

Remembering the Past/Preparing for a Better Future

January 12, 2011

Dear friends,

Today is the one year anniversary of the January 12, 2010 earthquake. It is a day for Haitians and all who love the Haitian people to commemorate the 300,000 lives lost in that earthquake. It is a day to grieve alongside those among the 300,000 injured who will never be restored to full functioning and to weep for the many children who are now without father or mother, to recognize the suffering of the more than one million Haitians who are still living in squalid and unsafe tent camps and to feel the despair of people who walk the littered streets of cities in which only 5% of the earthquake rubble has been cleared.

As if these things were not enough suffering for any one nation, 3,650 Haitians have died from the cholera outbreak, which was further spread by flooding from Hurricane Tomas. More than 170,000 have already contracted cholera and this epidemic has not yet hit its peak. To finish this incredibly difficult year, there was post-election violence in December, and the election process is not yet finished. The report of the Organization of American States regarding its recount of the first-round votes was leaked to the Internet yesterday. The report concludes that President Preval's own hand-picked candidate should be dropped into third place and out of the second-round runoff. It is expected that this report will be announced publicly after today's commemorative services are finished.

In spite of the disasters behind and the dangers ahead, we still have faith that a better future awaits Haiti. We are still eager to move forward in the process of building leaders who possess integrity, for we already see the growth that is taking place in individual lives and we know a God who can multiply loaves and fishes. We still find it satisfying to offer donors the opportunity to give not only for our primary long-term goals, but for urgent short-term needs. Recently, we found a way to purchase and deliver lifetime water filtration systems that are effective against the cholera bacteria and we have been having a good response from donors regarding this project. On Thanksgiving Day, special donations provided 30 water filtration systems for families in Gonaives. This Monday (January 10, 2011), several members of the team delivered 24 filters to Petite Riviere, in the Artibonite Department, the region where the cholera started. Our Director of Operations, whose mother recently recovered from a bout with cholera, had this to say:

Thanks for supporting the trip to l'Artibonite. God was also with us in this trip. It was just one day, but I think it meant a lot for our team and for the people in L'Artibonite, cause they are very concerned about the cholera. They all send their greetings and appreciate what we do for them.

Your gifts, small and large, are such a blessing. It only takes \$15 to send a young adult to our annual leadership conference and only \$60 to purchase and deliver a lifetime water filtration system for a family at risk of cholera and other water-borne diseases. Larger donations enable us to put new team members in trade school or university.

In spite of the earthquake and other disasters, we were able to carry out all our regular programs in 2010. We hope to do much more in 2011, both in building leadership and in meeting urgent needs.

Please join our prayers for peace and stability in Haiti in 2011 and for growth in our capacity to empower Haitians to share with Haitians.

With our gratitude for your prayers, your friendship and your financial support,

Betty Jean Harmsen
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