

HAITI EARTHQUAKE - January 12, 2010

Part 1

This Tuesday started like most at HIS Home For Children, a Christian orphanage in Port au-Prince licensed as a crèche by the Haitian social service office, IBESR. A crèche designation authorizes the home to place children for adoption. My husband, Hal, and I were responsible for one hundred and twenty two orphaned, abandoned, and needy children. We were assisted in the care of the children by 32 Haitian national employees. January 12, 2010 the children woke up, ready to start another day with lots of activity and energy. Staff filtered through the gate, gathering for casual conversation as they began changing diapers, showering little ones and preparing bottles to quiet the hungry babies. Older children prepared for school, showering and hunting for uniforms. In our apartment, my husband and our 3 children (that we were in the process of adopting) got ready and left for Morningstar Christian Academy where Hal taught. After getting my family on their way, I sat down at my desk with a cup of coffee to plan my day. Having just returned from a 3 week trip to the US to celebrate Christmas with our adult children and grandchildren, I had many things to get caught up on with Jean Jumelle, my assistant director, who is in charge when we are out of country. First priority was to get our car to the mechanic for some major repairs and to replace my 2 cell phones which refused to hold a charge. As we returned from accomplishing those tasks, I played with the phones, amazed by their feature of being solar powered. I had no idea of how important that feature would be to someone with no electricity to charge a phone... Three visitors arrived to spend time helping around the orphanage and were playing with the children. I gave the group a tour and explained that the mission of HIS Home is to meet the physical, spiritual, emotional, and medical needs of the children. If the child qualified for adoption, we would also search for a forever family for the child. One of the visitors was a young man who grew up in Haiti as a missionary kid, and returned from college with his 2 friends to visit his family in Haiti over Christmas break.

After a busy afternoon in the office getting caught up on the status of adoption cases in process, our girls began returning from our private school located at the boy's home about half a mile away. My husband and children also returned from school. As our 5PM dinnertime approached I carried Joey, a hydrocephalic little boy who shared our 3rd floor family apartment along with 10 other children (mostly kids with special needs and newborn infants), to our balcony to relax in the rocking chair while I talked with our visitors. Without warning, a few minutes before 5 all of our lives changed forever as our concrete 3 story house began to shudder and rock back and forth on it's foundation. Trapped in the rocking chair with a very heavy child while the chair rocked from side to side, I listened as kids screamed, furniture fell, and glass crashed. Several 5 gallon water bottles fell over and flooded our marble tile, making it impossible to walk on the slippery moving floor. In just less than 1 minute, the motion slowed, and I was able to get inside. Our visitors were helping gather infants and children from our apartment, and we escaped through our bedroom because our living room door to the stairway was blocked.

Getting outside of the house first I saw that at the end of the yard, the top 8 foot section of our 16 foot concrete security wall had crashed into the yard and rubble was tangled with concertina wire. I fearfully wondered how many little bodies were trapped underneath and cried out to God to protect our children. At that time of the day, toddlers would be eating at the long tables behind the house, bordered by that wall. Teenage girls would normally visit on the steps to the backyard in the cool shade of that wall while waiting for their meal to be served. I couldn't get to that area of the yard because of the mess. Words cannot describe my surreal feelings and overwhelming chaotic thoughts at what was happening at that moment...The concrete driveway continued to move, and I told the children who were gathered there to sit so they wouldn't fall. I began asking the nannies how many toddlers were missing. They told me that all were accounted for, as were the babies from the baby nursery. My husband asked that they recount, because it seemed impossible considering all of the damage. I asked the older girls to get head counts by room leaders, and they reported that everyone was present. I was later to learn that the toddlers finished their meal early that day, and had just lined up at the far end of the table for water. The falling concrete wall had crashed thru the roof over their dining tables, leaving rubble and tangled concertina wire where children had been sitting just moments before...but the children were safely escorted by staff to the front yard. About that time, James (who worked at our boy's home) came to the gate to let us know that all boys were safe and waiting on the soccer field at our church. We sent James to get the boys so that we could all be together at the main house. Considering that in less than a minute Haiti was devastated and approximately 300,000 lives were lost, it seemed too good to be true to hope that our children were all alive! God had answered my prayer before I had even asked...However, in that moment every one of our 32 staff members lost their homes. One staff member who was at home with her newborn infant perished, but her baby survived. Many off-duty staff were severely injured, and many of our staff lost immediate family members. Within the hour, people began arriving at the gate to inform our children of their immediate family members and relatives who had died. Bad news arrived rapidly, and we consoled wailing children. Grief therapy would have to come later...

As darkness began to fall and follow-up tremors continued, the children huddled together in central areas of the home, staring at light fixtures. As chandeliers began to sway, frightened cries would alert everyone to run outside. About 10PM the missionary father of our visitor arrived, accompanied by his pastor. Their somber faces said it all as the father asked to speak to his son privately. The visitor's mother and two sisters were missing and presumed to be under the concrete of their 5 floor apartment building. They had been in their apartment on the first floor and had not been seen since ... Father and son left together quietly to face their grief, leaving the 2 friends with us for the night as they had no place to stay. That night no one slept...

Wednesday began very differently than the previous day. Gone were the happy-go-lucky atmosphere and the daily routine. This day began with very few employees arriving to work, and those that did were sharing horror stories of disaster. The children were tired and disoriented as there would be no school, no regular routine, and the tremors continued constantly causing everyone to be unnerved. Early in the morning, a neighbor arrived at the gate asking me to come and assist in their make-shift medical clinic at another orphanage. Hal agreed to oversee activities at HIS Home, and I left with the neighbor and one

of the visitors from the previous day. It felt good to have an opportunity to do something constructive. With 10 years of experience on the trauma team in a hospital emergency room and experience as a paramedic on emergency runs in the ambulance, I was anxious to help. As we walked through the neighborhood, life still seemed surreal, as if we were actors in a movie...

