

## The Prescribed Life

Devotional by Malcolm Henderson, MD

*“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” - Psalm 34:19*

As Christians in an affluent country, the idea of suffering is not only a foreign one, but an unwelcome one. This attitude is strikingly different than the one we see held by the apostles and early Christians in Scripture who weren't only willing to suffer, but welcomed it. After being flogged by the Jewish religious leaders the apostles practically celebrated, “So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, **rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.**” - Acts 5:41. They knew that following Christ was synonymous with suffering and trials and there was no uncertainty about this.

This is Scripture, the inspired Word of God, so why have we veered so far from accepting and living in this Christian truth? Upon graduating from Oxford, George Whitfield, the great 18th century preacher, was quoted as saying,

*“I am now about to take Orders and my degree, and go into the world. What will become of me I know not. All I can say is I look for perpetual conflicts and struggles in that life and hope for no other peace, but only a cross, while on this side of eternity.”*



George Whitfield, through these words, displayed apostolic conformity in his willing expectancy of suffering. Additionally, we can consider Helen Roseveare, the British Christian medical doctor

who served as a missionary for over 20 years in Zaire (present day Congo). During her work there, a revolution broke out and Helen was imprisoned, beaten, and tortured for almost 6 months. Later she wrote what she sensed God telling her during that horrific time.

*“Twenty years ago, you asked Me for the privilege of being a missionary, the privilege of being identified with Me. This is it. Don't you want it? This is what it means. These are not your sufferings, they are mine. All I ask of you is the loan of your body.”*

As Christians, our bodies are purposed to glorify God. To glorify God in a fallen, satanically-influenced world, means suffering—it is inevitable. Before we fret, let us remember that Christian suffering produces a beautiful result. Through “sharing in the sufferings of Christ” we come to know Him better, which will bring us into a deeper relationship with our Father. Isn't that worth suffering for?

The question that surfaces here is one surrounding severity. In America, we are not going to be flogged, tortured, or beheaded for our faith. What then is ‘suffering’ in America?

I strongly believe that we are to be Kingdom-minded Christians in all aspects of our lives. In America, we can support missions, both national and international. If we truly give to Kingdom-expanding ministries around the world, we are ensuring that the gospel of Jesus Christ is spread and for this we will receive reward in heaven. This may cause a level of ‘suffering’ in the sense that we have to tell our flesh no, and rather than spending on temporal things for ourselves, we can invest in the eternal reality of the Kingdom of God. Ensuring



that all people get to hear the saving news of the gospel is what should consume us on this earth and this requires that Christians should go, and support, both of which pose levels of suffering.

Through this willingness to ‘suffer’ by giving of ourselves sacrificially, we will learn to know God better. What is greater than this? J.I. Packer knew the importance of knowing God and this is revealed in this profound quote by him found in his book ‘Knowing God.’

*“What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God. What is the eternal life that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God. ‘This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent’ (John 17:3). What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight, and contentment than anything else? Knowledge of God...What, of all the states God ever sees man in, gives Him most pleasure? Knowledge of Himself. ‘I desire...the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings,’ (Hosea 6:6). Once you have become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord.”*

So let's resolve to live with eternal purpose and bring the gospel to the people of Haiti. They are in desperate need of the true gospel, so please determine in your mind to live sacrificially through giving and going, for the sake of their souls and more importantly, for the sake of obedience!

# At a glance

With your help, we've accomplished so much this quarter.



100 Haitian Creole Bibles donated and distributed by mission teams.



774 boxes of high quality pinto beans donated and distributed throughout our churches, schools, classes, widows groups and 2 orphanages.



7 laptops have been donated and are being given to our leaders and a few of our students who are in need of them.



Funds donated to purchase 2 more new motorcycles for Kesnel and Ite' (both former vodou priests) to help them start a motorcycle taxi business and provide sustainable incomes for their families.



Hosted Living Waters AG church group from Grayslake, IL.



30 folding canes were purchased for our Haitian blind group!



A Fender guitar was donated for Lobo, (former vodou priest), so that he can start giving guitar lessons and start an apprenticeship program!



One hundred pairs of shoes, 5 boxes of miscellaneous medical supplies and 100 new back packs were donated and are currently being sent over to Haiti in barrels.



10 small generators have been donated for our churches and groups in Haiti.



Over a thousand pieces of beautiful, new hair accessories were given to the ladies in our widows group, as well as, to every girl in each of our schools.



18 goats were purchased for Charistan, (a former vodou priest), so that he could start a breeding program and provide sustainable income for his family.



