

GUYANA JOURNAL

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2010 – DAY #1

We flew to Georgetown, Guyana via Atlanta and Miami. We arrived safely. They drive on the left side of the road, quickly. I can already see why Gene & Carolyn Johnson have come so many times. I think I'm going to love this place, the people. I'm looking forward to our work here! I appreciate my wife and daughter for allowing me to come!

We arrived at our hotel. I took a shower in a cramped bathroom, but it felt nice. It's not the Quality Inn, but my mosquito net and my eye patch will provide some protection. The B complex can't hurt either. The garlic is in my other bags. I don't think I'll have much to worry about. But I'll wait to determine that at the village.

It's about 2 a.m. local time. We're getting up in five hours. I'll try to find a place to call or send a message to my wife. The internet café next door closed down I'm told. Maybe there's another one close by.

In His service

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2010 – DAY #2

We were awoken at 6:30 after 4½ hours of sleep, if that. Jerry Davidson said, “I know you feel cheated but welcome to Guyana!” We flew this morning to Lethem in a small prop plane. I saw Guyana’s beautiful countryside, the savannah. Lethem is an interesting city. It’s about one mile from Brazil just across the Takatu River. (I saw that on Google Earth while at home.) We’re here at the Takatu Hotel.

After settling in a short bit, we went for supplies *e.g.* hammers, axes. They are for Christian families in the village of Karasabai where we will be going. Most of them farm; these tools will greatly increase their efficiency. We’ll hand them out just before we leave the village to come home.

Some of the veteran missionaries have bought pre-paid cell phones with SIM cards that call the States. We’ll be able to use them but only in Lethem. They also have clothes and camping gear here—a very interesting idea. It would be worth it if I were to return frequently. I already know that I would like to continue coming.

The food today was interesting. At the airport in Georgetown while waiting, I ate a crumpet. It was a piece of soft bread with a hard-boiled egg in it. There was a papaya or guava fruit juice sprinkled on it and some kind of hot sauce. It was unlike anything I had had before, but it was good especially since I was very hungry. At the Takatu later in the morning, I had an omelet and two pieces of toast with instant coffee. For supper, we went to this chicken-on-a-stick place. I asked what I could order since there was no menu; others ran down the list in a varied order: chicken on a stick, rice and beans. So, that’s what I had, two chickens on a stick, rice and beans. The chicken was a wing or thigh on a skewer that had been grilled. Both meals were tremendously good. Maybe cause I was hungry. Of course, I told you about the crumpet that I had earlier. It was alright in comparison to the omelet and chicken.

We went to see the preaching school today. The veterans checked on their “resident” supplies. The grounds looked good. The preacher lives in a house on the grounds, and any teacher visiting for class instruction lives in one of two rooms with an air conditioner. The students bunk in one of three rooms. There’s a supply room and a kitchen. Then, of course, the church building has five double door entrances. It sounds grand, but they allow for much-needed ventilation during services.

The money is the Guyanese dollar. The ratio is 2:1 or \$2,000.00 GYD to \$10.00 USD. Our meal tonight cost \$2,020 GYD (with two orange drinks for tomorrow’s breakfast). So that’s \$10.10 USD. It was sure good.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2010 – DAY #3

Today, we slept in a little. We received some much needed rest. We ate breakfast. I had two omelets, toast, instant coffee plus my orange drink from yesterday. It was good; it filled me up. But later, I burned off the calories by riding a bicycle to the preaching school. Jerry Davidson bought two bicycles, and I had volunteered to ride it to the school. I was glad to help out, but my legs didn't appreciate the good service. (It must've been 10 years since I've last been on a bike for a serious ride.) I thought the bikes were for students, but we ended up taking them to the village. I worked up a thirst; drank almost a 2-liter of water. I'm trying to keep hydrated. After several hours of coming and going in the hot sun, I was able to rest some in the room. I am able to write, go through my bags and check/send e-mail. I have to pay \$300.00 GYD (\$1.50 USD) for every thirty minutes I'm on the internet.

There is much of the same today. We still haven't heard when we're leaving for Karasabai. It's a delay Jerry Davidson said he hasn't experienced before. I'm told that the government or airline (or both) has delayed the other team in Georgetown. They will fly in town tomorrow, and then we'll all head out to the two villages together. They will go to Yupukari, and we'll go to Karasabai. I know that I, for one, am ready to get started.

Many are watching the Chilean miner rescue. What a story! I haven't seen much of it. I'm either going on an errand, resting in my room from the heat, e-mailing, or going through the luggage. I'm still trying to find everything I packed. I'm not sure if I packed my travel clock.

We got the word. We're heading out tomorrow. I'm nervous, but I'm really excited. Wish my family were here.

