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MISSIONMATTERS

Allegany Region Missions provides a multi-denominational Christian mission ministry to the needy of the world, through a focus on mission projects and programs in medical care, surgery, construction and education.

Who is Blessed? The Rich? The Poor?

by Michele Harms

Thinking back to mission trips to Haiti and Jamaica, one thing that amazes me each time is my envy toward those less fortunate than me. Yup, you read it right—I envy them. No, I haven't lost my marbles, maybe; let me explain.

I have just finished watching Deal or No Deal; don't ask me why, the TV was left on and everyone was busy. It was background noise, until I started thinking. What does it mean to be rich? No fair to those who put their pious-hat on and answered things like "being loved" or "having a healthy family" or such. If we are honest with ourselves, the first thing that comes to our mind when someone says "I am rich" is money. Our world and lives rely on the green-backs. So many of our television shows (if not based on murder) are focused on gaining or having or doing things with money—Deal or No Deal, Survivor, Wheel of Fortune, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition and others.

In America, we have been duped to believe that if you are rich, you are happy. You are rich (or happy) only if you are on television, own a big company and can give away money like it is growing on trees. We have been lead to believe that you are rich/happy only if you have the newest cell phone, iPod, CD, plasma TV or computer. We have been tricked to believe that you are rich/happy only if you have a beautiful home (maybe even 2), a new car, a boat and an RV in the driveway. Where have things gone wrong? When did money and what you can obtain with it overshadow true riches and true happiness?

On mission trips, as team members travel to lands-of-little, whether those lands are in our own backyard or across an ocean, the same holds true. *People are as rich as their hearts, not their holdings.* The days are hard and harsh with questions of survival. In Haiti, I continue to be in awe of their prayers thanking our Lord that they have another day—do I pray that way? Or, am I so comfortable in my life that I assume another day will greet me? Am I so rich/happy that I deny the Lord my bent knee and

substitute it with faith in what I have and can get? How alarming and disheartening. Praise to our living and loving Lord that He forgives us and waits patiently for us to realize that true riches and true happiness are only found in Him and have nothing to do with the worn carpet, the rickety stairs, the rusty car, the patched clothes or our inability to afford the Dunkin' Donut cup of coffee.

Now to answer the title of this article: Who is blessed; the rich or the poor?

"Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him? James 2:5 (NIV)" And, remember Jesus was sad for the rich man, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Therefore, are the rich/wealthy doomed? No. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven Matthew 5:2-4 (NIV).* What does poor mean in this verse? It does not mean the opposite of wealthy, it means the humble, meek, those completely empty and open to the Lord. Thus, it doesn't matter whether you have a lot or a little in the bank, it does matter if your heart is wholly and fully His.

"—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:26-27 (NIV)"

"—in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7"

We are ALL rich when Christ is in our heart and we are fully His—we are *rich in faith*. The mystery of Christ's death giving life is ours to claim as an inheritance!—What amazing riches!—Eternity in heaven with our Lord! Don't let the world steal your poorness/richness away—and don't forget to share the wealth/poorness, too!

Fall ARM Banquet—A Fantastic Evening

The excitement of the evening was felt throughout the hall. Held at the Christ First United Methodist Church, the ARM Banquet was delicious, informative and entertaining. The night was kicked off by Harold and Teri Nichols, missionaries in Jamaica with TEAMS for Medical Missions. The Nichols, along with Bert and Roberta Anderson, missionaries in Haiti with Christian Service International, are from Chautauqua-Cattaraugus County—home-town folks sharing about their impact on the mission field. The hardworking volunteers from the Depot were given a tribute. And, Cheryl Canada, a teacher from Ohio State, spoke about the Haiti Teacher Sponsorship Program and how it is impacting the school in Galette, Haiti. Her excitement was contagious and interest in the sponsorship program continues to grow. A dream of building a walled school to replace the pavilion-style school is in the talking stages and hopefully becomes a reality. Don't miss next year's banquet; plan ahead for a great event!!!

2009 Mission Trips

Thank you in advance for your help, prayers and support.

JANUARY 8 - 17, 2009 - to Haiti

- * **Surgical Team**
- * Team leader: Dr. Bert and Mary Rappole (716)-357-2385
- * Team is FULL



MARCH 2 - 11, 2009 - to the Amazon, Manaus, Brazil

- * **Medical Ministry**
- * Travel, sleep, eat and minister on a hospital boat
- * Team leaders: Molly Lindberg (ARM) (716)-358-3046 and Jim Todd (CSI) 1-800-286-5773
- Need additional team members: medical personnel, pharmacist, and non-medical



MARCH 28 - APRIL 4, 2009 - to Haiti

- * **Praise and Worship Team**
- * Team leader: Mary Rappole (716)-357-2385
- * Team is FULL
- Need: musical instruments, call Mary



APRIL 10 - 18, 2009 (Easter week) - to Haiti

- * **Walking Medical Team**
- * Team Leader: Michele Harms (716)-985-4438
- * Team is FULL

What Can I Do to Help?

- ◆ PRAYERS
- ◆ Supplies
- ◆ Money for team member costs
- ◆ Money for project costs
- ◆ Money for medicine
- ◆ More PRAYERS

THANK YOU!!

You are a blessing to many you have never met. Thank you for partnering with us as we are your coworkers in service in His name. May our Lord receive all the praise and glory!



ARM

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Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness,
come before Him with joyful songs.
Psalm 100:1-2