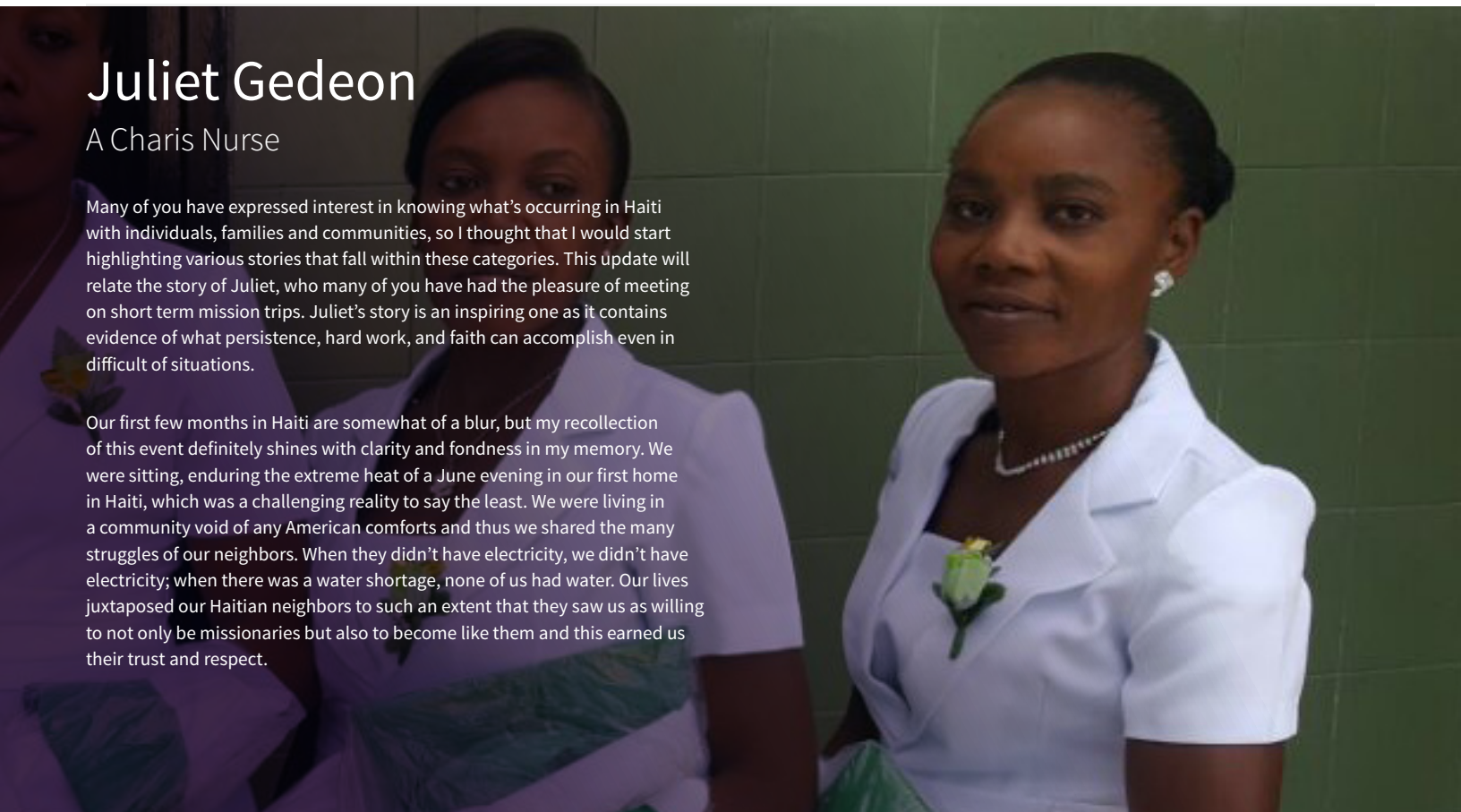
51 more Haitian Creole Audio Bibles were donated and distributed throughout our 9 villages to the illiterate and the blind.

## Juliet Gedeon

A Charis Nurse

Many of you have expressed interest in knowing what's occurring in Haiti with individuals, families and communities, so I thought that I would start highlighting various stories that fall within these categories. This update will relate the story of Juliet, who many of you have had the pleasure of meeting on short term mission trips. Juliet's story is an inspiring one as it contains evidence of what persistence, hard work, and faith can accomplish even in difficult of situations.

Our first few months in Haiti are somewhat of a blur, but my recollection of this event definitely shines with clarity and fondness in my memory. We were sitting, enduring the extreme heat of a June evening in our first home in Haiti, which was a challenging reality to say the least. We were living in a community void of any American comforts and thus we shared the many struggles of our neighbors. When they didn't have electricity, we didn't have electricity; when there was a water shortage, none of us had water. Our lives juxtaposed our Haitian neighbors to such an extent that they saw us as willing to not only be missionaries but also to become like them and this earned us their trust and respect.



