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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS, WORLD MISSIONS

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE GOING?

Cold Front Heaven by Keith Chapman,

D.D.S. , missionary to Liberia

‘Round about 70 degrees. 20% Humidity. Blue Skies. Pristine waves peeling and crashing. Nice off-shore breeze. West Africa doesn’t get like this often. My blue jeans are making only their second daytime appearance in 9 months. Out on a morning jog, all I could think was that if there is a heaven, God would have to make it pretty close to this. But as I continued on my run, I remembered how much the setting alone is not necessarily what makes a place heavenly. I run back by my house, only the half way point of lap number one. A boy steps up to me and states he wants to talk to me, usually code for asking for money, school fees, or rice. I am calloused. “But I am exercising. I will be back here in thirty minutes.” How can he not understand I did not want to let my heart rate go down? Plus this would give me adequate time to come up with my declination speech...

I kept running, all the while working up my speech on how to turn down this young boy waiting at my house. Or maybe he continued on to ask for help elsewhere. That would be even better. Just in case, I had it all ready. I, and the others living on this campus, did not come to feed Liberia or send every child to school. Certain organizations *were* here to help feed. In addition, it’s his family, his Ma and Pa, his community, and even his church, the people who he had daily relations with, who should be supporting him in these basic needs. My thoughts might be different if I didn’t know that, around the city at least, starvation is fairly uncommon. Did your ma even send you here to beg? Shame on her. You would at least be better off selling in the market with her, learning how to haggle, addition, and subtraction by making change. Maybe I would give him a little bit of rice or bread, but I never wanted to see him begging at anyone’s house again. My compassion was running low, especially since this boy was interfering with my 70 degree, low humidity heaven.

My run was finished, but I took some extra time stretching afterwards, still rehearsing my speech in my head. I returned home, the boy was still sitting at the edge of my yard, tattered shirt and oversized flip-flops. I shook his hand and asked his name to act like I had some compassion. “Let’s sit over here.” I sat with him where the grass meets the sand of the beach. Then I could at least not miss any of the beautiful waves while I listened to his plea and gave him my life-changing talk.

He began his story, “When I was twelve, these boys hit me in the mouth and it caused my front teeth to break.” I looked and the teeth that were once only broken had now decayed; one of them all the way to the gum line.

“Can they hurt you? They can keep you from sleeping?” I asked. If my grammar seems strange, it is once again my attempt at the sometimes Yoda-like Liberian English.

“Yeah. But my ma does not have money to help me to fix them. And now, when I go to school, everyone is always laughing at me. I want (contd. on p. 2)

Cold Front Heaven, contd.

you to help me.” I saw the corner of his left eye filling up with what would be the first of many tears that began streaming down his cheeks. I fought mine with every ounce of testosterone gained from my recent run.

“How old are you now?” I asked him

“Fifteen.”

“You are not in school now?” This type of problem will often cause a child not to attend school.

“I am, but anytime I talk they

“I can help you. It would

put my hand on his shoulder and here.” I was so glad I didn’t have to

**BE SURE TO VISIT THE
WORLD MISSIONS BOOTH
AT COUNCIL (FEB. 19-21).**

can laugh at me.”

make me very happy to help you.” I squeezed it. “That is why I am use my speech.

“I will try and make you look fine. But you have to do me this one thing. When I fix your teeth, you cannot go back to those boys and do the same thing to them. You have to forgive them. Make new friends and move on.” He promised me he would, wiping the tears from his face. “Please come tomorrow at 10:00 and we’ll start the process.”

“I should bring my ma?”

“Yes, please bring your ma. I would love to meet her. See you tomorrow.”

Turns out he is friends with a young boy that does yard work for Frieda. Why he came to my house and not the clinic, only a 10 minute walk away, I’ll never know. Maybe it was to teach me not to dread hearing someone’s plea.

Honduras Blog

Manos de Dios team has recently added community gardening to their long list of ministries in Honduras. To read more about this team’s work in Honduras, go to their new blog site at <http://www.hondurasmanosdedios.blogspot.com/>

To read an update about Harry Gunkel's ministry in Israel, go to <http://picasaweb.google.com/Harry.Gunkel/PostWarGazaFeb2009?feat=directlink>

SAVE THE DATE: August 7-8, Fishin’ for Mission

Join the fun this summer at the first annual **Fishin’ for Mission** fishing tournament and family fun weekend at Rockport, Tx. St. Peter’s Rockport will host this Diocesan-wide event. Funds raised will go to support world mission projects through the Diocese of West Texas.

There are guided and unguided divisions in this event with prizes for everything from biggest redfish to biggest hardhead. For non-anglers there will be plenty of things to keep you busy too, as Rockport is a town designed for families. There is a **kid’s fishing tournament** as

well as other kids’ activities on site. Shoppers and art lovers?? You’re covered. Bird watchers and other nature lovers? You’ll think you’re in heaven. Hope to see you there!