Arriving at the temporary clinic, people of all ages lined the side of the road waiting patiently to get through the gate. Inside the yard, injured people were everywhere. I was directed to a young girl with an obvious femur fracture. A volunteer carpenter offered his help and quickly put together a wooden frame for traction. Using rope and water bottles for weights, we were able to stabilize the bones, relieving some of the pain. With pain meds, the little girl began to relax... Two patients had amputated limbs needing attention, one with a missing foot and one missing her hand. Soaking them in disinfectant, then applying sterile dressings and starting antibiotics and pain meds was the best we could do until trauma surgeons arrived to provide surgical care. As I prepared to start suturing head lacerations, our pastor arrived. He quickly shared that the missing missionaries (mom and both girls) had been found alive. After being buried under concrete the previous day, trapped in an air pocket, they had successfully tunneled out to safety. Although injured, they were alive! This was the best news of the day and we praised God for his mercy!!! By mid-afternoon I had run out of lidocaine anesthetic for suturing, but patients begged to have their wounds sutured without pain control. Although standard protocol in a perfect world would be to stop suturing within a few hours of the injury and depend on the wound to heal naturally, considering the dirty air polluted with concrete dust, it seemed less likely that they would get infected if the wounds were cleaned and sutured with a sterile dressing applied. By dark, I was so tired that I couldn't stand up straight and I apologized to waiting patients and headed for home. Arriving back at HIS Home, children were settling down for the night on mattresses scattered around the driveway. Playpens were arranged in the side yard with a candle lit inside a clear plastic bucket as their nightlight. I found a mattress and lay down next to kids, while my husband curled up on the front seat of our truck. Laying down felt good and I finally fell asleep realizing that during tremors, the concrete driveway felt like a waterbed with rolling wave-like movement.

Thursday was pretty uneventful, but the older kids were starting to get bored with their confinement in the yard. They wanted to go out to the streets to explore the damage, but we made everyone stay in the compound. By evening, we were back in the yard to sleep. I noticed how very quiet it was without traffic, horns blaring, or radio voices in the background. Occasionally I would hear the revving of airplane engines at the PAP International Airport. I also noticed how incredibly dark it was without electricity. About 10PM I was starting to drift off to sleep when I heard voices in the distance and soon there were people passing in the street outside the wall. They seemed very excited... I woke Hal and asked for the keys to the gate so I could send someone to check out the situation. Hal sleepily replied that it was probably just people trying to escape a tsunami, then he went back to sleep. An employee volunteered to check out the situation in the street, and I went into the house to get a radio. Word on the street was that a tsunami was approaching, and people were warned to run for their lives. Through the gate I saw people running with tables and other possessions on their heads. Children ran behind parents, trying to keep up. I woke Hal again to confirm his suspicion. He patiently advised me to go to sleep, as water couldn't reach our elevation, then he immediately returned to sleep. I was jealous of his

ability to sleep through this emergency... I turned on the radio to get an official report... Authorities were advising people to return to their homes as no tsunami was coming. After about 2 hours of people heading uphill, foot traffic reversed and people headed down the mountain, reporting that thieves with weapons were waiting at the top of the road, stealing all of their possessions. The next morning, radios reported that escaped convicts from the prison (which was destroyed during the earthquake) had not only robbed these poor people of their meager possessions, but when the people returned to their slum homes in City Soleil, they found them occupied by the convicts and the ones who had been scammed were now homeless.

Friday we realized that our food supply was almost finished and we started praying for food. There were no stores open for our regular weekly shopping. Later in the morning, another missionary friend stopped by with a supply of Pop Tarts. Eighteen cases were unloaded into our garage and breakfast was distributed to the children. I spent the day searching through cupboards for food to prepare for dinner. We still had rice, but that was it... Friday was also the first time I recognized the smell of death in the air. Reality was setting in! This wasn't a movie that was going to end anytime soon, and we were responsible for the lives of 122 children and our employees. By Friday night, I was exhausted from a poor night's sleep the night before, and I prayed that the nightmare would end and life would go back to normal. I didn't realize that "normal" would never be normal again... I would have been so happy to have my morning cup of coffee, but even that was gone without electricity and clean water... Our drinking water supply was much too precious and being rationed so coffee was out of the question.

When I woke up Saturday morning, Hal was sitting on a chair next to my mattress watching me. His first question was, "How can you sleep through a 5.8 earthquake?" I was oblivious as I had slept peacefully on my concrete waterbed. His next question was, "What are we going to do? We have more damage..." Hal gave me a tour of the house, pointing out new cracks in different areas of the house. We ended up sitting on our balcony, trying to make a decision about what to do next... It was obvious to both of us that it would no longer be safe to keep the children in our yard. If the house fell as others had, we would be buried in the rubble. Our yard was too small to avoid danger from a collapsing house or the front wall if it fell as the side wall had already. We prayed for wisdom...Considering possibilities, moving the children to our church grounds seemed the most logical, as there was a security wall, open areas where we would be safe from falling buildings, and there were bathrooms and running water. I went to the church looking for the pastor, but he was not there. Our previous pastor was visiting friends next door and I was directed to him. He suggested that we set up camp behind the church office. I returned to HIS Home and began the process of gathering everything that we needed. Older kids were instructed to prepare their mattresses, sheets, pillows, and they could each bring a backpack with clothing. Staffs were asked to go through our baby supply storage room and gather everything that we might need. We collected about 50 baby playpens and loaded them in the big truck and headed to the church with a team of boys to set up the playpens for the babies and small toddlers. Back to the orphanage for a load of older girls holding babies... Back and forth we went until we had what we thought would be important. In the last trip, we loaded the file cabinets with all of the children's files so that if the house fell, we would still have the children's information.

By evening, our camp was established. I was amused that one girl had placed plastic tubs together with her foam mattress on top. Her "bed" was decorated with a colorful bedspread and throw pillows she had received for Christmas from her adoption mom. She had found her new "normal". In planning ahead, I was afraid that after a breakfast on Sunday of Pop Tarts, there would be no lunch because our food was gone, so I sent an employee to look for food on the street. He returned with some very expensive week old bread which was all he could find. I stored it in a plastic tub to prevent rats from getting into it. By Sunday morning it was still there, but was covered in a layer of green mold. More prayers...

Part 2

Sunday morning as we prepared for church services, I realized that our children had planned ahead and brought their church clothes. Kids started showing up for breakfast dressed up. I didn't expect that, but was happy to see that church was enough of a priority to them that they planned accordingly when packing their backpacks. I didn't tell the children about the bread problem, but passed out the Pop Tarts as usual. Little kids were getting 1 and older kids each got 2. Each child was also given a half-cup of drinking water, as our water supply was almost gone. An organization had brought us a portable water filter, which would filter, out bacteria, but it did not remove the salt and minerals from the water. The only water we had available was from our well, and it was salty. The water from the church was very heavy with minerals and salt, so it wasn't good either. Drinking purified salt water was making us thirstier, and kids were complaining that they didn't feel well. We headed off to church, with the prayer of my heart that God would provide food and good water for everyone, because I didn't know of any source since stores were not open and nothing was being sold at the street market.