We had a good Bible study period. Two Guyanese brethren spoke. They did a good job. It's good to see so many good brothers and sisters in Christ.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2010 – DAY #4

We are to leave the Takatu Hotel by 7:00 a.m. and leave Lethem for Karasabai by 9:00 a.m. according to Brother Fredrick Daniels. We would actually leave from the hotel by about 10:30 a.m. Five Americans rode a Toyota pick-up truck with air conditioning; the rest of us rode in the Army truck. For us to ride in a more comfortable way, we would have had to pool together some major US currency. I hadn't prepared to do this.

The 4½ hour trip to Karasabai was very dirty, hot and bumpy. If I had a bit more money, I would have gladly paid the extra fare to ride in some kind of comfort. The exhaust alone from the army truck is worth avoiding. In addition to the aforementioned trials, we had bees—yellow jackets. I was stung twice; others were stung more times. The ladies sitting beside (behind—our backs were turned to each other) had some oil of sorts. It immediately took much of the pain away.

We finally made it to Karasabai! Wow! What a place! A local shop has a gas generator, but it's got to be extremely expensive to have gasoline brought here. They have nothing, absolutely nothing! While still in Lethem anticipating the week here in this village, I wondered if I had enough money exchanged to Guyanese because there is no one to exchange currency here; but now, I'm wondering what purpose they have for money.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2010 – DAY #5

Our first night in Karasabai went well, especially since we didn't have air conditioning. I found the little travel clock that I was looking for. We had a devotional under a mango tree. The tree is very big, and it has lots of shade. I wouldn't mind sleeping under a mango tree, but there are animals—forget the mosquitoes. Cows here eat anything: clothes, shoes, anything. During the devotion, several Amerindians had to chase off the cows that came close to the clothes draped over the fences. I saw a cow approaching someone's sneakers and sniffing the laces. All of the sudden, I darted for him and scared him off. I don't know what I would have done if the cow started after me.

We began our mission today—to set up Bible studies, to encourage the saved and to restore the wayward. There is no personal work done. The preacher here has done quite a bit. He knew the story on everyone. But the members do not visit or evangelize or share their faith; they have not set up studies. When we asked them who to go to, they replied that they didn't know. The veteran missionaries who had been to Karasabai previously would comment that this is especially troubling since it had not been the case before. There are three churches in this village: the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Brethren, and the church of Christ. The Karasabai church of Christ is just another place to go.

We walked miles today to conduct Bible studies. The village of Karasabai is very small in population, but it is spread out. It sits in a "bowl" surrounded by beautiful mountains. The "bowl" is maybe 25-30+ miles across one way and 40+ miles in another direction. Smaller villages (if you can believe it) lie further out from Karasabai towards the mountains, but I think some of them are still considered to be Karasabai.

People farm casabas, watermelons, peanuts, bananas and other foods at the foot of the mountains. So they walk two or three hours each way to their jobs (farming), work all day then walk the same distance home. Two of us walked several miles today to the smaller village of Curricock, south of Karasabai. My feet are worn out, my face and arms are very tanned or slightly burned, but my spirit is not broken or dampened.

The crusade began tonight. Brother Fredrick Daniels, the preacher for the Kitty congregation in Georgetown, spoke tonight about faithfulness from Numbers 12:7. Jerry Davidson spoke to the Amerindian members and those present encouraging them to be resolved in their faith.

Showers are short; days are hot; night comes quickly; the people are friendly.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2010 – DAY #6

I slept well last night. I woke up to a bird hopping across the roof or something. The Catholic school bell rang at 6:00 a.m.

Listening to a small girl sing “Jesus Loves Me” peaks my interest. She sings with the voice of one passing the time along the trail. She’d loud and beautiful. The words increase my resolve to teach and preach “Jesus” to these people!

I always wondered about a village that never (or seldom) had contact with the outside world. I have found such a village! Children watch the sky to follow the sound of an airplane. Boys shimmy a coconut tree for its fruit. A green coconut yields valuable, refreshing water; a dry one is good for its “meat.” Older people many times speak only the local dialect—Mucushi. Their children or grandchildren have to translate for them. Even though English is taught in the schools (Guyana is the only South American country to have English as their official language), many young people don’t speak English well enough. We must use a Mucushi translator or one of the local Amerindians to talk or study with them.

I keep hearing a bird that sounds like a crow but with a deeper guttural and with an added call as a whippoorwill only noting like a whippoorwill.

