



November, 2011

Greetings from Liberia!

I apologize for the long time between newsletters. How can I account for the past months since I wrote last? Where to start...?

To begin with, I left Ganta in early July for the US for a combination work and vacation visit. It was meant to be a 2 month stay but was extended. The first month, I was traveling to supporting churches outside the Baltimore-Washington Conference. These churches have been faithful and generous in their prayers, help with program development, and provide financial contributions to the work at Winifred J. Harley College of Health Sciences. However, during my itineration in 2009, I wasn't able to visit them. I felt it important to visit them personally. You know the importance of that face-to-face interaction.

It is not only the congregations who benefit from these visits with increased awareness of the work being done in Liberia and a 'face to go with a name'. I always get renewed from church itineration. The enthusiasm, interest and encouragement that are shared with me are contagious and uplifting. What may have become daily routine of work and challenges, I see through their eyes with freshness. A recent devotional reading from the Upper Room Disciplines Devotional says that faith in the steadfast love of God connects us to what the writer in Hebrews describes as 'so great a cloud of witnesses' that travels with us. I am so grateful for all the congregations that are present with their prayers.

Also, while in Baltimore, I met with the staff from the University Of Maryland Office Of Global Health. We had several productive meetings about the Primary Health Care Specialist Program. Originally, it was to be a Family Nurse Practitioner Program but the new name will allow Physicians Assistants to participate also. We established a Memorandum of Understanding between them and the United Methodist University – College of Health Sciences. They hope to have representatives from Global Health visit early next year for further evaluation for collaborating on this project.

The month of August was vacation... mostly, except for trips to Lafayette, North Carolina; Peoria, Illinois, and local Baltimore-Washington Conference visits! I enjoyed visits to the beach with my family, and lots of time with my two year old grandson, Cameron. We enjoyed walks in the neighborhood to the playground which frequently ended up with a dish of frozen yogurt at TCBY. Mostly, I enjoyed just the rhythm of the household and being a part of their family life.

While home, I was also having some medical checkups for some symptoms I had been experiencing -hence the extension of the visit. It took time to get appointments with doctors and wait for test results. Praise the Lord that the symptoms are gone and the tests were negative. While nothing specific was diagnosed, I know of others who have traveled here and returned home with unknown illnesses that persisted for months or longer but were eventually resolved. While disconcerting, I'm just happy to be back to normal. Again, Praise the Lord!

I returned to Liberia in early October, just in time for the national presidential election. It was very exciting to watch. There were 16 candidates and no one won a 50% plus one majority, so there will be a run off November 8th. So far, the process has gone smoothly and uneventfully, and I pray for continued peace and sanity. Liberia has

suffered too much over the last twenty years from civil violence and I know the majority of the people want to get on with their lives.

I have a new job title - Coordinator of New Program Development. I stepped down as Dean of the School this past January. I had planned to do that anyway this September to make way for the newly graduated faculty returning from academic leave to get a Masters in Nursing Education. It would benefit them to take over the leadership of the school and start getting experience. I stepped down earlier because of administrative reasons and have enjoyed the increased time with the students allowed by not having to do those administrative parts of the job.

However, I found when I returned in October, there were many changes. There is an increased number of incoming students. The educational standards that had been in place have been eased which may be detrimental to the quality of the students. At least now and with great joy, there is a strong educational staff. They are smart and creative teachers and I know they will meet the challenge.

There have been two setbacks with the Dental Nurse Practitioner Program. One is that the dentist teaching the program needed to spend three months in Monrovia, the capital, at the government dental clinic. As a new graduate dentist, they wanted to be sure of his skills and also to put the advanced theory learning he had into a Liberian setting. This put the dental nurse practitioner training behind schedule. Unfortunately, the students won't finish this July as planned, but they are growing in knowledge and their practical skills every day.

We are also having trouble filling the dentist position for the Dental Nurse Practitioner Training program and the Ganta United Methodist Hospital. Through a series of 'bad timings', we will have no dentist from March until July. This will also impact the DNP training. If anyone knows a dentist who can come to practice and train, even for a short period of time, please give them my email address seporter29@yahoo.com. Along with an adventure, they would be serving people who are in great need of oral health care!

The last update relates to the dormitory renovation. As you remember, the first dorm, Adams Hall, was completed this past February. Funds are still needed for the 'Hostel', the boys' dorm. There is a significant amount collected so far, but I'd like to be sure of an amount sufficient enough to get most of the work done before starting. The total needed is \$92,000. There are donations of ~ \$35,000 and pledges for ~\$30,000. I'm also working with the contractor to see if there are ways that costs can be diminished slightly.

Well, I must give my holiday greetings now, as I know that by the time you get this, it will be Thanksgiving and into the Christmas season. My heartfelt thanks for all you do there to help the work here. It wouldn't get done without you. Thank you for all you do there, in the name of our Glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Living God, whose Love is an endless wellspring of grace and compassion for His people.

Blessings to you all in His Precious Name – Sue Porter, Missionary

Winifred J. Harley College of Health Sciences - Renovation of Student Dormitories

Advance # 3021119 “...I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be.”

Amos 9:11