Feeding the Poor in Honduras by Marthe Curry

I've just returned from Honduras where I was a tag-along with the Water Ministry team. While the drillers were daily pushing through sand, ash, and quartz, I took photos and interviewed many of the people with whom we minister in our ongoing relationship with the Diocese of Honduras.

Besides watching the enthusiasm and bonding experience of the drilling team, I visited 11 other well sites that we've drilled to provide water in rural areas where there either is no water or the water is contaminated. I saw churches we've help build or renovate, an experimental garden that will extend the growing season (see blog mentioned on p. 2), and a children's oncology wing we've partnered in furnishing.

One of the most touching visits I made was with missionaries to feed a family of 20 who live in a two-room house after their home

washed away in the flood. For weeks they have existed on contaminated water and tortillas. I



cannot describe the looks on their faces when we delivered bags of groceries, books, and

stickers.

I asked the missionary how she determined which of all the poor families should be helped. She reminded me of the starfish story and said that we help them *one family at a time*.



(The same family has a 12-year-old girl who has a congenital heart defect, but the family had no means for her treatment. Through the networking of the missionaries, Rotary, Intl. sponsored the child's surgery and treatment in Florida. The doctors and hospital provided their services *pro bono*. The girl and her mother are still in the States as she recovers. This is just another example of God's work through the partnerships he has established through his servants.)

MLK Blitz

On MLK weekend St. Luke's (San Antonio) youth and members of Trinity (Victoria) converged on El Buen Pastor (Piedras Negras) to minister to those in the colonias living on the edge of life. Some missionaries painted houses in the colonias while others gave out blan-

kets and food.

The women of El Buen Pastor cooked lunches and suppers to feed the hungry workers, and everyone enjoyed their meals together in the church's parish hall.



Many churches that frequently do mission work in Piedras Negras met together to learn about needs, challenges, and opportunities in this Border town. If you'd like to be a part of this network, contact Marthe Curry (888/210/824-5387 or mcurry09@sbcglobal.net).

Upcoming Mission Trips and Prayer List:

February—Summer. MEXICO, Piedras Negras. Sean Koetting, TMI Eagle Scout Project.

February 13 & 31. NORTHERN MEXICO. Water Ministry. Jeremy Cooper, Team Leader.

March 6-15. RUSSIA or BELARUS. Visit orphanages. Trent Timberlake, Team Leader.

March 7-11. MEXICO, Piedras Negras. Reconciliation (San Antonio). Bobby Hausser, Team Leader.

May 16-22. HONDURAS, Siguatepeque. Veterinary Team & Public Health. Dr. Bill Campaigne, Team Leader. Rodger Kleisch, Randy Lynn, Victor Mux.

May 21-30. HONDURAS. Water Ministry. Jack Martin & Louis Manz, Team Leaders.

Summer (tba). UGANDA. Christ Church (San Antonio). John & Frances Harrison, Team Leaders.

June-July (tba) UGANDA. Hands of Hope Tapestry Ministry. Helen Schnelzer & Brenda Kingery, Team Leaders.

June (tba). ZAMBIA, Gaali. St. Luke's (Cypress Mill). Evangelism & Education. Tommy & Connie Bye, Elizabeth & David Manning, Team Leaders.

June 7-13. MEXICO, Piedras Negras. St. Mark's (San Antonio) Medical/Dental Team. Bobby Hausser & Dr. Bill Smith, Team Leaders.

June 12-18. HONDURAS, Siguatepeque. St. David's (San Antonio). School & Orphanage Ministry. Victor & Murry Mux & Vicky Goeber, Team Leaders.

June 18-30. INDIA, Diocese of Karimnagar. Good Shepherd (Corpus Christi). The Rev. Steve Bilsbury & Dr. Anantha Babbili, Team Leaders.

June 20-28. MEXICO, Piedras Negras. St. Francis (Louisville, KY). Bobby Hausser, Team Leader.

June 21-28. SOUTHEAST MEXICO. Good Shepherd (Corpus Christi) and St. Mark's (Beaumont) Medical/Dental Team. Dr. Kent Tompkins & the Rev. Frank Fuller, Team Leaders.

July 7-21. UGANDA, Nebbi Diocese. St. Luke's (San Antonio). VBS & Renovations. Elizabeth Allen, Team Leader.

July 20-24. MEXICO, Piedras Negras. VBS at Iglesia El Buen Pastor. Bobby Hausser, Coordinator.

July 30-August 8. HONDURAS. Water Ministry. Curt Mowen & Louis Manz, Team Leaders.

October 14-23. HONDURAS. Water Ministry. The Rev. Don Lee, Team Leader.

PLEASE ALSO CONTINUE TO KEEP OUR LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Alison Barfoot, Jennifer & Phil Leber (Uganda); Harry Gunkel & Sharon & Duane Miller (Israel); Jeannie Loving (Honduras), Ginny & George Olson (Philippines); and Beth & Tony Price (Mexico).