JT Beard and I went again to the village of Curricock. This time, however, we walked with a mother, EvaLinda, and her three children. Their names were Teresa, Eucinda, and Denise. We walked for miles. We had two Bible studies. There were two teenage girls (15 years old) in the first home we visited. The name of the first was Liza Cyprian, and she lived in the home. The name of the other girl was Marion, and she lived further out and so visited often with her friend, Liza. After our study, they wanted to walk with us and our family-companions to other studies. They went with us and were instrumental in talking with locals because they spoke the local dialect of Mucushi. They were both Catholic and other studies were of further benefit to them especially to Liza who spoke English very well. So there were eight of us altogether.

Lunch was very interesting. It was 2:00 p.m., and EvaLinda’s children had already expressed that they were hungry. They were polite to sit through the 3-hour Bible study on an empty stomach. I hated to send them home (a good hour’s walk at least). I had two little cans of sardines and two small loaves of bread from breakfast in my backpack. JT and I bought some crackers and butter (actually margarine) from a little family store nearby. (I didn’t know it was there). Between the eight of us we asked God’s blessing on the food, and each of us shared in a very tiny ration. I couldn’t help but think of when Jesus fed 5,000 with five loaves of bread and two fishes. We enjoyed the fellowship. They enjoyed the rich food otherwise a special-occasion commodity.

We came back to Karasabai and I prepared my lesson for that night. I spoke on “How To Win Souls for Jesus?” from John 4:28-38. Everyone said I did well; the brethren seemed to respond well to it though there were no public responses. In either case, God receives the glory.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2010 – DAY #7

The first day of worship in Guyana was today. It was unique. A children's class was at 8:00. The adult Bible class was at 9:00. And the worship was at 10:00. The church is a one-room building with homemade benches for pews. There are two small rooms up front for storage. There are a few lights to make evening services possible and to attract bugs. There is no air conditioning, and there are no fans.

The supplies that the other missionaries bought early this week were given out to faithful members of the church. Some extras were given to guests. The Lord provided them tools to help with their farming. Items included hoes, hammers, cutlasses (machetes) and files. Other items given to members primarily were solar lights, medicine, flip-flops, glasses, Bible study materials and baby blankets. I became overwhelmed with emotion and slipped outside to sob quietly in private. I couldn't remain somber while watching the ladies fit a two-year old for new shoes or while Jerry Davidson was explaining how to use their new solar lights to read their Bible at night. They can put the little light on the top of a wall and the light provides a shimmer of light to the whole house. His explanation sounded just like Jesus' words in about the lamp (of God's word) giving light to all who are in the house.

A guest came to the structure where Steven Kelly and I are sleeping in a tent. He is a mountain man who was passing through. He had his supplies with him, and he was prepared to stay the night. Upon walking up to him, I quickly noticed his cross-section of a fish in a plastic "Wal-Mart"-like bag. He was using his very dull knife to cut up the raw fish to cook in a pan. There was not a clean prep area; it was a dirty old freezer that he used as his table. I resolved not to set any of my belongings on that freezer during my stay. I would caution Steven as to the same advice. The area was completely unsanitary. I don't think the health department makes inspections down here. The man wanted in to the locked storage room. The owner had given us keys to the lock and explicitly warned us to lock the room when we left for services. This man didn't look trustworthy. (I mean, I'm in South America! Who do I know here that I can trust?) Add to that, Steven was at the church building conducting a children's class, and I was extremely uncomfortable letting him have access to our stuff.

It rained but the temperature warmed again making it very hot and sticky.

Tonight was unique. Worship was as other nights in the crusade. The events afterward resembled the story distractions in Luke 7. (There Jesus was led from one interruption to another without a break.) After worship, I took pictures of children, who swarmed to the camera to see their photo; they laughed at their own expressions. Someone tapped me on the shoulder to tell me that a mother desired prayers for her sick child. The girl was nine months old and had been sick for three months. She had a fever and cough. I'm not sure the cause. I cried before the mother and the Lord, and I fervently prayed. I told the mother that I hoped to see the child to improve the next day.

After praying with the mother, I felt another tap on my shoulder. Someone was pointing to a 12-year old boy, named Jessie Thomas, who desired to study to learn the truth. I studied with him and taught him how to become a Christian with the help of an Amerindian preacher named Kinnard Moses, who spoke Mucushi. I was unsure about an American baptizing the Amerindians

GUYANA JOURNAL

so I allowed Kinnard to baptize Jessie. Jerry Davidson would later tell me that Americans baptizing Amerindians would not cause problems here. He advised me to do future baptisms and have photos taken for my report in the States. I see the needs of the people. There are sheep but a shepherd is needed. The gospel is needed here; the people are hungry for the truth.

I missed a shower tonight because of all the happenings. When I came back to the tent, the others were already asleep.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2010 – DAY #8

We were awakened by our mountaineer guest about 5:00 a.m. Everywhere he walked, he dragged his feet. It was discomfoting. We were so tired; we eventually fell back asleep.

