

Merger Student Sponsorship

Sending the Young's

On July 18 we bid a fond farewell to Mason & Lauren Young and their son James. Mason and Lauren served in Haiti for 18 months before returning to the states last November. They have been raising support and plan to head back to Haiti to work full time with Crossworld. They will drive to Florida and fly to Haiti on July 25th.

Mason works on the STEP (seminary) campus doing construction and maintenance and helps rebuild homes that were damaged in the 2010 earthquake. Lauren helps with communications at STEP and also teaches at CENV (the school in Merger).

After they have assessed the needs on the ground, they will inform us of future G.O.

Team opportunities.

As a part of their ministry, for six months they will focus on language and cultural training.

Mason and Lauren will be a wonderful connection to the school in Merger and we hope to be able to provide you with pictures and updates on a regular basis once they are settled.

Please keep them in your prayers as they leave family and friends behind to serve God full time in Haiti.



Celebration of Marriage

Living together is common in Haiti so when a couple chooses to honor Jesus by getting married, there is much celebration! We praise God for His work in the lives of Belony and Violette Abellard, Jean and Clamina Luckson (pictured below) and Fresnel and Missoule Joseph who were joined in marriage during the first part of 2013. *(Please see the story on page two to learn how Glenwood has been involved in helping couples in Merger who are planning to marry).*



Pray With Us

- **Praise** for the marriages of three couples this past January!
- **Praise** that Samantha Orelie, a student at CENV, accepted Jesus as her savior!
- **Praise** for God's provision as Mason and Lauren reached 100% support!
- **Pray** for health and safety for Johny & Rosadite as they continue to expand their ministries in Haiti and as a new school year will begin in September.
- **Pray** for Mason & Lauren Young (and James) as they head back to Haiti to minister full time
- **Pray** for the students at CENV and their families – for their spiritual growth, health & safety.

Please Remember:

- To write a separate check for your sponsorship contribution and indicate your MSP # on the memo line (please call the church office if you do not know your MSP #).
- To write to your sponsored student on their birthday, at Christmas and at Easter. The students love to receive your cards and letters! Please contact the church office if you are in need of the mailing address.

When a group of women from Glenwood's Ladies Bible Study discovered that opening a forgotten closet can directly affect the life of another woman living in poverty and squalor, something beautiful began to happen; open closets led to open hearts and then to open jewelry boxes and open lives that suddenly pulsed with something precious and forgotten.

The story began when two ladies, Rosadite and Cindy, shared how several former prostitutes in Haiti had decided to marry. They had chosen to follow Jesus and were expressing their newfound devotion to Him through a traditional marriage ceremony performed publically within a culture rife with sexual promiscuity. Cindy translated as Rosadite described how she and some ladies from their church in Merger had provided a simple ring and a dress to a few impoverished women to be used in their wedding. The clean, new dress and relatively cheap ring became a powerful symbol of their new love and the new life to which they were committing. The beauty captured in this poignant moment was not lost on the listening women. Many of them remembered a wedding and the life-changing commitment symbolized by a ring and a dress. Many of them still had those dresses hanging, clean, pressed, and as good as new after decades, in a forgotten closet holding memories too precious to let go – until now.

What happened next was remarkable. Someone had the idea to give away her own wedding dress for this occasion. Another woman felt the same impulse. Within moments, several had caught the vision; every one of those Haitian women could have their own real wedding dress. Over the next few weeks the dresses began to pour in, from brides married 7 months to 54 years, and are now waiting in storage to make their way to Port Au Prince, Haiti so that Rosadite and Cindy can personally offer them to the new brides.

Then one woman who had studied geology had an idea to find nicer rings. She took a group of young boys to a rock and gem show where they looked for rings made with semi-precious gemstones. When the rock show vendors discovered the young boys' intentions and their desire to spend their own money on this mission, they offered the rings at cost and the boys came home with a mother lode of beautiful rings to add to the project. Then the ladies discovered the ring idea and it blew up too. Jewelry boxes began to open and rings rolled in; beautiful rings, expensive rings, precious and sentimental rings.



And then it got personal. The women began writing notes and wedding cards to accompany the rings and dresses. They wrote about their weddings, about their love and commitment, about a life of following Jesus and loving their husbands, of caring for children and reaching for the good while trusting God through the bad. They wrote about hope and joy and struggle and love. They wanted to have a personal connection to the woman who would wear their dress. They wanted to pray and share their hearts and souls with the one they had touched with their gift. They knew the power of words and the power of love. They had run this race; they knew the course, and they wanted to keep giving.

They poured out their hearts and simultaneously discovered them filled to overflowing. They discovered all over again that it really is more blessed to give than to receive and they couldn't seem to give enough. The rings and dresses were not the most precious gifts they could give. The hope they had in Jesus Christ – that had enriched their lives and their marriages – was more precious by far. That cherished hope is what this story is really all about. A few excerpts from notes written for the bride-to-be make that very clear:



"Dear Sister, Though we have never met, we share in a connection that is rare and precious. We are sisters in Christ. I will pray for you always and ask our Savior to bless you richly."

"We promised to love each other, take care of each other, pray for each other, and stay together until parted by death. And now, almost 54 years later, we can say we did...My prayer is that whoever wears this dress will make the same commitment that we made and that God will bless them like He has blessed us."

"Dear Sister in Christ, so you are getting married! Oh, how I have prayed for you, through we are so far apart! You will be in my thoughts and prayers over the years. Though I might not know your name, God does and He will hear the prayers."

"Congratulations on your decision to seek a marriage commitment! I have been so blessed and humbled to see God's hand in my marriage. Here's what I can say I truly know: God loves me and will never leave me! Knowing that keeps me going in my marriage every day."

"To a beautiful bride in white, as I sit here and reflect on my very recent days of anticipation of my wedding day, as a new and joyful wife of 7 months, I am being reminded of words of truth and hope that echo in my heart as the Lord has been, and continues to strengthen me and grow me in the ways of walking with Him and alongside my husband. This is my prayer for you: Lord, you know your daughter here, You knew her before time began and created every beautiful and precious detail about her. You are delighted in her. You know what brings her joy, what hopes she has....."

"As you wear this dress I hope you experience the same joy and happiness that I did on my wedding day. I pray that you will put Jesus in the center of your marriage and will look to Him in times of joy and hardship."

This is a beautiful story about beautiful memories and beautiful moments but it isn't just a "visiting missionary story" or a "ladies Bible study story"; this is a very human story. This is a story that shivers our souls because it touches something so deeply beautiful and transcendent within us that it can't be resisted. It's a story that reminds us; this isn't normal, but we wonder if it ought to be. This is truth, embodied, and we easily see it to be clearly and fully true. There are no words for that. Sometimes, love is the only word that matters.



If you have any questions regarding your sponsorship, please feel free to contact Shelly Kirgiss in the front office at 360-571-3300 or skirgiss@glenwoodcc.org. Thank you for your sponsorship!