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**Five Years Post Quake And What Remains**

**Kris Costello, Messiah Lutheran Church, Lincoln, NE**

I just returned from my seventh trip to Haiti and find myself struggling to hold and savor the sweet memories of the experience. The trips go far too fast and start to feel like a dream within days of returning. Bringing first timers along on a trip always provides fresh insight as you can also experience the trip through their eyes. Questions bubbled up about lifestyle of the Haitians, activities in a typical day, why they require so much ongoing assistance, and remaining effects of the 2010 earthquake,

I was reminded of a very articulate answer to questions from the outside world about why those in the third world can't "get their act together" and be more productive, in the book *The Hole In Our Gospel* by Richard Stearns. The author asked the reader to mentally go through their day and recall each time they touch water; whether for drinking, hygiene, cooking or laundry. Then imagine having to walk, up to several miles each way, with a container for carrying, (then boiling it over fire to make sure it is safe) to provide for all of your daily needs. How productive, outside of these basic tasks, would you be? How much energy would you have left?

As we all know, accessibility of clean safe water is only one of the challenges of daily life faced by many Haitians. Lack of quality affordable education, safe roads, reliable electricity and stable government are just a few more. The resilience of the population, their resourcefulness, creativity and connectedness to each other are what makes me fall in love with them over and over each time I visit. How they can live in these circumstances yet greet us with such warmth and compassion in meticulously clean outfits with gleaming white smiles leaves me in awe.

*(continued on page 3)*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Supporters of Haiti Lutheran Mission Society,

I was blessed by God to have two wonderful parents. They raised four boys to have good morals, be honest, pray before meals, be responsible in all things, etc. But like all parents, they had their little quirks too. For instance my mother somehow, some-way believed a lot of old wives tales. We grew up thinking the white of watermelon rinds was poisonous. You don't know what trauma that caused me at picnics. Not only did I have to be sure I didn't eat any, but I had to watch other kids as they got desperately close to eating some of the villainous rind. I was sure we were going to lose some of them before the day was over. We learned the same thing about green tomatoes. Can't eat those, they're poison. Grinding teeth was a sign of worms.

There were several others, but you get the picture. My wife and I laugh at them now. I don't believe any real harm was done to any of us despite the fact that I developed a few phobias as a result. Once you know the truth about such things, the fear goes away, and your behavior even changes.

Jesus said one of the most meaningful and important things when he said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Knowing the truth about watermelon rinds, green tomatoes and grinding teeth cast off a lot of unnecessary worry and fear on my part.

There are far more serious myths that are believed by many people that have far more serious consequences. Some believe there is no God. Many, that all religions are the same. Others believe that Jesus was not God or that He didn't have to come and save us. Some have even gone so far as to think that Satan is to be worshipped.

Such has been the case in Haiti for many, many years. **The truth about a loving God who earnestly cares for and loves all people is largely unknown to many Haitians. Our pastors and laypeople in Haiti are out to bring this truth to light among their fellow countrymen. It is a truth that desperately needs to be proclaimed so that the old myths and ignorance of the Haitian people can be destroyed and the joyful truth of forgiveness and life after death can be a part of their lives. This is a truth that will set them free.**

You have been a part of dispelling myths and ignorance in Haiti, just by virtue of your support of the work there. Thank you once again for your kind and generous support. As great as the 2010 earthquake was, there is an even greater need today among the people of Haiti, that the truth of the gospel, that truth that sets people free, be proclaimed and shared among them.

God's blessings to each and every one of you,

Rev. Robert Nowak, President



## THE CALL

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*The mission of the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, USA is to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of the Haitian people, so that they might be won by the Holy Spirit to be disciples of Jesus Christ."*

*1 Cor. 3:7-15*

*(Continued From Cover)*



In preparing for a trip it is always a challenge to decide what items to pack that would be most needed by those we visit. We decided to focus on medical supplies for the medical clinic at Good Shepherd Church as well as first aid items for the House of Love and Hope Orphanage. School supplies, clothing, sheets and basic hygiene items for kids at the orphanage were also included. Never had I dreamed that we would be using some of these medical supplies for the treatment of one of the teachers at Cité Soleil who attended a meeting with us at our hotel. As the teachers arrived Saturday morning, I noticed this gentleman was limping, noticeably wincing in pain as he sat at the table with us. He lifted his pant leg and revealed a huge gash and burn on his calf, one week old and untreated, from a motorcycle accident. Yet another reminder of the access to medical care we take for granted.

