

Subject: November Update from the Van Dams in Haiti

From: Ruth Van Dam <rvandam@fastmail.fm>

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To: Ruth Van Dam <rvandam@fastmail.fm>

Dear Friends,

James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who give generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

How many times have you asked God for wisdom today, this week, or this month. It's incredible to know that God gives wisdom generously without looking at our skewed motives or the things that got us into a jam or at the sins in our lives. He gives it freely. It makes me wonder though, how often do we not recognize that wisdom or how often do we choose not to follow it.

For us, the month of November is the month of plans. We begin to make plans for the next fiscal year which begins in July 2010. This is certainly a time to seek God's wisdom. With the economic downturn in North America, join us in prayer, that people would not lose their jobs, and that the church's ministry and its mission efforts would not be adversely affected.

In October we met with 7 of our partner organizations in our yearly meeting and asked, "How is Sous Espwa doing in meeting their goals and following the strategies we had outlined together?" It was a very interactive and interesting day with lots of discussion and ideas flowing. The results: our partners want to share their resources and strengths with one another. It was also clear that Sous Espwa needs to engage more in Christian education (both elementary and higher levels of education) and the publication of Christian books. These two items need to be more clearly laid out in Sous Espwa's plans.

Lesley Millar and Diego Toussaint were married on October 23. Ruth acted as "marenn" or "godmother" of the couple. This is a Haitian tradition which ideally means that Ruth will counsel or encourage the couple in the days ahead. It was a privilege for Ruth to be a part of this wedding, but she looks to God for wisdom as she seeks to encourage and help Lesley and Diego become one in marriage.

Speaking of marriages, Ruth and Howard will be celebrating 20 exciting years together this month. Praise God with us!

Howard taught "New Testament Survey" for the leadership class that is being offered for pastors in the CRC of Haiti. These 18 students meet for three days, 4 times per year. This program hopes to become a more formalized theological training in the future. Please pray for these church leaders that they will be teachable and work hard in their studies.

At the end of this month, Sous Espwa will be hosting a service and learning team from Ontario. They will be focused on working on the new office building of our partner, The Ministry for Christian Development. This is the third year that this team of four will be joining us in Haiti. We are thrilled by their desire to partner with us in these construction efforts.

Our whole family is also very involved in our English speaking church, Quisqueya Chapel. Howard is teaching an adult Sunday School with two other young men. They are averaging 25 adults. Taressa just began teaching the preschool class with a friend, and Ruth is involved in the organization and leadership of the youth group which serves nearly 100 youth each Saturday afternoon. This coming Friday, they are hosting an all-night-er on the church grounds. Please pray for God's Spirit to use these teaching opportunities and to move in the lives of these adults, preschoolers, and youth.

Thanks for your prayers and care and financial support. May you discover God's wisdom in the decisions and directions you need to go today.

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Pictures #1: Howard in discussion at our Partner Meeting, #2: The Van Dams and the Toussaints, #3: Howard & Ruth; 20 years together!





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