

January 2008 Newsletter

Happy New year! First, some personal and exciting news: I'm engaged!! It's been a very difficult couple of years, and I never thought I would be in a relationship again, at least not this soon. But God has blessed me with an amazing woman who loves the Lord, loves ministry, and is into many of the same activities I am into such as running and biking. Carole and I plan to be wed at the end of June, after our children are finished with the school year.

Our plans for the future also have implications for this ministry. Carole visited Haiti with me for the first time last May. She enjoyed doing English lessons with the teachers in Marchasse, and as a professional nutritionist developed a burden to investigate ways that the lunch program can be supplemented. Carole will be my partner with the Haiti Friendship Ministries.

Now we are planning our next trip to Haiti, which is scheduled for February 9 - 16...and it is coming fast! Carole's 16 year-old daughter Sam will also be joining us. Bobby (Bobcat) Karaffa will already be there, traveling to Haiti with Pastor Scott Walsh's team from the Abundant Life Christian Center in January. As usual, we will hook up with Ed Lockett and Pastor Abner, spending most of the week in Marchasse and the remaining part in Petit Goave. In addition to checking up on the children and schools many of you continue to help support, we will be looking at ways the Lord would have us get more involved in the future. One project we will investigate is a church building for the community in Marchasse. The current building is shared by the school, and is not adequate to handle both functions. Pastor Abner has started the foundation of the building by faith, but funds are limited.

Carole and I are seeking the Lord for direction with this ministry. We will continue the slow transition from individual child sponsorships to support of schools and their associated feeding programs. And in 2008 we hope to present to you special projects that God burdens us to help out with, whether it's the church building in Marchasse or getting a high school established. We ask that you pray with us, for this direction and also for the trip .

2008 promises to be an exciting year, not only for personal reasons as Carole and I come together, but for the Haiti ministry. Thank you for being a special part of it

For the least of these,

Joel