After the morning devotion, the local policeman was ready to obey the gospel. I traveled with an Amerindian by motorcycle close to the river. We parked and walked the remainder of the way. It was a beautiful scene. The river was calm and cool. Gene Johnson waded down into the water and baptized him. When they both came out of the water, we sang “Oh Happy Day!” and prayed; we then drove back to the guesthouse. I gathered my things and went to take my shower that I had missed last night.

Afterward, I got a bicycle and rode out to Curricock. What took hours the past two days took 20-25 minutes. It was very difficult to ride on sand, mud, bumps, and ruts. I suppose it has been years since I last really rode a bicycle save for last Wednesday. I didn’t have a study so wanted to visit someone who we studied with on Friday. On my way, I met Sister Joan and Sister Shirley, workers from Trinidad who were on the campaign with us. They were returning to Karasabai from Curricock. We stopped for a brief moment in the hot, hot sun. They said that a boy was alone in his house and was sick with the fever. The village medic would need to travel out and see him because he was too sick to ride or walk to Karasabai.

We parted, and I pressed on to another part of Curricock. I visited with the gentleman and his family. I learned that his elderly father, over whom we prayed on Friday, was sick, too. This is the second person in the very small village of Curricock (20 homes or so). It very likely could be malaria, but it could be much worse – dinky fever. My visit with this family was not long. We prayed and I rode all the way back to Karasabai to the guest house very out of breath.

Jerry Davidson and Lloyd Beard were going to the river to baptize a boy. They asked if I wanted to go, and naturally I said “Yes!” I could catch my breath in the truck on the way to the river just as well as I could sitting in a chair at the guesthouse. We went to a different location than before. This river, the Ireng River, is larger and farther away, and it separated Guyana from Brazil. I asked Jerry Davidson what the likelihood of me going to the Brazilian side of the river, and he said that after the baptism that I could have the boy row me across the river and stand on the Brazil bank for some photos. I was thrilled and jumped at the chance. We quickly rowed over, took some pictures and rowed back. The boy pointed out some places where some piranhas came to the surface of the water. I saw the bubbles but no piranhas. Just as well. We drove back to camp. It began to rain. This rain was better than yesterday’s rain because it happened later in the afternoon and the temperature didn’t have time to rise again. It felt great!

JT Beard and I studied with Liza Cyprian again today and her family. Her friend, Marion, was not there. This was our second study with her and her mother and uncle. (The uncle was a cousin to the man in Curricock I visited with today.) The study went well.

We went on to worship from the study. I preached again tonight, “Will the Lord Find Faith?” My feet hurt before I began preaching and intensified after I finished. I was tired. I ate a very late supper. The generator went off at 10:00, and the light shut off while I was eating. I finished my supper in the dark by flashlight and then went to bed.

GUYANA JOURNAL

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2010 – DAY #9

I left my tent later than usual for trying to catch up my journal. There are several opportunities for down time but I spend breaks trying to learn more about the Guyana work and specifically the village of Karasabai.

I hurried to breakfast and soon to the devotion which followed. The speaker spoke with zeal and passion but not much clarity in English. He did his best I'm sure.

I didn't have a study set up in the morning so I tried again to catch up my journal. Steven Kelly and Lloyd Kelly came over for a wonderful visit. I learned more about the village and about the Guyanese people. Steven Kelly had two studies, one at 10:00 a.m. and the other at 1:00 p.m. It was decided that I would take the first study, which would give Steven enough time to do the other study. (It was a great distance out from the village. We needed motorcycles, but the Amerindian preachers were repairing them.) We drove out there and were about 2 hours late for the first study. Steven and his driver left my rider and me there and they went early to their next study.

These sisters were young (probably in their 20s) and spoke English fairly well. I'm thankful that my Amerindian preacher that drove me here spoke the local Mucushi language. I found that his reading the verse and explaining it in Mucushi went much further than me just talking alone. But because of the length of time for the Mucushi translation and explaining, I would find my mind wondering sometimes. I would get distracted by the children running around and the chickens running past my feet and the bees here are HUGE. Forget the American bumble bee. This black bee is a bombardier bee of sorts. I quickly made my childhood phobia of bees known. And the study continued. In fact, we studied for four hours. It started slowly and progressed slowly mainly due to the noisy children and the language barrier. When the children fell asleep and I began using the Amerindian brother, it would begin to go quicker. We studied until 4:00 when I had another study scheduled.

