



## AT A LOSS FOR WORDS

Dear Ministry Family: January 13, 2010

It is the morning after the most devastating earthquake in modern times. So many friends and family have called with concern, feeling the same hopelessness, helplessness that I have. Each say how glad they are to find that I was not there during the quake. I don't harbor a death wish, but I wish I were there, if not to help and encourage—then to suffer along with those of Haiti I love. There are so many aspects of this tragedy that need to be discussed, so the purpose of this letter, which is added as an addendum to the Harvester which is also enclosed in this envelope. I know that even by the time you receive this letter, you will have so many questions, thus I am starting now by answering with what I now know and I write also to rid myself of nervous energy.

I am awaiting a call from a missionary who is to walk over to our compound/headquarters to see if there is anything left. Our main building, which we have been working on for ten years, is in the Fontamara District in the city of Carrefour, about 10 miles from Port-au-Prince. If you watched the news and saw the maps, the red X marking the epicenter of this 7.0 magnitude earthquake is in the heart of Carrefour. If we survived at all, it will be a miracle of Biblical proportion. While there are only four major buildings of this ministry in the PAP area, there are several pastors who live in the city proper. I am deeply burdened and concerned for them.

The Hotel Montana where I have stayed for 12 years or more is reported at this time to be a leveled heap of rubbish. It was a beautiful five story complex. It was reported also that in it, everyone was killed who worked or resided there, including the U.N. Missions director, whom I call friend, for we spent many an evening meal together talking about the problems and solutions for Haiti. The employees and I are close, and friends also. They greet me by calling my name and offering hugs and cheek kisses. Monique, Daniel, Dominique, Jude, Rene', "Boss," and all the others may—for all I know, be gone.

God is in control, several have said this morning, and I know it is true. All the world has reported that Haiti is the worst prepared for an earthquake or disaster of this magnitude, and while I agree that physically—it is, I suggest that perhaps Haiti as a nation is the MOST prepared for such a disaster. Immediately following the shock of the tremors, groups gathered in the street to pray, sing, give thanks to their Creator. Throughout the night, groups of Christians sang and gave praise to the God of Heaven. Now, the poorly constructed buildings, miserable infrastructure, and poorly prepared disaster relief systems of Haiti, all are signs of humanities failure, but I want to tell you this: All of man's buildings and structures of organization will one day, (perhaps soon), be reduced to similar rubble. Our buildings and perimeter fences may be down in a heap and death may be ours too, and if to you—all seems lost, let me give you the good news. **THE PEOPLE PRAYED AND SANG IN THE STREETS!** All spent on the schools, churches, medical teams, mission groups, food, benches, pastors' love gifts, teachers—all have produced the one thing that survived the destruction. I call that victory! They **SANG** in the streets! I have heard that singing in the night during times of trial and tribulation. both in the mountains and cities. Our efforts as Christians have been well spent and the proof is in the pudding. **THEY SANG IN THE STREETS!**

Now, as you read the Haiti report in this month's Harvester, you will note my statement of complaint and of how sometimes I long to be released of the problems of Haiti—they seem so unending. It is the problems that produce the victory that the world is so hungry for. No, I don't long to be free of Haiti's problems—I long to be in the midst of them and I will be soon. Many of you are calling, wondering what to do and what will happen to this mission? I have few answers, because there is so little information, but I feel that the direction of our mission thrust will change, if not permanently, temporarily for sure. I will book the first opportunity to go and we will attempt to save little ones who have been orphaned or those who have no where to look and as always, there is too much for us to do, but as always, we will do what we can for who we can. That is the way it has been and I see it continuing the same way until Christ's Return.

If your heart is moved as ours is, and you want to put more **SINGING IN THE STREETS** of Haiti, I will take your gift and apply it lovingly in the manner the Holy Spirit leads and in doing so, we will bless the Name of our Lord together.

The image to the right shows the Hotel Montana as it appeared before the earthquake.



The photos below vividly show the destruction and pain caused by the quake.



Amen,  
Tom Buttram