Our Sunday morning service normally seated about 250 people, but this Sunday there were about 30 people. The service was a time of testimonials and a memorial for those who lost their lives. There was a sense of camaraderie that we were all survivors, but there was also a sense of survivor's guilt because so many friends and family members had lost their lives in our community. As we walked back to our camp area, we watched congregants arrive for the Spanish speaking services, which followed the English service. At the end of the second service, food was distributed to those attending that service. We learned that a friend of the church leader was from the Dominican and had received the donations. When they finished the distribution, a friend of mine came over to me and asked if we could use some bread, as they had cases of prepackaged bread, which would be good for a couple weeks. We were given enough hamburger buns to keep our children in bread for the next two weeks. They also brought cases of sardines and Vienna sausages as well as cases of bottled water. Another organization had set up a distribution center at the church grounds for enriched rice. They started giving us 2 cases per day, which was enough to feed our children a hot meal every evening of rice with creole sauce made with either sardines or Vienna sausages. For the next 2 weeks, our meal schedule included Pop Tarts and water for breakfast, a hamburger bun and water for lunch, and rice with creole sauce for supper. Although our menu did not change, we were thankful that God had heard our prayer and provided food and water!

Monday night I was on nanny duty, as our limited staff needed sleep. By this time, I was sleeping in the back of the truck with 3 fragile babies, using my body heat to keep them warm. Every couple hours I would make rounds of the playpens, changing diapers and checking on children. At about 2AM, I was getting very discouraged because children were coughing a lot from the cold and breathing dirty air, and I feared that children would not survive long under these conditions. I began crying out to God, asking for wisdom. I told God that I didn't know how to protect His children, and we were in a high risk situation with no solution in sight. I begged God to show me what He wanted me to do. Immediately God responded by telling me, "Take them home!" I was sure that it was God's voice, but I didn't understand what home he was referring to. The orphanage wasn't safe, and many children had been abandoned and had no other home. Again, I approached God and asked him to clarify the answer, because I didn't understand what he wanted me to do. God repeated the exact same message and did not elaborate. I was very much in awe that God had responded in a voice to me, but I still did not understand what I should do, where we were to go, or how to proceed. However, I knew that God had heard my prayer. I spent the rest of the night awake trying to figure out what God meant...I thought about many Bible stories where God gave direction, and people tried to figure out similar messages such as "Go where I send you!"

First thing Tuesday morning I shared this experience with Hal. Hal knows that I am a vivid dreamer, and I am sure that he was not convinced that I was physically awake when this happened. He advised me not to set my hopes too high, because he didn't want to see me disappointed if things did not work out. I realized that if our positions were reversed, I would probably respond the same way. Shortly after telling Hal, two pastors arrived. One was our previous pastor from our church, and the second was a new pastor who had recently replaced the former pastor upon his retirement. They had come to check on the welfare of the children and to see if we had any success the previous day with the new house search. While talking with them, I shared my experience from the previous night. Their responses were very different. The new pastor smiled and said, "That's nice...", but it was quite obvious that he didn't comprehend the significance of what I was saying. He appeared much more interested in us finding a new home so that we would move our children from the church property. The older pastor was our friend and mentor. His response was a hearty, "Halleluiah! If God said it, then He has a plan. You don't need to know what to do. Just walk through the doors that He opens, and I am going to check back with you every day to see how He does this!" As we were talking, I looked up to see Jean Jumelle, our assistant director at HIS Home. I had not seen nor heard from him in the week since the earthquake. I later learned that his family had suffered multiple tragedies that he had to face and respond to. As we talked, I shared what had happened the previous night. He immediately replied that we should go to the Embassy to ask for help. I questioned him as to whether the US Embassy was even open, and he said that he was sure that it would be. Considering this a possible answer of which door to walk through, we headed off to the Embassy. What would have been a 20-30 minute drive on a normal day turned into a 2 hour drive because of traffic, trying to avoid rubble in the streets and cars backed up around a gas station which was selling 1 gallon of gas per customer.

Arriving at the Embassy, we saw a huge crowd lined up down the road trying to get through the gate. When we approached a security guard and explained that we were looking for help with our orphans,

they allowed us to enter through the employee entrance without a wait. I learned that the hundreds of people lined up outside were Haitian people with legal status to travel to the US, but many they had lost their proper documentation when their homes fell. Now they needed to establish proof of their legal status to receive documentation to go to the US. Once inside, we realized that there was minimal staff, because many Haitian national staff was not able to come to work. Many of the working staff who were there had suitcases sitting next to their desks, proof that they were working round the clock shifts and sleeping there as well. Explaining our situation to one officer, we were surprised with their response. They informed us that children with enough documentation to show that they were currently in the process of a US adoption would be considered for a program called Humanitarian Parole with the Orphan Refugee Resettlement Program which had been signed into effect the previous day by the US Government Department of Homeland Security. An agreement was established between the US Government and the Prime Minister of Haiti to release children with active adoptions, allowing children to be placed in the legal custody of adoptive parents while their adoptions were completed in the US. Canada had a similar arrangement. I was asked if I had come with any documentation for our children who might be eligible. When I said no, they asked me to go and get the documentation immediately. At that moment I realized that with the government program instituted on Monday and no communication access for me to know, God had miraculously led me through the first door on the path to "Take them home!" Now I knew which homes He was referring to... Amazing!!! We quickly returned to our camp to gather files, filling two plastic bins, and then we returned to the Embassy. Next we were asked to provide the adoptive parent files. That presented more difficulty, as we didn't have those. They were in the hands of our lawyer, and we were not sure that she had survived the earthquake. While Junior left to look for the lawyer, I was asked to prioritize the children into the 3 categories needed to establish who needed to be processed first (based on medical condition of the child and the status of their completed documentation). As I finished with our list, Junior returned with 2 more plastic tubs containing adoptive parent records and a report that our lawyer was safe. We praised God for His protection!!! We were asked to return the following morning with the 56 children in groups 1 and 2 to begin processing. When we returned to the camp, we found that an adoptive parent had arranged with his employer to purchase and transport tents to Haiti. They flew into southern Haiti then transported the tents to us in a borrowed vehicle. We now had 10 tents arranged on the church soccer field, and children would finally have shelter. We had also been notified by a phone call in the middle of the night that a team was arriving Wednesday morning to bring emergency supplies to us. Adoptive parents in the US had collected supplies, and a team of 8 adoptive parents, an EMT, and a Haitian translator for the team were traveling thru the Dominican Republic, and then chartering a bus to deliver the supplies. The translator was a former security employee of HIS Home, and was living in the US with his wife.