We left and drove to that appointment. I ate two snack bars and drank water from my bottle while on the back of the motorcycle. This was my lunch. We arrived, and JT Beard was already there. We were again at the home of Liza Cyprian; it was our third study with her. She was ready to be baptized into Christ. Liza's aunt, Ann, sat and studied with us. Jerry Davidson came and joined us because he was supposed to study with Ann anyway. When Jerry showed up, I was ready to push Liza in the water; when he left I was ready to push both Liza and Ann in the water. (I say this, of course, tongue-and-cheek.) At the end, Ann almost ruined the whole study efforts with Liza. She wanted to wait until we came back in a few years. I silently prayed that God would help us by removing Ann from the situation. Suddenly, Ann excused herself to prepare supper. It was God's answer to my prayer. With gentle prodding, Liza decided to be baptized. JT and I drove her to the river to immerse her into Christ. I didn't know where I was going even though I had been there the day before. It was in the day previously; this time, we were in the dark night. Also, Gene drove the truck then; I was driving now. I depended upon the locals, but they didn't know for sure. There were several times when I felt lost in the Amazon, but the Lord was with me—he was with us. Fortunately, I had taken photos of the landscape the day before, which helped me identify in the dark where the opening was among the trees to the river. We baptized her and we returned to the church building where services were already underway.

GUYANA JOURNAL

We were careful to drive slowly for fear of causing the truck tires to be flat. This was a constant problem. It is evident to me that a good, dependable truck is needed down here. It doesn't matter the model or looks—just that it goes.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2010 – DAY #10

We were awakened again by our mountaineer guest by 5:15 or 5:30. He was really scraping hard a pot to cook his breakfast. A woman came over to talk with him, and then, carried on a conversation as if it were noon. I let out a grunt to remind them that others slept on the premises, too. (It wasn't as loud as the spooky grunt that he let out last night about 11:30. Steven was asleep; I was writing. All of the sudden, he let out a moan. It woke up Steven and scared me half-to-death. I thought it was a South American boogey-man.) The food that he left out from the night before stunk. The meat hanging on a rafter was still attracting flies. I felt as though I were sleeping next to a pig sty. It sure smelt like it. We got dressed and went on to breakfast early. Fortunately, the wonderful cooks had breakfast finished early.

Most people sit outside to catch the morning breeze. I sit in the back on the west side of the house where the morning shade is. The cooks sit out there and gaff. Brother Fredrick Daniels sits out there, too, but he left for Lethem this morning. He must fly to Georgetown on Thursday with the American team at Yupukari.

We had our morning devotion. It was special because it was a last devotional with everyone here. Paul Daniel and his family are returning to Monkey Mountain. It was a 5-day walk for them to come here. I captured his wife describing the terrible experience. A tractor will return there; it will take a day. He said a few words after the devotion expressing his appreciation to everyone. Brother Vibert, the Karasabai preacher, said a few words about his transfer away from the village. Brother Winston said a few words as the returning preacher. Brother Williams, who was the policeman baptized on Tuesday, read his letter he penned to a Tennessee brother who furnished his Bible. Jerry Davidson gave the directions about today's preparations to leave and tomorrow's trip back to Lethem. We ended our gathering by singing "We're God's Family." Even though I'll be returning to air conditioning soon, I'm sad to leave God's work in Karasabai because I know many will not continue once we leave. They are just not grounded like they should be. Then again, who is? We have a responsibility nonetheless.

After the devotion, I went to pack up and consolidate my things. I sorted my clothes packing the things I was to take back and setting aside the clothing I want to give away. I figured that I would be placing one suitcase in the larger one. In the morning, we'll have a short time to pack our mattresses and tents and to load the truck. I left there for the guesthouse and sat with some others discussing the mission effort and getting an idea of what the next few days would hold. I needed to know for my packing.

I walked to the church building with JT to get some Bibles. Upon returning to the guesthouse Kinnard Moses, an Amerindian preacher, approached me with a young girl who wanted to study. We studied for several hours. She finally decided to make the commitment to put on Christ in baptism. I instructed her to go home and get a change of clothes, and we would meet at the church building. The water tank had to be filled again, and we had to find a Mucushi translator to assist with her confession.

Several responded to Heaven's call. The total for the week is eight baptisms and 17 restorations. Several more studies and visits were set up, made and conducted.

GUYANA JOURNAL

Gifts were given publically to Steven and me for our first visits to Karasabai. Steven's gift was a casaba strainer and mine was a musical instrument called a shack shack (pronounced "shock shock"). It was really a baby rattle that was a memento that represented their prayer for me to have another son. I was deeply touched. Carolyn Johnson was also awarded a miniature basket back pack that women use to carry goods from the farms.

Finally, Brother Vibert, the local preacher, had organized the rice, flour and grains that had been purchased for the faithful members of the church. This effort included the newly baptized and restored members. Each family received a ration which consisted of a scoop of flour for each person that was in the family. Each family also received a bag of rice. It was really wonderful to see these families and individuals receive this food. It wasn't much, but it showed them that we care for their well-being.