At the orphanage we were so excited to see the amazing construction progress and the beams being delivered, the second floor walls going up. Because of the project, there are huge piles of rock and sand, construction materials and equipment taking up the courtyard area where

the children usually play. Their well had broken two weeks earlier so all of their water use was again reduced to a public well they could walk to and carry water back to their home. While many of the bunk beds had mattresses and sheets, others for the younger children had no mattresses.

With 2015 commemorating the five year anniversary of the quake that killed over 250,000 people and destroyed so many buildings in the area where we spent most of our time, our first-timers were curious about the progress that has been made. Paved roads, solar street lights, an occasional stop sign (that no one pays attention to!) and many re-built structures are proof that the city of Port-au-Prince has come far since this disaster. While these improvements are wonderful outward signs that we can immediately notice and appreciate, I have to say that I can't see how they make a tangible difference in the day to day life of those we serve. Without the availability of safe water, quality education, basic human needs of shelter and safety, the population is left in a state of dependence.

**Even though Haiti is no longer in the headlines every day with national recognition of its glaring needs, they remain.** Even without these reminders, this country, just 830 miles from Florida, still relies on us, those who can help and make a difference, to do just that. I met an inspiring woman in the airport as we were leaving who started an organization with a weekly feeding program in rural Haiti all by herself. She shared with me this quote by Mother Theresa, "If you can't feed a 100 people, then feed just one."

**One by one, we ARE making a difference in Haiti through our accredited Christian schools, medical clinic, orphanages and churches. Thank you for your much needed ongoing support of this important work.**



# Messiah Lutheran Haiti Trip

April 8-14, 2015 by Jim Schmersal



Messiah Lutheran Church, Lincoln, NE has taken on the project of finishing the second floor of House of Love and Hope Orphanage in Croix des Bouquets, Haiti. This orphanage is managed by Josie Antoine, sister-in-law of Pastor Thomas Bernard. A generous couple donated the metal roofing material and fasteners for the roof of the structure. Orphan Grain Train of Norfolk, Nebraska shipped the materials to Haiti. We are very appreciative of this donation.

The materials were delivered to the orphanage and had to be stored inside the building to prevent theft. This took away room in the orphanage for the children's beds and was also a safety risk to the children.

Messiah congregation members felt it urgent to complete the roof to remove this risk. In order to complete the roof concrete block work needed to be completed, and roof trusses purchased and installed.

Messiah Lutheran contacted the design engineer in Haiti to obtain plans for the orphanage. We then contacted contractors in Haiti to give us estimates to finish the work to complete the entire second floor in stages from the blockwork to final completion. The first stages were the block work, purchase and installation of the roof trusses, and installation of the metal roof. The total for this work was about \$ 11,614, using Haitian's to complete the work.

We presented this information to the congregation and asked them to pray about the funding for this project to complete the first phases. Several contributions were made from private donors. About \$5,000 was raised the first week. A couple of weeks later, Pastor Kunze announced that we were proceeding with the project and asked for a door offering. To our amazement, \$12,600 was raised in the door offering. God is good. The project was definitely a reality. The contractors were hired, the money wired to Pastor Thomas and construction began mid-March.

April 8 thru 14, Pastor John Kunze, Kenny Blair, Mark Miller and Jim Schmersal went to Haiti to oversee the construction and contribute our labor to the project. We were able to view the construction, make some constructive changes, and worked one full day to clean up the area of all the left over construction materials.



We also spent one day doing maintenance work on the orphanage—replacing light fixtures and bulbs, switches, and the wiring for the electrical battery backup system. We also hired an electrician to fix the controller on the well, and a plumber to move the water tank to the new concrete roof over the balcony area.



We were able to purchase 15 bags each of rice and beans, as well as spaghetti, oil and soap for the orphanage. **We also purchased foam mattresses for the bunk beds which we hauled on top of Leonard’s van 15 miles to the orphanage. These were very much appreciated by the children. They were so happy when they came home from school on Friday. They just wanted to lay on and bounce on their beds.** There were also a few hours of just playing with the children—the best part of any trip to Haiti, in my opinion.

We attended two different church services at Leonard’s church—Friday night and Sunday night. We also attended the Sunday Morning services at Pastor Thomas’ church. What a joy to worship with the people of Haiti.

**As for the orphanage completion, we are still in need of about \$20,000 to complete the electrical, plumbing, plastering, tile and windows. Messiah hopes to work with some other churches to raise the funds to complete this project in the very near future. If anyone wants to contribute to this needed work, please contact Jim Schmursal @ 402-430-8746 or jim@schmursal.us**



## HAITI TRIP March 19-24, 2015

### DICK BUETHE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HLMS



On March 19th, six of us traveled to Haiti, including my wife Nancy. Three travelers were experiencing Haiti for their first time and three of us had been to Haiti multiple times. I personally had been using United Airlines for the last 30 years to make this quarterly trip, but due to changes in their scheduling I switched to Delta Airlines. The connections were amazing, allowing us to leave one hour later than usual and arrive in Port-au-Prince two hours earlier.

