

Dear Friends and Family,

Hello all, back in February, we asked you to pray for a few urgent items that filled our plate at the time. Well, here we are two months later, and we think we can give reports on all of them. It's been a long season, because we had been engaging these items for a while before our email, but we are actually feeling like we are out of that particular stand of the woods-- er, rainforest. Actually, it is especially appropriate that we report today. The Liberian government has proclaimed it a national holiday-- Fast and Prayer Day.

Item One:

Bob will be in Dakar Senegal from Sunday the 17th until Friday the 22nd attending meetings with the CRWRC West Africa Ministry Team. There, other members of the team from Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone will be getting together. A big part of our agenda will be a day-long discussion of the future of CRWRC's role in Liberia. That discussion is scheduled for Wednesday, the 20th.

-- On the 20th, pray that our meeting is guided by the Holy Spirit throughout and that our decisions be informed by His spirit.

Report: The meeting was productive, and out of it Bob got an assignment to begin exploring potential partners for future work in Liberia. It is still too early to make any announcements, but CRWRC, along with Christian Reformed World Missions is seriously considering joining Partners Worldwide in establishing a new formal presence in Liberia. This is a very important development, but as far as we are still in the exploring phase. Keep praying for wisdom as we move forward to the best next steps in Liberia.

We are any day expecting a very late container to come, loaded with books donated by many loving Canadians—including Renita's family and packed and shipped by Active Kids Canada. We now are hoping it will be even later, until after I return from Senegal to help with the hundreds of boxes of books.

--Pray that the container arrives unmolested at a good time to retrieve its contents.

Report: "Any day now"-- that's a laugh! However, the container did come and all of the items sent arrived safely. We unloaded the container just last week, and earlier this week distributed almost everything to the schools. 320 boxes of textbooks, reading books, school supplies, and many other things - the generosity of so many people who contributed to this effort is overwhelming. We still have a few boxes to deliver, but mostly, that adventure in shipping is over. A very special thanks goes to Renita's mom and dad for their hard work in packing all the boxes and organizing all the donations.

Thanks to gifts that came to us in memory of Norm Katerberg, we have been able to sponsor a project we think would have delighted our dear friend. In Monrovia, there is a girl's school with 851 girls, but no playground. Inspired by Norm's boundless love of children, we decided—in consultation with the Katerberg family, to use the money for a playground. It will have two slides, three swing sets, two merry-go-rounds, three teeter totters, and a jungle gym. That gets built this week as well. Norm's son, Todd Flier, will be out with the Nehemiah group to aid in the construction.

-- Pray for safety during construction.

Report: The playground has been completed and is being enjoyed daily by many, many young girls who Bob can hear squealing with delight while he teaches his class. As Todd realized when he was here, the playground put in place here is the kind that is being taken out in the US for being unsafe; Liberia is a little far behind when it comes to children's toys, so this will do for a long time while the country moves forward. A very special plaque has been given by the Katerberg family with Norm's picture on it, surrounded by Liberian children; this plaque has a very special place of honor at the

school. Please see attached picture.

The LEAD conference, titled “The Way Forward: The Future of Small Business in Liberia,” is hosting business owners at an all day event February 23rd at the Providence Baptist Church. Speakers include members of the legislature, the head of the Liberia Business Association, the Minister of Commerce and Liberia's President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

--Pray that the turnout matches the quality of the event, and that LEAD's message of "Business as God's Calling" will come through.

Report: Turnout was less than we had hoped, but we still had 150 businesses represented, and the nation's president gave a great talk on the bigger economic picture and the work that is happening behind the scenes in Liberia. She gave a chance for the businesses to dialogue with her in a question and answer session, which was meaningful for LEAD businesses. Lou Haveman, our friend from Partners Worldwide, participated in a panel discussion with other professionals, these representing Liberian banks and business organizations.

The Nehemiah Liberia Group— the US partner to LEAD birthed out of our home church—Madison Square Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan—will have representatives visiting us, as well as other Madison Square folks this week. They arrive mid-week, will visit businesses and attend the conference, and do some other hands-on kind of activities, then leave next Wednesday.

-- Pray for traveling safety and meaningful experiences, that the visitors will see Liberia through the eyes of Christ. Report: As you who read our blog know, the team had a full schedule, including a visit to a LEAD farm in the interior, visit to the Mercy Ship, work on the playground, visit with the Liberian National Police, working in LEAD's office on software, the LEAD conference, Providence Baptist Church anniversary, and many other things. We don't want to speak for them, but they certainly blessed us with their presence and Todd Flier gets a special thanks for fixing our car and helping build the playground.

We thank you for your prayers!

Blessings,

Bob, Renita, Hannah, and Noah Reed

Bob and Renita Reed