At the end, we took lots of pictures and said our good-byes. It began to rain a bit and we waited for the truck to come around again. I had my poncho, but I waited because many of the Amerindians were staying around to talk. So I stayed, too!

We got back to the guesthouse and to get a few things. Gene Johnson had locked Carolyn's door accidentally and had climbed over the wall of the adjacent room before anyone could stop or beat him over. We were very nervous for him. I turned the corner to tell Carolyn, who stood at the door and said, "Well, Gene is okay." Just then, he opened the door from the inside.

We went to our bunks. I showered and came to lie down in the tent to write. It has begun to rain again. It is raining very hard, probably harder than it has any this week. It is loud and yet peaceful. We are safe in our tent, which is situated beneath a dry shelter. It may make our journey home tomorrow, however, very difficult. The dirt roads will be very muddy.

I'm hearing a new sound, like some kind of broken-record accordion-style frogs. It's the first time we've heard them. Interesting.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2010 – DAY #11

It took a while to fall asleep due to the extra animal noises and the especially heavy rainfall. The animal noises were not frightening, just noisy because they were many. I suppose they were telling each other about the advancing rain system. I remember thinking the previous morning how it looked like it would rain. I just didn't know that it would hold off until the late evening when it had time to build. It was pleasant because we were safe in our tent under our pavilion-type structure.

Our mountaineer guest got up early again. I heard his feet shuffle and I opened my eyes to look at the clock. There was previous discussion as to what time he was waking us up; this morning's record settled it. 5:01 a.m. He began scraping pots again. I fell back asleep but woke up later because today was the moving/packing day. When I dressed and exited the tent, I noticed that the mountaineer was packing to leave, too. I couldn't help but to notice the humor. I told Steven that I thought God had a sense of humor when he caused Balaam's mule to speak to him. Steven and I wanted this conversationally-kind-but-hygienically-and-sanitarilly-crude gentleman to move along as we knew he was just passing through Karasabai. Well, he would be moving on—the very same day as us. We would finally have a peaceful night's rest with no early-morning noises, except we, too, were leaving. Is this Divine retribution of sorts? Go figure.

Steven and I packed our things together, deflated our mattresses and tent, and then went to breakfast. We needed to be there as soon as possible to eat so that the kitchen staff could clean and pack early. Our departure time largely depended upon their supplies being ready. We anticipated our departure time to be 10:00 a.m., but we would end up leaving at 9:30 a.m. We prayed, sang "Until We Meet Again" and loaded up to depart. Many cried, especially among the Karasabai Christian Amerindians.

Our trip out of Karasabai would be rough. The showers on the preceding days had softened the ground and had washed the already difficult roads. They were even more difficult to navigate for the army truck. Several of us thought many times that the Toyota truck wouldn't make it though without getting stuck, even with two new mud tires on the front; but Gene Johnson did extremely well. The army truck would slide around many times. It would take many hours for us to reach Lethem again but not without incident. Two motorcycles would be left behind at some point, and the Toyota would get a flat. The repair didn't take long. It was fortunate that the flat would be on the best road (closest to Lethem) as opposed to the back roads. This fact alone would prolong our down time.

We arrived in Lethem with great anticipation. The rain made for less dust but we were all still ready for showers. It felt so nice to have air conditioning again, but by now I am used to the hot days.

After a shower, others and I rode to the school to get our bags off of the army truck and bring them back to the hotel. We were told that we would have them through tomorrow night to go through the contents, but we got word that the bags were leaving tonight for Georgetown by truck, and we had to have them ready ASAP. I was totally unprepared. After doing the best I could with about 5 minutes of borrowed time, I sent my bag to be reloaded. Within 30 minutes of it leaving, I would see other items to send and regret sending other items that I should have kept

GUYANA JOURNAL

with me. Oh well, it's too late; I'll see the bag again on Saturday night. I think I can go two days without deodorant with the help of moist towelettes. I may have to try Guyanese deodorant.

We visited the chicken-on-a-stick place again and ate off the menu, the only items on the menu: chicken, rice and beans. They did have fried plantains. They tasted like French fries with a hint of banana flavor. It was all good. We enjoyed our food and fellowship, especially since we had spent the last week together doing God's work. We planted and watered, and God gave the increase. We felt good and tired.