We arrived on time at 2:00 PM to find our friend Leo waiting for us just outside the airport. After a brief stop at our hotel to drop off luggage, we were on our way to a 6:30 PM church service at Zion Lutheran Church. The service was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all of us. We had purchased a projector back home for this church and delivered it just before the service. The projector was immediately put to use with Bible verses, song lyrics and beautiful graphics being projected to a large screen at the front of the church. We enjoyed a late dinner and slept well after a long day of travel.

After breakfast on Friday we headed up the mountain to the Baptist Mission so our first-timers could take in the incredible view of Port-au-Prince from the lookout. We stopped at the church at Pelerin #3, a church that the HLMS purchased and dedicated approximately 15 years ago, and learned of possible opportunities to once again support this church in its much needed outreach to the community.

We were able to attend worship services almost daily, and they were all incredibly well attended. On Sunday evening we were happy to see a youth group, ranging in ages from 4 years to 24 years meeting at Zion Lutheran before their evening service. They were engaged in so many fun games and so much fun was being had by all. The 6:30 service was absolutely bursting at the seams with so many people that we ran out of chairs for them all.

Our group met with the teachers from Faith School, our supported school in Cite Soleil. We were able to pay each staff member their three month salary and visited with them through a translator. They expressed their many needs as they serve in this dangerous and extremely poor area of Haiti. One of the teachers had been injured in a motorcycle accident the week before and we were able to provide some first aid treatment for him, send some supplies with him and insure he would soon be seen at our medical clinic.

**We are seeing that the needs in Haiti are high right now; people are in desperate need of food and projects need completion. We ask your prayers and support as we seek to do God's will in Haiti. Thank you for your partnership.**

Dick Buethe, Executive Director



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# PRAYERS FOR HAITI

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Summer 2015

## Praise and Thank God:

For your much needed on-going support benefiting the dear ones at our Haiti Mission.

That God provided wonderful connections & safe travel to six travelers as they delivered funds & medical supplies for our churches, schools & orphanage in Haiti. Thank God for the work accomplished.

For your prayers for the team who worked most recently in Haiti.

For the wonderful attendance & the new projector purchased for Zion Lutheran Church so the church could worship with projected bible verses, song lyrics and beautiful graphics.

For the fun-filled youth group at Zion Lutheran.

For all the work completed on the 2nd floor of House of Love and Hope Orphanage. Thank God for the generosity of Messiah Lutheran Church givers who made this possible.

For the couple who donated metal roofing for the orphanage & for Orphan Grain Train that shipped them to Haiti.

For the faithful leadership of the HLMS Board.

For your continued prayer and financial support for the HLMS Mission so that both bodies and souls are fed.

## Prayer Requests—Please PRAY:

That God will continue to bless the youth group at Faith Lutheran & bring many to salvation & that they would support, care for & encourage one another.

That God would heal the teacher at Faith Lutheran (Cite Soleil) after a motorcycle accident.

That God would provide for the safety & many needs at Faith Lutheran located in a dangerous & extremely poor area of Haiti.

That God would sustain & continue to grow the mission in Haiti and give continued enthusiasm, wisdom and strength to its leaders.

For continued prayer and financial support.

For God's wisdom and discernment for the board members as they lead the HLMS.

(prayers submitted by Jill Jank)

**The next meeting of the  
Board of Directors of the HLMS  
will be held on Saturday,  
October 31, 2015 at 9 AM  
at the office of  
Buethe And Associates  
Insurance  
Lincoln, Nebraska**



# HLMS Call

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## The Haiti Lutheran Mission Society Needs Your Help!

In order to help us track our readership, please enclose this portion of your newsletter with your financial support or requests for information. This will allow us to make any necessary address changes, forward correspondence and material to you, as well as ensure that we receive your pledge. *Thank you for your continued support and prayers.*

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to help sponsor a child to attend school and receive an accredited Christian education for \$130 per year.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will continue to pray for the HLMS.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to contribute to the HLMS general fund. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to pledge a monthly gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the HLMS.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please forward additional copies of the HLMS brochure. I need \_\_\_ copies.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send a copy of The HLMS Call to this address:

*(Please make your check payable to the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, USA)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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