

The Christians built 27 small houses that could accommodate a single family in these small one-room shelters. It not only gave them shelter from the elements but it also gave them protection from snakes and rats.

The people sleep on the floor and there are slats that are open at the bottom of the walls for air flow but when a frog is being chased by a Cobra snake it hops into the house through the slats and goes between the people sleeping on the floor. The snake in pursuit of the frog goes through the same slats to get at the frog but when the people move the snake bites the people.

In one case when this happened the family yelled to their neighbours that they had been bitten by snakes and needed help to get to the hospital. The neighbours were Christian and called their pastor who had a motor-bike. He came right away and took them to the hospital and the family was physically saved. They also became spiritually saved. The new houses that were built do not have the slats at the bottom of the house and these houses protect the people from such dangers.

SEX SLAVE INDUSTRY

Hundreds of young girls are lured into the sex slave industry every month. Dr. Thapa operation provides a shelter and a 'rescue operation' in which many of these girls are rescued putting his own life in danger. Not only are they provided shelter and food and clothing but they are also taught how to earn money legitimately. Due to the generosity of one of our donors several thousand dollars were given to this particular ministry.

MICRO-FINANCING

Dr. S. also trains pastors in agriculture. He tells me that a piece of land without a crop is indicative of a person without a brain. People who have land, no matter how small, can grow some vegetables. It is the pastors that must take the lead. So, every month he selects 15 pastors and they work a small farm together. The stay on the farm together, eat together, worship together and work together. They are providing food for the hospital and orphanage and they are able to take some produce back with them. The whole process is to teach them how to teach their congregation how to do it.



HAITI & DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ALIX & GERTRUDE JEAN-PAUL

SAM I AM CENTRE
FOR

CHILDREN EVANGELISM AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP
SPONSORED BY CHRISTIANS EMPOWERING ORGANIZATIONS MINISTRIES INC
LOCATION: LECHARD, NORTHEAST OF HAITI
HAITIAN DIRECTOR: PASTOR NAMPHY TELUSMA

RATIONALE: Fifteen years ago when I went to Haiti for the first mission trip, God has put on my heart a desire to focus on children evangelism and youth leadership. I have been doing it but in conjunction with many other activities such as orphanage building, school building, church building, humanitarian aid and so on. Although, these undertakings were important, I had a deep feeling that I was missing the mark, that I was sidetracked by other priorities and struggles. It has become clear to me in the last while and it has been confirmed by pastor Namphy who felt that children evangelism and youth leadership should be his focus. The spiritual evidence is found in the number of children and youth who have accepted the Lord as their personal Savior as a result of his ministry through Vacation Bible Camps (VBC) and youth training.

THE VISION: build a centre to welcome and nurture the new and young Christians in the Word of God while equipping them to be witnesses in their local communities.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS: **Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it (Proverb 22:6 NIV).**

WHY SAM I AM: Sam is the son of my brother and sister in-law who passed away suddenly at the tender age of thirteen years old. Ted and Carrie Geddert with the support of family and friends have used their loss to make a difference in the lives of many other children and youths. Every year since, the fundraising has provided financial support for children who have overcome life challenges at the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute (MBCI) in Winnipeg, an orphanage in Ethiopia and Vacation Bible Camp in Haiti.

TIMELINE FOR THE PROJECT:

1. YEAR ONE 2015: THE ACQUISITION OF LAND (\$ 10,000.00 HAS BEEN RAISED)
2. THE DRILLING OF A WELL TO PROVIDE CLEAN WATER TO 150 HOUSEHOLDS (\$ 7500.00, done)
3. THE BUILDING OF A CISTERN OF 3000 GALONS (\$ 4000.00)
4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A STORAGE BUILDING 20 X 20 (\$ 8000.00 HAS BEEN RAISED)
5. YEAR TWO 2016: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DORMS (\$ 50,000.00 TO BE RAISED)
6. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HALL (\$ 20,000.00)
7. YEAR THREE 2017: THE WELCOMING OF THE FIRST CAMPERS AND STAFF (\$ 15,000.00 YEARLY)

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION:

Under CEO ministries, we will continue to penetrate the surrounding communities with our annual VACATION BIBLE CAMP PROGRAM. The follow-up program will be enhanced by providing to the selected children and youth a Christian environment for a longer period of time to nurture them in the Word and to send them back to their communities as witnesses for Christ.