The supply team arrived early Wednesday morning, and after we borrowed fuel for our truck from a foreign reporter who was also camped at the church, Hal drove to the bus station to pick up the team and supplies. We had planned to hire an armed security guard to escort Hal because supply vehicles were being stopped at gunpoint and robbed. Unfortunately, there was no time to find a guard when the team arrived earlier than expected. Hal decided to go alone, so we prayed for his safety and he left. While he was gone, at the camp we were quickly washing children and dressing them in clean clothes for their visit to the embassy. When Hal safely returned to the camp, the back of the truck was full with

approximately 5,000 pounds of emergency supplies, and the team members were standing on the back bumper of the truck holding on... Supplies were quickly unloaded, and we all rejoiced and thanked God for water, food, diapers, and all of the things that we needed! The celebration was brief, however, as children were quickly being loaded in the back of the truck to go to the Embassy. Several parents asked to go with the children to help, and the others stayed behind to help organize supplies and to help care for the remaining children.

Inside the truck, excited children sang at the top of their lungs as we traveled, anticipating a new adventure. Arriving at the embassy, we were told to leave all belongings in the truck and we were escorted into the main waiting room where we normally waited for adoption visa appointments. Embassy volunteers wandered through our group offering rehydration drinks. Three of our babies were very fragile and quickly transferred to the US Military Medical Clinic set up inside the embassy. What a blessing to be able to get IV's in the babies who were dehydrated and have them evaluated by physicians. At that moment, I was SO proud of our military service people who were helping in this crisis. Knowing that my son was serving in the US Army at that time made me so proud of the men and women who serve! The men were friendly, and said that they missed their own children at home. A week later I had an opportunity to meet the 3-year-old daughter of one of those service members who cared for our babies. Back in the main lobby, our children were fed, napped, played, and became bored. By the end of the day, the kids were worn out. We asked what time we would be finished for the day, and were told that we were not to leave; we would be sleeping there. We had been provided diapers and bottles for the children and had already set up a makeshift diaper changing station on the marble counter, normally the cashier desk. Bottles and formula were lined up in the windowsills, and the children received MRE meals and sat on the floor to eat. In the evening we were moved to the lobby of American Consular Services, where we stretched out on the floor to sleep. The air conditioning was very cold, and children huddled together to try to get warm. One military officer who was helping came in and brought several thermal blankets donated by military personnel sleeping outside in tents. They heard that our babies were cold and wanted to help... We felt so blessed! Although security at the embassy is normally very strict, that evening some of the adults were allowed to go to take showers, and we were allowed to take a couple loads of dirty clothes to the military laundry room. Our sick babies needed clean clothes, and we did not have any. While they waited for laundry to finish, we took Pampers, cut out the crotch, and pulled them over the baby's head, fastening the tabs around their waist creating tank tops, which matched their diapers. If they vomited, we could easily throw away the temporary clothes and make another...As I lay down to sleep that night, I was concerned by rumors that I had heard that each travel authorization would require that we sign a promissory note for \$1,000 to cover the cost of the emergency flight. With the number of people traveling, that would be about \$80,000, monies that I didn't have any way to repay. Again, I went to my Heavenly Father and ask him to intervene with this issue, trusting that He knew the solution to this problem. Exercising blind faith, I fell asleep.

Thursday and Friday the waiting continued. As files were prepared, the children were called for photographs and then returned to wait again. After 3 days the first group was done, travel authorization packets were issued, and we returned those children to the camp. The travel

authorization packets were locked in the car for the night for safe keeping, as we knew they would be irreplaceable. We curled up in our tents for a good night's rest. Unfortunately, that was not to happen, as there was repeated gunfire over the wall accompanied by shouting. Frightened children ran to share tents with their friends and they all huddled together for comfort and everyone prayed. The next day we learned that thieves were trying to break into a home and a policeman who lived across the street started shooting at them and the thieves left.

Saturday morning the remaining children went to the embassy, and the process started again, but with a smaller group of children. Meanwhile, Hal continued to supervise the camp, and we had very little communication. I had no idea of what was going on in the camp, but later learned that American Airline Ambassadors had visited the camp and were arranging to donate an airplane to transport our children to the US. They were waiting for notification of when we would have all of the children ready to travel, and we planned a tentative target travel date of being ready on Monday morning. The Canadian Embassy also contacted Hal, and they arranged to come to the camp to collect the children who would be evacuated to Canada. Looking back, so many things were going on both in Haiti and the US that we were not even aware of, it confirmed my belief that it took a miraculous God to coordinate all of these details and efforts to protect and care for His children!!! Each day we sat and watched Embassy personnel rushing around their office passing paperwork back and forth and the photographer running around getting needed photos. With each of our children that were called for photos, we found encouragement. The volunteers continued rehydrating kids, and we sat in chairs or lay on the floor with our children and tried to understand what was happening and to guess when it would be finished. One volunteer asked me if there was anything she could do for me, and I asked for a cup of coffee. A couple hours later she returned with a cup of coffee, and I was elated! There were other volunteers who showed us such kindness, one bringing special microwave meals for the adults to "keep us strong to care for the kids". Others were doing anything they could to try to keep us comfortable while we waited. Everyday our children amazed me! Older children sat for hours holding sleeping babies, helping feed the little ones, and playing with the children to keep them occupied. The older children seemed to understand that although they didn't know what was going on, something very important was happening, and hoped it would be worth the wait. At that time we had no idea that the next 24 hours would change our lives forever...

Part 3

Sunday morning, January 24, 2010 began at the Embassy as all other days had with a hurry up and wait theme. We hurried to prepare children in the morning with daily routines. Diapers changed, kids fed, hair combed, and then more waiting. It was obvious that the Embassy staff were becoming wearier as they continued the paperwork with an unexpected urgency that we didn't understand. Again, children were called for photos, but there was a sifting process that appeared to be happening. Not every child was called. As the day continued, the children started asking why they hadn't been called yet, and we tried to reassure them. This was now the third group on the priority list, which was those with

designated families, but less documentation. These were the children with less possibility of being approved to travel.

In the evening, I was called to the window to speak with the officer in charge of our documentation. He explained that the situation was changing legally, and the new requirements would become effective at 6AM Monday morning. All children leaving Haiti with Humanitarian Parole status would be required to have their documentation signed by the Prime Minister of Haiti, and no one was sure that would happen. The officer told me that there was a plane on the ground with seating space for our group and we must leave immediately to get to the airport. I was asked to contact someone at our camp to transport the children who had already received travel documentation. When I reached Hal, he told me that the children were already asleep in their tents for the night. I explained the situation, and he promised to do his best to borrow a truck and get the children moved. When I returned to relay that message to the officer, he began handing me the new group of completed documents. When I started going through them, I realized that many of our sibling groups were split. Some had papers, while others did not. I was told that any families with split paperwork would be left behind, as siblings could not be split. I quickly calculated how many children would be left, and realized that eleven children would miss the opportunity to leave. I begged the officer to reconsider and complete the remaining files. I could see the exhaustion on his face already, but as I looked around the room at our children who would have to be told they could not go, even though they had received documents, I was devastated. One adoptive father overheard the conversation and suggested that we cut our losses and go, so that we would not miss the flight. However, I reminded the officer that several of the siblings with documents were at the camp and already on their way to the airport. He reluctantly agreed to try to complete a few more... I realized that by asking this favor, I was putting our other children at risk of being left behind, but I felt sure that God was encouraging me to wait for the other kids.