I think by 8:00 or 8:30, everyone had gone to bed. I finished reading Philena's e-mails by just after 9:00 and went to bed. But I couldn't sleep. I had a good mattress and air conditioning for the first time in a week, and I couldn't sleep. By 11:10, I would get up again to check e-mail mainly because of my concern over Philena's and Neleah's trip to Texas. There was no new e-mail so I went back to bed after only ten minutes. Writing in this journal and reading the Bible would help my eyes feel heavy. I would sleep, but not very well. Maybe I'm really getting homesick. I never sleep as well alone. Philena may have to join me on my next two-week trip.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2010 – DAY 12

A restless night didn't cause me to sleep in. I woke at about 5:40, ready to get up. I naturally checked e-mail, and Philena had made it in to Mom's house safely. I'm relieved. Many from the Karasabai and Yupukari team were at this bus station waiting to leave for Georgetown. The bus coming to pick them up had broken down along the road so they were told to come back to the station around 12:30. I came back to the hotel with others and visited some. After checking the internet again I slipped to the room to write, but I ended up napping. The rest was much needed after yesterday's terrible trip.

I went to Mohan's to purchase a Brazilian hammock. It is a beautiful blue cloth. I'm going to enjoy hanging it in the tree in the year. I wish I could buy a two-person hammock, but my backpack is filled, and I sent my other bags to Georgetown already. I had a local preacher student take me by a man's house that makes good quality leather belts. I placed an order for one and bought a leather-made passport case with an Amerindian design for Philena. I think she'll really like it.

We went to the weekly singing. I led two songs. It was the first time I had led any congregational songs since having my Bell's palsy symptoms. Some teenagers who were present laughed, which is the very reason for my furlough from song leading. (I didn't want to hinder someone's worship.) I don't think that I would have been able to contain myself very easily if I was watching a two-faced guy sing. It had to be pretty funny to watch. Other people laugh when I talk. Oh well.

We ate at the chicken-on-a-stick place again tonight. I think it must be the only restaurant in town worth going to. I had bought two loaves of bread at a local store on the way back from the singing. Four of us who walked back, ate and returned to the hotel. Others were eating at the kitchen there. If I had known they were eating fried chicken and vegetables, I probably would have elected for the different platter than my chicken-on-a-stick.

I sent an e-mail, showered and went to bed.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2010 – DAY #13

I slept much better last night due to some p.m. medicine. I ate eggs for the last time at the hotel. I gathered stuff for the trip. I used the internet a few more times. And we gathered at the station to wait for the plane to arrive.

We promptly left at 12:30. I fell asleep for a bit. There was an older couple from England on our flight with us. I talked with the man. His name was John. He was interested in our mission effort and was curious about the church of Christ. I talked with him a bit and showed him some scriptures. He was kind but not interested. He did, however, accept a tract I gave him entitled “Come and See.” We saw two beautiful rainbows from up in the air. It was awesome. I think that was the first time that I had seen a rainbow from the air. I got plenty of pictures.

When we landed, Brother Fredrick Daniels was waiting to take us to the hotel where the Yupukari team was already waiting. We picked up our luggage at the church building. It’s a nice functional building. The Guyana School of Biblical Studies meets behind the church building. I met two students who were studying in their dorms. They were nice, friendly. One student was just beginning; the other was just getting ready to finish out his final semester.

I find Georgetown to be a dirty place. It’s noisy and has a run-down look. Open sewage runs along the side of the road. I’m told I will become acclimated to the stench by tomorrow. That may be, but I don’t like it.

JT Beard and I walked to the internet café. The prices were reasonable. They wanted to charge me more, but I wouldn’t pay it. I paid for what I used, but I wasn’t going to let them charge me for internet time while I’m standing in line to pay my bill. The experience was great though, and I was able to send another e-mail to my wife. I don’t know what I would have done without e-mail. We prepared not to hear from one another until I returned to the Miami International Airport. This setup was nice.

We went to supper at a hotel called the Pegasus. Some ordered from the menu; I ate off the buffet. There was trout, pork ribs, rice, chow mein noodles and some spinach dish I didn’t care for. There were three kinds of desserts; I tried them all. Jerry Davidson presented all the first-timers (like me) with a pen made from the local Guyana dukaliballi wood. The gift was so thoughtful, especially since he crafted the pen himself. Five Americans, including Jerry Davidson, and Fredrick Daniels stood for some photos as they were leaving in the morning for the Kopinang Village. We snapped several group photos in the hotel lobby then went back to our hotel.

I packed all my things and souvenirs into one bag to check. I hope it’s all less than 50 lbs. I showered, took an Advil p.m. and went to sleep.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2010 – DAY #14

We woke up today around 6:00 a.m. by women talking outside the window and roosters crowing. I had a fairly decent sleep even though I had woken up a few times. When I got dressed I went downstairs to the restaurant. I had eggs and coffee and visited with others who were up for breakfast. They finished and I remained to write out my sermon.