HOW WILL WE KNOW THAT WE ARE HAVING AN IMPACT?

The success and the blessings that Vacation Bible Camp have brought about are ample evidence that we are having an impact. In 2014, we reached 1000 children, 300 have made a decision to follow Christ and over 200 have been part of the follow-up program.

Vacation Bible camp has welcomed in the last four years an average of 3000 children, an estimated 600 have made a decision. The communities where we had it not only welcome the program, they want reassurance they will continue to be part of it. The parents are encouraging their children to attend the follow-up programs. As a case in point, the community of LECHARD has offered us the land below market value to have the camp in their community. The feedback collected at the end of VBC spoke volumes about the value for the communities: this is the first time somebody is doing something positive for our children instead of recruiting them for gangs and other destructive activities; we are willing to provide security and our small contributions to keep the program going; the doors are always open for Pastor Namphy to visit with the parents...

We will keep not only quantitative data based on parents and children testimonies; we will also keep qualitative data to measure our impact. However, the most important data will be kept by our Holy God as He welcomes each one of us by saying: well done my faithful servant. In doing good, let's be mindful of this spiritual truth: that God needs one faithful person to save a nation.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON HAITI;

As of June 17, this year, the Dominican Republic which shares the same island with Haiti is in the process of expelling up to 400,000 Haitians and Dominican of Haitians ancestry back to Haiti on the basis that they are illegal immigrants. As you well know, Haiti had experienced in 2010 a major earthquake which left the country less capable of meeting the basic needs of its citizens. Since this major disaster, the condition of living of the majority of the population has become worse. 1.5 to 2.5 million Haitians are at risk of starvation due to drought and government inability to work for the people. By all accounts, the international aid after the earthquake has not made a difference in the lives of those who need it the most. The lack of basic infrastructures such as: housing, clean water, medical cares, irrigation systems have rendered the population at risk. If you add 400 000 new people, you get the picture.

SAM I AM CENTRE will welcome many of these children for a short period of time by providing a place to sleep and a hot meal coupled with spiritual support. Our area, where there will be in influx of people, will feel the demographic pressures.

THE BUILDINGS

They are two separate buildings with two 20 x 20 rooms each. Each room can hold up to ten bunk beds each for a total of 40 people with showers and toilets. The building will be used also to house mission teams, medical teams as the needs arise. It will be used as shelter in case of natural disasters. It will be used as a guest house to generate extra income to support its maintenance and the workers. In the middle, between the two buildings, a hall will be built as a multipurpose rooms to be used as classrooms, workshop and meeting place. Donations can be made to: CEO Ministries Inc. and designated for Haiti.



CANADA/ETHIOPIA/CUBA BERHANU & IRYNA AYANO

Health care in Cuba is a right; not a privileged. It's centralized and socialized health care system is prevention-focused, and committed to both women's health and "Healthy beginnings for children.

This commitment is evidenced by Maternity Homes. There are 209 such homes throughout the country. One of them is "Hogar Materno", which is located in the municipality of Alamar (suburb of Havana). This facility has 20 beds; however, currently there are only 11.

In cooperation with the facility administration, Yudiel Antonio Rodriguez, the pastor of "Dios es Amor" church, organized the service at this facility on March 30, 2016. This gave me an opportunity to visit this Maternity Home and minister to 11 pregnant women and other staff members. The topic of my sermon was "Call upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55: 6-7). As the result, eight women and four nurses accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. At the end, Spanish Bibles, and small gift bags were given to those who gave their lives to Christ.

During this trip, I travelled to five provinces and preached at 12 churches. One of these churches was the "Anointing Tabernacle" in the province of Sancti Spiritus, located in the city of Sancti Spiritus (85 kilometers East of Santa Clara, the provincial capital of Villa Clara). The topic of my sermon was "The Rich Fool Man" (Luke 12: 13 - 21). At the end of the service, six people (five women and a man) accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.



TOGO, AFRICA: LEWIS AND NAOMI SWANN

I just returned from an incredible 6-week trip in Togo, Africa that I am excited to share. So much happened that it's hard to know where to begin, so I'm going to try to summarize my experience and spare you from a 20-page letter.