While the final documents were being prepared, we quickly began loading an Embassy bus in front of the embassy. Many of our children were babies, and had to be carried and it was impossible for me to manage all of them by myself, so US military personnel were called to assist. I will never forget the feeling of standing in the door of the bus calling names of children who had travel authorization documents, loading them in the bus. The children who didn't have enough documentation to travel were handed off to the military guys to hold. I had 2 of our HIS Home employees with me. James was gathering our children without documentation to take them to our truck where Richemond would transport them back to the camp. When at last every child with documents had been called, the Embassy officer handed me two additional documents. He explained that he was sending two extra little girls with me, and I would be their escort to the US. They were each wearing a name band, as were all other kids. I was told that when I arrived "where I was going" someone would find me and ask for the girls by name and I should relinquish the girls to them. When I asked where we were going, I was told that the location was confidential. Words cannot express the distress I felt as I looked at the line of children on the curb outside the bus! I had no idea if I would ever see them again, as I worried about another devastating quake. I also wondered if I would ever have the opportunity to return to Haiti again... My feelings can only be described as bittersweet as I saw children being left behind who I had raised from infancy. I was the only mother they remembered and I was getting on a bus leaving them in

the hands of the military guys who were trying to befriend them, but the little ones were terrified. I felt like a hero to the ones in the bus and a traitor to the ones on the curb all in the same moment...

As the bus quickly drove to the airport, I was thankful that it was dark and the children could not see the damage caused by the earthquake. This is a memory of Haiti I hoped they would be spared. I was surprised that when we arrived at the airport, we drove straight to the flight line. Along the edge there were stations set up to handle airplanes as well as passengers. I was directed to speak with a man working at a table, and when I explained why we were there, he seemed confused when I told him that we had a large group arriving in another vehicle. He asked if they might have arrived in a truck parked close by, and when I checked, I recognized our Haitian friend who was a former employee and had accompanied our children to the airport. Although the other team members who brought the emergency supplies were all leaving, he chose to stay to help his biological family. I confirmed that was the vehicle, which transported our children, and when I asked where they were, I was told they were on the way to the US in the plane, which had available seats. I asked where they were going in the US, as my adoptive children were in that plane. I was told that information was confidential and I would find them when I arrived in the US. Now I was the one who was confused... Later I learned that when the truck transporting our children from the camp passed through the gate leaving the church camp late that night headed for the airport, the children were singing "Mighty to Save" in the back of the truck, and our former pastor witnessed the children leaving from his home across the street. He knew that God's directions to "Take Them Home" were in action as the children headed to the airport.

The children and I at the airport were accompanied by a couple of the adoptive parents who helped monitor the children. We were told to wait in a tent set up with folding chairs. As it was very late, the children were very tired and laid down to sleep on the chairs. The military guys on night shift were bored and wanted to play with the kids, but realized they needed their rest. The guys made it their mission to play anyway and applied some temporary tattoos to the children's arms and hands to surprise them when they woke up. They tucked candy bars and small toys in their pockets for later, and they brought sandwiches for anyone who was hungry. Still concerned about the 6AM cutoff for our travel authorizations, I asked if they knew when the next available plane would take off with space for us. They pointed out a C17 Cargo plane being unloaded and told me that would probably be our "ride". They asked us to wait until the plane was unloaded, and they would call us when they were ready. As we had no other options, we waited. **We had become** experts in the field of waiting...About an hour later, we were instructed to board the plane. I will never forget the expression on the children's faces as we entered the cargo area of this huge plane, and were strapped into jump seats. Boxes containing supplies sent by the embassy with bottles, diapers, etc. were strapped to the floor next to the boxes containing our files. The two little girls I was escorting were strapped in seats next to me, and they seemed to accept everything that was happening with no qualms. The flight crew made rounds, matching faces with photos on the legal travel authorizations. As the plane prepared to leave, we were amazed when the back hatch door opened, and we could watch the airport lights and activities accompanied by the loud roar of engines and lots of vibration as the plane backed away from the terminal. I was concerned that the children might be afraid of another earthquake, as we were all still pretty sensitive to any type of vibration and unexpected movement around us, but the children

appeared so excited and overwhelmed with the experience, no one seemed afraid. The back hatch closed again and once the plane was airborne, we were told that we were being transported to Sanford Airbase in Orlando, Florida. As I hadn't slept more than an hour or two per day for the past week, I was beyond exhausted and couldn't begin to figure out what we would be doing in Orlando, but at this point, I just grateful to be on our way knowing that God knew exactly what was going to happen and He hadn't failed us yet. On the flight, airmen offered the children bottled water, snacks, more small toys, and most of the children napped. When we landed we were brought into a terminal, and there before us in Immigration were our children who had arrived on the earlier flight all sound asleep on the floor being supervised by Red Cross volunteers and adoptive parents who had traveled with them from Haiti. Children traveling with me ran to join their friends and were soon sound asleep too. It had been a very long night, and it wasn't over yet! I had no idea of what time it was, but I wanted to find a corner and sleep for a very long time...

