

Wednesday June 25, 2014

Day Five account to our Dear Ones,

On our various job sites, we get our hands, feet, and clothes covered in clay soil and cement (add gravel mixed with sand). With the right mixture and a pastor-turned-bricklayer (*far left*), bathroom walls and septic tanks of

concrete block will stick and last, likewise footings for house foundations.

In relationships the same principle applies: We hope to build on a strong foundation of trust, some-

thing that holds the weight of the relationships, even ones that go bad or need to be lifted up in prayer, or

sheer determination — as when Doug Ready lifts 7 kids off the ground at once. We need superhuman strength to shepherd 250+ kids at the foot-

washing and sandal-giveaway program. “Plan A” is tossed aside; Pastor Doug becomes a gatekeeper, when an unexpectedly huge crush of tiny humans amass outside the church. We make it through the next two



hours, thanks largely to local police security and wonderful church ladies (*page 2, top L*), who immediately jump in to bail us out.

Once inside, where we can get our hands on their tiny feet, we forge relationships and make each other smile. To each guest whose feet we wash



with soap and with the servant heart of Jesus (see John 13), we repeat the mantra for this day, *este es el amor de Dios para ti* (“this is the love of God for you”). In our version of this biblical story, the recipients of God’s love and grace also get new sandals for their now clean feet.

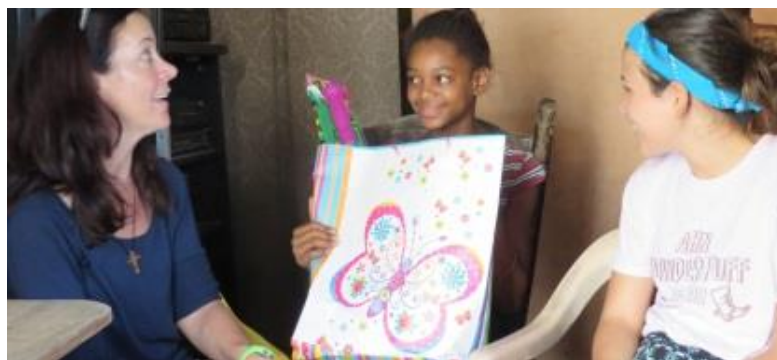


Such love can be tough, even sad, as when Pastor Doug sees that he’s washing the

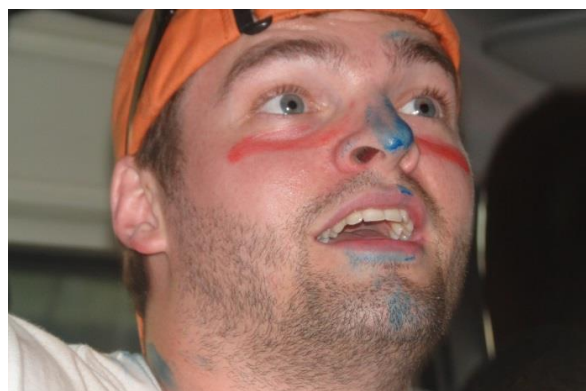
feet of a girl in our project from 4 years ago, who’s now 14—but with a baby.

Even so, grace is freely given—and mixed with the law of reaping what we sow. That is why we now offer sex education on STDs and birth control, to which 55+ teens (some as young as 10) show up a 2nd day....

Such love can also be joyous, as when Kerry & Alma meet their sponsored child Pamela, who loves the art project gift they gave her. Ditto for Jeff & Rhonda, who meet up with Kiara (*in teal blue*) and José, from another household (*below*); José loves the baseball and mitt he’s given and immediately begins playing with Jeff. Peyton also catches up with her sponsored



child Maximo (*above*). Speaking of baseball, that is the national sport here in the DR, and no week of mission in this country would be complete without a game between the



native Dominicans versus the ragtag Americanos. So “game on!” tomorrow. With some ringers from the local Hands of Hope staff, we Americanos hope to win; already Brennen has his game face on the day before. He will do most anything to charm the kids and the rest of us—but all for now, all for Christ. Until then, *hasta mañana*.