We officially moved the team to our permanent headquarters on our 20-acre farm, we had 75 surgeries performed in our new ambulance donated by ETMC Regional Health Center, two new missionaries joined our team to volunteer for a year, and a new friend of mine became a convert to Christianity.



God is always working on my heart during these trips, and it's always so much to take in. It's such a blessing to see so many lives impact in such powerful ways. Some of the people we serve are receiving their sight after a decade of blindness, like a 17-year-old boy who had been blind since he was 7 (who also gave his life to Christ). While others, seemingly neglected by the world around them, are simply longing for someone to care for them.

For the most part, I'm always traveling solo on my flights to Africa, but that was not the case this time. My wife, Naomi, my Communications Director, Beth Reed, two ministers, Larry and Linda Payne, and two missionaries, Wayne and Elaine Riley, all joined me on this adventure. The trip began

with us moving from our old headquarters in the capital city of Togo to our new headquarters three hours north.

This new headquarters is geographically central to our region of eye care, making all of our areas of operation a couple of hours within reach. This new move brings down many of the costs and hours spent on the road on a weekly basis. Our new headquarters is also a beautiful 20-acre farm with lot's of things to do and with many wonderful people that come through to greet us on a daily basis. It's incredibly lush throughout most of the year, and has become our new oasis. While heading out for our first medical mission, I had the pleasure of riding in the back of our new ambulance. It was the first time for me to see our new mobile eye clinic in action. Our mobile clinic, which is a modified ambulance donated by ETMC, has made a world of a difference in how we perform surgeries. With our team going to the poorest and most remote parts of Africa to perform eye surgeries, each outreach has been a logistic nightmare.

Previously, we had to create makeshift surgical rooms in dilapidated bat infested clinics, and it would take a couple

of days to prep the rooms before we had a sterile environment suitable for surgery. This ambulance brought this two-day logistic nightmare down to a two-hour breeze. With this ambulance, we're able to drive into some of the most rural parts of Africa, and within two hours we are ready to perform surgeries in a sterile air-conditioned environment.

Watching the surgeries performed in the ambulance was a dream come true.

The ambulance was so practical for performing eye surgeries that it seemed as if it wasn't designed for anything else; and there were no fears of bats flying over our heads either! If I were to receive an eye surgery in Togo, Africa, this is where I would want to be. **75 surgeries were performed in the short time I was with our team, and all of them were a success.** Their eye patches were removed the following morning, and at that moment, they could see! **Rejoicing, hallelujahs, and songs of glorifying God often follow.** I would compare their expressions to someone who is being released from a dark dungeon... and in some ways, that's exactly what's happening.

Witnessing people receive their sight was such a joy, but a greater joy was the people whom I had the honor to serve alongside of. The level of sacrifice and passion in the hearts of our team is simply mind-blowing. Our team of volunteers and employees are made up of 7 nationalities and many live far from home and family in order to serve. For 4 days out of each week, this team travels to some of the poorest and most remote parts of Togo in order to share the good news of Christ while **extending Christ's healing hand to the blind.** So many lives are touched by this group, and through them, many are coming to know Christ.

The time I spent with this group of people is invaluable to me. A few of the team members were separated from their families during brutal war back when they were children, yet they are so grateful for how faithful God has been in their lives. One may stay up praying until 2 a.m., while another wakes up to begin his prayers at 4 a.m. Each has a wonderful personality and all of our team members bring something unique to the team. I always have a spiritual boost when I visit the team in Africa, and often it's because I'm seeing the size of our challenges face to face. What this team has already accomplished in such a short period of time is nothing less than extraordinary, and we can only thank God for that.



ERNESTO & MARINA PINTO: CENTRAL AMERICA

As you can see space does not allow us to publish a report from Ernesto and Marina and they are doing a wonderful job with church planting, mentoring young pastors, ministering to single moms and feeding children who might not otherwise get a meal. Please continue to pray for them and support them financially. Their report will be in the next Newsletter.

Prayer Focus on Finances: *We need your prayer and financial support at this time especially as we move into the summer months. Dr. Lewis takes another 'mission team' to Cuba on May 9-18 and we covet prayers for him as his health is still very challenging.*



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