In Immigration, I was greeted by the adoptive parents who had accompanied the earlier flight, and introduced to the Department of Homeland Security officer in charge of the in processing of our children. They had been waiting for me to arrive to assist in the identification of children in our group. I asked for time to rest, but they found that request humorous. I was shown a full coffee pot and told to help myself (that could be dangerous for a coffee addict who has had only one 1 cup of coffee in 2 weeks and almost no sleep). I agreed to help with whatever was needed, and I was briefed that now that the children were in the US, they were now in the custody of the US Government and I had no legal authority over the children. With that statement, I was tempted to take that as my excuse to get some sleep and let them figure it out by themselves. However, my mother instincts prevailed and I decided to do whatever I could to help the kids get to their adoptive families. The children were summoned individually, and we would wake them for photographs and fingerprints. The children's files we had brought were spread across the floor with files of adoptive parents matched to them. I was very thankful for the adoptive dads who had helped with matching the kids and adoptive parent's files. It made the process move faster. At one point I was called to check on one of my little boys. He had a chronic ear infection and had been evaluated several times for this problem in Haiti and had been on several antibiotics with no cure. He needed tubes placed in his ears according to the Haitian pediatrician. However, the medical person who evaluated him did not trust my information and insisted that he go to a hospital because he thought that he might have pneumonia as well. As he had no fever, I didn't agree with him. He asked me to go with the baby, but the DHS officer insisted that I stay to help with identification of the kids. The baby was taken to the hospital and later returned with a diagnosis of no pneumonia and sent with instructions to have him evaluated for tubes in his ears. Sigh... A little later, I was asked by a volunteer to identify a beautiful little girl who was missing her armband. Just looking at her, she resembled a little girl who was headed to Canada, not the US and I was confused. Then I realized that she was ours, and had gotten on the plane to the US by mistake. The Canadian Embassy was called to send someone to get her. We also realized that another little boy headed for Canada had also accidentally been put on the plane. Looking for children at night in tents with no electricity was not an easy task for the nannies that had been rounding up all of the children for the first plane. In the rush of getting the plane airborne; children were not matched to their dossiers. They were simply loaded as quickly as possible. Another call to the Canadians who were very understanding of the

situation... They assured me that we were not the first ones with Canadian stowaways by mistake. The good news is that those children were joined to their Canadian adoptive families faster than the Canadian ones who traveled through normal procedures. In the chaos of the previous 24 hours, it is amazing that there were not more mistakes!

Periodically throughout the day I would go to check on my 3 children who were waiting with the other children. At one point, Berline proudly showed me that she had a little bag containing a toothbrush, soap, deodorant, etc. As my teeth hadn't been brushed in what seemed like days, I begged her to tell me where she got the toothbrush. She pointed out a Red Cross volunteer and next thing I knew I was in a bathroom experiencing the bliss of something normally a part of my daily routine, which I take for granite, but made me SO grateful this time. I also noticed as the day went on that each time I saw Berline she was wearing different shoes. I quizzed her on where they came from. She pointed out a table off to the side where volunteers were handing out clothing and shoes to needy children. When volunteers changed shifts, she would put on her most forlorn look and ask for a pair of shoes, which they were happy to donate to her cause. I thought that she was exchanging shoes, but found out the following day that she had left Sanford with about 5 pair of beautiful shoes. Sigh... At that point I refused to go back to Sanford to return them... We all have our priorities after doing without our comfort items for a while. For me a toothbrush, for her 5 pair of shoes...

Mid-afternoon, I was asked to come to the area where DHS was finalizing paperwork. They told me that they had completed documentation for one of my families, a sibling group of 5 children. The adoptive parents were with their kids, and they were preparing to leave for California to start their new life as a family. As I met with them and saw the family visiting together, I was completely confused about how the parents had known to come to Sanford to get their kids. Later I learned that USCIS had contacted them and told them where to come, and because they had previously completed their Immigration paperwork, they were cleared to leave with their children. As I posed for photos with the happy family, I realized how different this day could have ended for this family. They were one of the families with a child who didn't have documents when we were ready to leave for the Haitian airport and I had begged the officer to finish the last child's papers so they could all travel together. In that moment I thanked God for the officer in Haiti who had forged ahead to complete that child's paperwork. As the time passed, I was called to say goodbye to other children... a sibling group of 3 headed to Portland, Oregon, another adoptive mom leaving with her 4 adopted children and 2 others adopted by her aunt on their way to Rhode Island. The mass exodus continued with a single boy headed to his Florida home with his parents, a girl to Arizona with her dad, and another dad left with his 2 little girls. In those moments, I experienced confusing emotions as I rejoiced with these new families headed to their homes to start the transition process of orphan to family, but also feeling incredible sadness in saying goodbye to children that I had raised and loved and knew that I might never see again. I had experienced this same emotional rollercoaster many times before in Haiti as I took families to the airport and said goodbye to my children, then cried on the way home. However, in my heart I knew that this pain was only a fraction of what birth parents experience when they leave their children at the HIS Home gate, asking me to place their child for adoption because they cannot provide what is needed to raise their child well. With over 500 children who have lived with us at HIS Home, there is no way I could raise all of those

children successfully to adulthood. I thank God that He has a better plan, and the temporary pain of the moment disappears when I later see the children thriving in their new families and environments. I relate this to the sorrow when we say goodbye to our loved ones on earth, knowing they are safely delivered to heaven, but still knowing that we will miss them being a part of our daily lives. By the time I watched the last pre-approved child walk away I was emotionally exhausted. I realized that most of the adoptive parents who had traveled with us were gone, and there were just a couple of us left with a room full of about 50 kids. I was hoping that since we had completed the necessary DHS paperwork that I might finally be allowed to get some rest. It was not to be...

We had spent about 12 hours in DHS getting the children's paperwork cleared, and I was uncertain of what would happen next. About that time, a DHS official came to speak with me and told me that they had completed their responsibility and now it was my responsibility to transport the children to Miami. I remember looking at this man like he had two heads... I asked him why this was suddenly my responsibility to provide transportation when he had already told me that I no longer carried any authority for the children, that they were in the custody of the Orphan Refugee Resettlement program and that the US government held all authority over the children. He could not give me a reason, but emphasized that this was now my problem to resolve. I asked him for suggestions, and he suggested a bus or airplane. I reminded him that I had arrived unexpectedly and was not carrying any cash on me. He shrugged his shoulders and walked away after telling me we needed to act immediately, as they were expecting another large group soon. I did what I had done in the other circumstances, which had befuddled me and prayed. My quick prayer went something like, "Lord, I have no idea how to handle this. Since these are really your kids, do you have any suggestions?" Standing behind me was an adoption dad who had overheard the conversation with the officer. He stepped up to me and said that he had an idea, which might help, and he asked me to give him a few minutes. After a phone call, he informed me that there would be an airplane arriving for us in about 2 hours. I remember asking him how he had arranged that, and he said that someone with connections had offered to help if needed. Apparently they were connected to the same God who was orchestrating everything else, and I was amazed again at how God was going before us, making the path straight. While we were waiting, I started preparing the children to travel again, making sure faces and hands were clean, everyone made a bathroom break, and other things that we mothers feel obligated to do. As I had just about finished making the rounds with several kids to the bathroom at a time, I realized that the Red Cross ladies were making rounds too. In their mission to keep everyone rehydrated, they were passing out purple popsicles. Some of the children ate them and they were a sticky mess. I later learned that others had saved them in their pockets or backpacks... I gave up on the cleanup efforts.