The Kitty church building is a few blocks down and about one block over from the hotel—a short smelling distance to walk. We naturally walked in groups.

Tom Hodge taught the Bible class and did a good job. His lesson was about Peter and highlighted his growth. I preached a lesson for the worship hour entitled “Three Views of Death.” One young lady responded. She was an out-of-wedlock mother who wanted to renew her relationship with God in light of the given subject. Again, God gets the glory.

A group of us ate at Popeye’s Chicken. It was a good Cajun meal. I was near the very end of my Guyanese “funny” money and Lloyd Beard loaned me \$1,000.00, which I was later told that it was a gift. I have come to really appreciate Lloyd and JT Beard’s kindness and have really enjoyed their friendship. Their humor will be missed. I hope that I can return on another campaign with them and be on the same team as them. We came back to the hotel and visited some before resting.

We went to worship this evening. Just before we began to sing, the generator kicked off and the lights went out. We sang in the dark and prayed in the dark. Steven Kelly preached a fine lesson that ironically fit the occasion, “Lesson From Nicodemus’ Encounter with Jesus” from John 3:1-21. He spoke about what men do in the darkness and how we must seek Jesus. It was very fitting indeed.

We walked back home and all went to bed pretty quickly. I got on the internet one final time then headed up to my room. As I approached my room door, I could hear party music growing louder. Our room was on the corner in the back right next to a bar. Women were louder than the men. But later, I learned there was a rain that came on strong that dispersed the crowd. I didn’t know because I took a Benadryl for my ant-bitten arm and hands. I was out.

In His service,

David

GUYANA JOURNAL

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2010 – DAY #15

It's homecoming day. 1:30 a.m. came very early, but I have to say I was ready for it. I woke with an upset stomach. It felt like some acid reflux. I suppose it was due to it being so early. When I rose, however, it seemed to quickly dissipate. I had my things ready to go. We were supposed to have our bags out front at the curb by 2:15 a.m., but we were pulling away from the hotel by 2:10. Every one of us were ready to go home I suppose. I know that I was.

The 45-minute ride to the airport went well. We were very tired. We pulled up to the airport and went through the line with minimum problems. There were almost two hours still that we had to wait before boarding the plane. It was another example of "hurry up and wait." We enjoyed our last moments together. Like all good things, this mission effort was soon to come to an end. Jerry Davidson and four Americans and one Guyanese brother had already departed yesterday morning for Kopinang. The rest of us would travel together to Miami, then split up to our respective destinations. It has been a good trip, but home is sounding sweeter and sweeter with each passing hour.

We boarded the Caribbean Airlines plane bound for Trinidad. Customs regulations prevented us from getting off the plane even for a quick postcard.

We had about five hours layover in Miami, which provided ample time to get through customs and sit down together to eat. It was good eating our last meal together, well, almost together. There were eleven of us who ate at Chile's. It was great eating a bacon smokehouse cheeseburger. This was the first "American" meat in two weeks.

The planes that carried missionaries from Miami to Atlanta left in three tiers. Eight of us were on the second plane. It was sad to part ways; but it was very good to see my wife and daughter.

There are several questions that linger in my mind. I can't help but to wonder when I'll return to Guyana? Or who among this group will I have the privilege of serving with again? Or which village will I travel to next? And, if I can talk my wife into coming with me?

I think about the village of Karasabai and the folks that I met there. I'm not just thinking about the Christians there, but the people with whom I visited, studied and prayed. I wonder if the new Christians will grow, if the people that began studies will continue their search for truth, and if the church will strengthen in number and faith.

I think about the additional support that is needed for this work. Naturally, money is needed for some long-term workers in Guyana to follow-up on the efforts of the short-term workers and the work of the regular preachers. Funds are needed for regular transportation equipment e.g. 4WD trucks, a heavier-duty motorcycles and ATVs.

Money is a big factor, but it is not the only factor. Supplies are badly needed. With better vehicles, biblical materials can steadily come into the villages for better growth and follow-up. Local churches need Bibles to give to villagers who don't own a copy of God's word. This needs to happen regularly, not just when American missionaries come into town every couple of years.

GUYANA JOURNAL

Humanitarian aid is needed as well. Medical supplies (OTC items for cold and flu symptoms, gauze and band-aids, etc), glasses, toothbrushes are sorely needed. Most small children I saw were in bad need of some dental care. Many had fillings at such a young age. It's amazing what dental floss, a toothbrush and toothpaste will prevent. And there is a great need for shoes (flip-flops). Children grow quickly, and are in constant need of different footwear.

So much is being done, and it is a blessing to be a part of this wonderful work; but so much more can be done, so much more needs to be done.

In His service,

David