

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

October 23, 2005

The Story of Oretta

Jefferson David Tant

In the summer of 1991 in Savanna-la-Mar, I met Oretta Baggo while she was working in her aunt's store and invited her to attend our Vacation Bible School. She showed an interest in what we were doing, so we continued our contact with her. Her family of eight (four brothers and one sister) lived in a one-room home with no utilities in an impoverished fishing village. During the January 1992 trip with Jeff Harward, further studies brought about Oretta's baptism. She was an intelligent girl who did well in school, and took her commitment to Christ seriously, promising to remain morally pure until she married—something rare in Jamaica. She was 15 years old.

She continued to grow as a Christian, and her letters were encouraging. This went on for about two years, until she disappeared. Her mother wrote asking if I knew where she was, but I had no clue. For the next two years my wife and I would find her mother and ask about Oretta, but still no clue. Then one day we went by and there she was—very pregnant and very embarrassed. Then we learned “the rest of the story.” Oretta ran away from home because of her abusive father. In fact, he had set fire to a bed she was on when he was drunk. That's when a young man in the area offered to marry her and provide for her. We met Rowan Nepaul, and he seemed like a pretty good fellow. He had a good job, and they lived about two hours away. But he never got around to marrying her, even after the birth of a second child. In time, Rowan began drinking and becoming abusive. She had seen her father's drunken rages in which he would cut her mother with a machete. Due to this, she left Rowan and struggled to provide for her two children on her own. We visited her whenever we could to encourage her.

Oretta then met Marlon Mauta, a very nice young man who proposed marriage. He also had a good job and could provide for her and her children. Unfortunately, before the wedding, Marlon fell while doing some electrical wiring and broke his neck. He was paralyzed from the neck down and is now a permanent invalid. But Oretta married him, and has devoted her life to caring for him and raising the two precious children—Shara and Rajae. In addition to marrying Marlon, she also taught him the gospel, and he has been baptized into Christ. They tried meeting with a church in a village a few miles away, but the very liberal preacher who controls the church has not been of help to them, despite his promises, and folks complained about having to pick them up. Thus the Mautas have their own services in their home.

They live in a remote area close to Marlon's family, and we have raised funds for Marlon and Oretta to build a nice four-room house so they won't have to worry about rent. Their home was severely damaged by a hurricane in September, 2004, but has been repaired.

American Christians are providing the family with monthly support so Oretta can attend nursing school and thus get a stable job upon her graduation. In January, 2003, she arranged for me to speak at the chapel service at her college. In the summer of 2002 a group of about 20 of us met in their home for worship on Sunday afternoon. Oretta had invited several young people from the community, and about ten came. She continues to talk to people to arrange future studies. This past March, 2005, we had studies on two nights,

with 17 and 22 respectively. We see this as the beginning of a faithful church in their community. With some training, Marlon is capable of preaching from a wheelchair.

All who know them love them. Please pray for Marlon and Oretta and the precious children they are raising. They are teaching the young ones to love the Lord, and they are an inspiration to all of us. In July 2005, it was my honor to baptize 12-year-old Shara into Christ. This was my first “second generation” to baptize there.



“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).



“Prayer is not a way of making use of God; prayer is a way of offering ourselves to God in order that He should be able to make use of us.” – William Barclay

Family News

Virginia Bryant is doing some better. She does remain in pain and will get another pain shot on Tuesday (the last time this helped for a few days).

Mary Burnett has been doing well lately but had a bad day yesterday.

Mark Ciampa passed out while driving several weeks ago. Since then he has not been driving while many tests were ran to identify why he had passed out. All tests have now been completed. All test results came back showing nothing is wrong and that he is very healthy. He is now driving again.

Kendall Gaw got hit in the head Thursday while playing. She was cut and bleeding. She was taken to the emergency room. They used some staples to seal the cut and sent her home. She is fine but needs to be extra careful while she heals.

Estelle Hayes went to the doctor this past week for her hip. They did not give her any solution to the pain except rest.

Sandra Hunt continues to not do very well.

John Jenkins, Robert's father, has lung cancer and continues treatment.

Remember **Debbie Kelley** who remains at Brandywood in Gallatin.

Fran Pickens went home as scheduled this past Monday. She continues to improve.

Laura Reed remains about the same. Her birthday is this Saturday.

Jason, Lisa and Daniel Schoenholz have moved to Florida. Jason will be preaching at the Hollywood church.

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Dustin Simpson has returned to the Navy.

Fred Wenger, Teddy's father, is now in Brandywood in Gallatin.

Joyce Werner is doing very well. She will continue therapy for a while.

Ame White is doing better.

Robert Wray continues to have various health problems. These include some loss of hearing and sight. Also, his dizzy spells have not abated.

*“Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.” – Psalm
85:7*

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).