After 14 hours of visiting Sanford Air Base, we were ushered to our waiting plane with military men and women helping to carry children. When we entered the plane, I realized that we were not on a commercial or military plane. The private plane was plenty large to hold our children and the flight attendant greeted us in her uniform of jeans and a casual shirt. She was very friendly, and told us to get everyone in seatbelts as quickly as possible. As we had only a couple adults, I tried to arrange seating with an older child in the middle of the row with younger children on each side. The flight attendant produced a couple large black garbage bags containing blankets for each child. She explained that the

Linus Foundation thru the local fire department where they came from had donated the blankets, and they wanted each child to have a warm fleece blanket to wrap up in on the flight. Everyone snuggled into his or her seats and they were all asleep as soon as the flight took off. I held two babies during the flight, and wondered who the angel was who donated their airplane for our flight. I never found out. I suspect that God was smiling, wondering when I would catch on to the fact that none of this real life drama was ever under my control, and He already knew that I had no plan. He was executing His plan just as He had provided for our needs in Haiti.

The flight from Orlando to Miami was a short one and as we arrived, I was wondering what I was going to do in Miami with all of these children. When the plane opened the doors, more Red Cross volunteers appeared and told me they were sent to help me carry the children from the plane. When the last child was out, I followed them into the terminal to find some of my older kids starting to spread out their blankets on the floor to go back to sleep. Someone told me that we were not to set up camp, we needed to stay together as a group and we were led to Gate G Exit. Along the way I noticed security guards posted to ensure that our group stayed together.

When our group got outside I saw a bus, and in front of it was a line of white vans parked along the curb. The Red Cross volunteers were loading our children in the vans. I found someone who appeared to be in charge and I asked her what was going on, and she explained that the vans were provided to take us to His House Children's Home. She was very nice, and explained that they had gone to several Wal-Mart's to purchase 30 extra car seats to accommodate our large group of young children. She laughingly reminded me that, "You are in the US now, and kids need car seats." She said that the people at His House Children's Home were expecting us. I had no idea of who was at HIS House Children's Home expecting us, but I got into a van and put on my seatbelt as directed.

When we arrived at His House Children's Home I noticed lots of houses, and people were unloading my children and taking off with them. In total confusion, I started asking a lot of questions, like what are you doing with all of my kids? Where are you going with Berline, Michael and Felineta? They are MY children. I was reminded, "that was then, this is now", and they were not currently "my" children. It was gently explained to me that everything was OK, and the children were being taken to homes with house parents who were going to care for them. They assured me that each child would be bathed, fed if hungry, and put to bed in a home with kids they already knew, with 12 children per home. I was very uncomfortable with this arrangement, as I wanted to see where the children would be and that they were OK. However, I was told that I needed to come to the administrative office. There were people waiting to see me, and they had been waiting a long time. As I hadn't slept for days and had been wearing the same clothes for days as well, I wasn't very sympathetic. It was the middle of the night again, and I couldn't understand what was so important that it had to be dealt with in the middle of the night. I was taken to the office anyway, and was met by well-dressed officials with the Orphan Refugee Resettlement Program from Washington DC. They were interested in knowing what paperwork I had for the children. I explained that complete dossiers had been submitted to the US Embassy and they had taken what they needed for their processing. Next, the files were sent to DHS and they, too, and taken what they wanted. I had no idea what was left in the files. They seemed satisfied with that response and told me that they would have the files prepared by morning and we would start work at 8AM. They

needed to get clearances for the adoptive parents so that they could leave with their children. The parent's background checks would be done through social security numbers, instead of the normal fingerprints, which take longer. I agreed with this plan, and ask where I could go to get a few hours of sleep. Again I was told that was not to happen yet. I needed to meet with adoptive parents. As it was around 2:00 AM, I couldn't imagine what they were talking about. They explained that adoptive parents were waiting in the cafeteria to meet with me. I questioned how the parents knew to come to this place. Later I learned that they had been contacted by USCIS. I was instructed that adoptive parents were tired and some were angry. Many wanted their children immediately, with plans to return to their homes on already scheduled flights in the morning. I was to speak to the parents and calm them down, assuming that since I already had a relationship with them, they would accept what I needed to tell them.

Walking into the cafeteria, I experienced that surreal feeling again. As I looked around the room, I recognized parents from all over the US, including Hawaii. I could not comprehend how they all knew to come and meet in this place. It took me a few minutes to get oriented to the setting and I was humbled as they began clapping. I shared with them what an amazing experience their children had been going through. I shared that their children had spent the previous weeks sleeping on the ground, in tents, on the floor of the Embassy, on folding chairs at the airport, in airplanes, on the floor of Department of Homeland Security, and for the first time since the earthquake, they were being bathed, put in clean pajamas, and being tucked into beds with their friends. I explained that the children were safe, but exhausted. They needed the gift of rest with their friends who would make them more comfortable in new surroundings. I begged the parents to be patient, knowing that in the morning they would have an opportunity to visit with their children. I think they understood once I shared that my own adoptive children were also in one of the houses, despite the fact that they had lived with me in Haiti for 5 years. I understood the parent's feelings. We agreed to go to get some sleep and then we would meet back at His House Children's Home in the morning. As the group began getting their things together, I had a chance to speak with my sister-in-law and daughter-in-law who were also in the group. I was confused about why they were there, as I knew that they were not adoptive parents. They explained that they had come to help me, as they knew I would be exhausted. They were willing to help me with whatever they could to help get processing completed and to help with my adoptive children. I felt so blessed to have their support, as Hal was still in Haiti caring for the children at the camp. They took me to their hotel, and I stayed in the hot shower for over 30 minutes. It felt so good to be clean, even if I had to put my dirty clothes on again. I went to sleep for a couple hours and then we were up for a quick breakfast and back to His House.

Adoptive parents were welcomed into a waiting room, which was very brightly decorated, and we were offered snacks and meals throughout the day. Many parents sat waiting in the hallway outside the office where dossiers were being studied. On occasion parents were called into the office for paperwork questions. About 10:30AM parents were allowed to go to the houses for a visit where their children were staying. The comfortable homes were very nice, and our children seemed happy. A couple kids were not feeling well, and they were taken to a clinic for medical evaluations and treatments. The rest seemed very excited to see their adoptive families. The routine became waiting, snacking, visiting

children, waiting, snacking more, and visiting children. This process continued for 2 days. Once a family received clearance, they were called into the office to sign final papers and get instructions. Their children were brought to the office for photos, and the happy family would get back into one of the vans for a trip to the airport. Over and over again I smiled for photos with the children, then said another goodbye. On the way back to the hotel one evening, the driver asked if I needed to stop at Wal-Mart to buy clothes for myself. I was elated! I was given 15 minutes. With the Wal-Mart laid out in a familiar floor plan, I had everything needed for a couple days and was back in the van on time. I couldn't wait to shower that night and to put on clean clothes! My daughter-in-law had brought a suitcase for Berline, Michael, and Felineta with clothing for their flight to Ohio, so they were set for clothes.

During the second day, I was called to the office. Very excited to hear good news, I was disappointed to find that was not the reason for my summons. I was asked if I was legally adopting my children, as there was no trace of my documents. It appeared that there were some who believed that I was not legally adopting my children, but maybe trying to get them to the US illegally. I was shocked, as I had been in the adoptive process for years and had just a few days before the earthquake received my Haitian Presidential Waiver documents needed to complete legal proceedings. I was further than anyone else in the adoption process for my 3 kids. I explained my situation, but had no answers for where my documents were. I had received them back from the Embassy, and had seen them at Sanford. I was told that ORR could do nothing for me until they had my legal documentation. Totally distraught, for the first time since the earthquake I completely broke. I went outside to wander around the compound, although I knew this was not approved and I didn't care. I just needed privacy to cry out to God and just cry. I reminded God that I had done all of the right things with my paperwork, and yet I had no idea of what had happened to it. As I prayed, I told God that I knew that He knew everything, and I asked him to reveal the location of my file. I had seen so many dramatic answers to my prayers already, and I knew that I couldn't resolve this on my own and I asked for another miracle. Not for anyone else, but for my family and myself this time. God overshadowed me with His peace, and I returned to the waiting area again. I shared my problem with other parents, and they began praying too. About 30 minutes later I was called to the office again. This time it was to receive a phone call. Another adoptive parent was on the line, calling from Arizona. When they got home with their child, they checked their paperwork and found my complete dossier mixed in with theirs. I found out later that one of my relatives with me had sent a message to our Internet group site, asking families to check their paperwork for my file. Words cannot describe the mixed joy and amazement that I felt as I realized that God had answered my prayer so quickly! The people working in the office seemed equally excited to receive the good news. As I was talking on the phone, I asked the family to start faxing documents, but as there were so many papers, we decided to overnight mail the file to us instead. By the end of the second day, all other families had completed their paperwork and left. Since I was the only parent still waiting, I was given a small guest apartment on the campus. It was stocked with food, and I was told to make myself at home. I had a telephone in my room and was able to call my daughter in Ohio to discuss plans for our anticipated homecoming.

The next morning, my paperwork arrived, and everyone involved at His House stopped what they were doing to prepare my papers. It didn't seem possible that I could finally get my children! I had missed

them so much, but I realized how important that time had been for me to complete my responsibilities to the other children in getting them on their way. Now our time had come, and we could finally get in the van and head to the airport too! The kids and I were so happy to be on our way home to Ohio.

As we arrived in Dayton and were ready to leave the plane, my youngest daughter had a meltdown in the jet bridge. My arms were loaded with all of our belongings, and I begged her to get up so others on the plane could get out too. My 5 year old refused to stand up and continued crying. Someone asked if she was sick. When I explained our situation, everyone became extremely sympathetic and a man arrived with a wheelchair and gave her a ride to the lobby. Our family and the local news media team met us! Everyone was very excited and my little girl quickly recovered. The kids and I were given winter coats; gloves, hats and scarves, and we were off to our hometown.

As I reflect on the entire earthquake experience, I understand tragedy better. It changed my life forever. No longer will I ever live in innocence, thinking tragedy affects only others. Tragedy can affect anyone at any time. However, with God as my Father and Jesus as my Savior, I have the personal knowledge that God is watching over every detail of my life and he is a faithful father to the fatherless! I realized that in this situation, I had no control over anything except my ability to trust God. With God leading the way, He took us through a very difficult situation and showed his love for us through countless miracles. God's heart is merciful to orphans, and he blessed the children with everything needed. Although I never want to go through something like this again, I would not ever want to trade the opportunity to experience so many miracles first-hand.

In the months that followed, we were able to complete paperwork for several more children to join their families thru the Humanitarian Parole Program. We sent a total of 8 children to Canadian families and 72 to their American families. Hal continued to oversee activities in Haiti with day to day activities of caring for 42 children, getting our homes inspected to determine that they were structurally safe and coordinating teams to help in the cleanup, repair, and restoration of our homes. Finally, he closed the camp at the church and moved the children back into our two original homes. I traveled between the US and Haiti for several months helping with legal documentation for the children going through the process of completing US adoptions, including our own 3 children. While Hal and I were continuing our work in Haiti, our three children lived with our adult daughter's family in Ohio. They learned important life lessons such as how blessed they were to have 6 adult brothers and sisters who loved them. They learned to never eat yellow snow, and to cherish our family time together. A year and a half after our children left Haiti in the emergency airlift, they returned to Haiti with completed US adoptions and new passports declaring them Citizens of the United States.

I would like to thank so many who supported HIS Home Ministry and our family in so many ways. Although I cannot begin to recall the names of everyone, I would like to say a very special thanks to everyone who prayed for us throughout this experience. I know that God heard those prayers and answered them in dramatic ways! Pastor Carl Olsson: thank you for your faith in God to fulfill what He started, and your encouragement to me to follow God's leading! Another thank you to everyone who sent donations, both financial and in the way of supplies! Thank you to all adoptive parents who collected and brought our emergency supplies! You will never know how much we appreciate what you

did, even coming to Haiti during a very difficult time to deliver the supplies. To the adoptive parent who arranged the tents, we can never say thank you enough! I would like to thank the US Embassy for their involvement in helping us with the needed paperwork. Special thanks also go to those who coordinated travel arrangements, and the US Military who provided medical care for our kids and helped in so many ways! I would like to thank Jean Jumelle and our HIS Home staff who worked beside Hal to care for the children left behind, and especially to Hal for his willingness to stay behind in Haiti and accept responsibility during this chaotic time. Blessings to the folks at DHS who worked together to quickly complete our legal documents for the children's entrance to the US, and all of the Red Cross Volunteers who helped with keeping our children fed and diapers changed, as well as helping unload the kids from the plane in Miami. They deserve our appreciation too. The wonderful people at HIS House Children's Home were so patient with us and provided for us with such generosity! Your efficiency and hospitality were amazing! I would also like to let every team member and volunteer who showed up in Haiti to help with the cleanup and repairs know how much your efforts were appreciated! Words seem so inadequate to express my personal appreciation to each of you for being the ones who listened to God's voice and responded to the needs to provide for God's children in countless ways!

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:27

End of the Chapter: HAITI EARTHQUAKE - January 12, 2010