*"To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it." - 1 Corinthians 9:22-23*

The night of relevance to this story was an especially hot one and there was no electricity. All of us were just sitting around in the dark, sweating profusely and waiting for the government to send electricity, which was usually a futile hope, and thus I wasn't in the greatest mood. We heard that someone was at our front door asking to see Joy and I, so we went to see who it was. Standing just inside the door was a young woman with a stack of folders and files under her arm appearing timid, yet desperate for something. You must understand that Joy and I were daily receiving somewhere in the range of 5-10 requests a day for money from countless individuals for a variety of reasons. We obviously couldn't help everyone so giving people the regrettable answer of "no" had become commonplace and this, at the outset, appeared to be another such case.



We invited the young woman in and asked her what she needed. She was dressed very nicely, appearing as if she was going to a job interview. She had on a long business type skirt and a nice short sleeve sweater with her hair up in a bun. She began to open up a folded document which she brought into our view. It was her grade sheet for nursing school. The grades were impressive as she had achieved almost straight A's across the span of her entire first year. Then she opened a folder that contained many pictures and as she began to show them to us, her voice and face, though still timid, contained an element of confidence. They were pictures of her in her nursing attire in various situations at school. She went on to tell us that it had always been her dream to become a nurse and that she and her family, through great sacrifice, had gotten the money together to pay for 1 year of nursing school (which is a four year program), which she had just completed. Unfortunately, there was not another dollar available to put toward the furthering of her education, and she was coming to us to ask if we would be willing to help.

When people ask us for assistance I make a practice of always looking at them in their eyes because it tells me something. In some strange way, it lets me know if the person is lying or sincere, and if they are a genuinely good person or a manipulative scheming one. This time was different though. As I looked at her, I felt that she was telling the truth (she had brought all the proof for that) and that she was a good person. I also felt the Holy Spirit telling me to alleviate her fear and tell her that we were willing to help and that God would see to it that she would indeed finish nursing school.

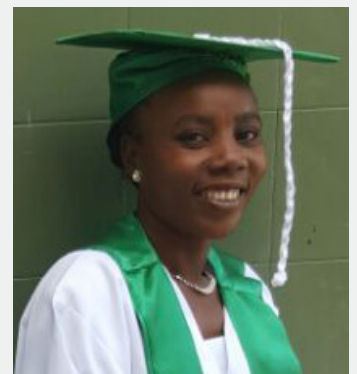
This was the very first time that this level of clarity had come over me in terms of hearing the Holy Spirit. It was so quick and forceful that I knew we had to help this young woman finish what she had sacrificed to start. So, I obeyed what I was sensing despite the fact that Joy was more uncertain about it, wanting to wait, investigate and pray secondary to the fact that agreeing to help this young woman would surely bring many others to our door, with similar requests, pleading that it's only fair that if we help one person, we should help them all.

When I shared with Joy though, that I felt God telling me to support her, she was willing to go along with it. We therefore told her that we would help, and her entire countenance transformed from timid and unsure to overwhelming relief and happiness—it was awesome to witness! After several more minutes of conversation, in which she told us her name was Juliet, we told her to come back in a few days so that we could get the money together to pay for the first semester of her upcoming year. God provided the funding almost immediately through a relative of mine named Jan, who is a retired nurse that had, at that point, already been supporting the ministry since its inception. Upon hearing about Juliet, Jan stepped up and told us that she would support her monthly, and the amount she pledged would cover both tuition and transportation expenses so that Juliet could get to school reliably every day.

When we had the second meeting with Juliet and told her all of this she was, as expected, overjoyed. The problem in Haiti though is job availability. Countless people who have completed nursing school, and even medical school, cannot find work as a nurse or a doctor, so they end up selling food in markets or farming—a real personal, and social, tragedy. Knowing this, we told Juliet that the support that God had opened up for her came with a commitment on her part. First, she had to keep up her grades, and second, she had to be willing to work for Charis as a nurse upon the completion of her education. Of course, this was really a win-win for Juliet because not only was she getting her schooling paid for, but she was also ensured a paying job after she was done. Juliet could not have been happier and she left just bubbling over with excitement over how her future had changed that day, and it was all within her power to attain it through commitment and hard work. We watched Juliet over a three-year period complete nursing school. There were definitely struggles, both academically and emotionally, as serious academic pursuit in Haiti is no easy thing. Haitians have to study in the worst of conditions (miserably hot, no technological assistance, many nights of no electricity—so no lights, etc.) but she got through it all as she endured and worked because she knew that her life had purpose.

One day when she came over to report to us on how things were going she saw Joy reading her Bible. Juliet asked Joy why she was reading the Bible when there was no one there to help her interpret it. Joy told her that we are instructed to read and study Scripture by God, and that this brings you into closer relationship with Him and into a greater understanding of how to live as a Christian in an evil world. This just blew Juliet away as she said that her church had told her that she was not to read or study the Bible on her own and that only the priest knew enough to teach the Bible. At that time we were having church in our home, so we invited her. After attending several times, Juliet began to read the Bible for herself and we saw her spiritually blossom right in front of us. She ended up leaving her church and going to our church, and to this day she attends every week and reads her Bible daily—praise God!

Juliet graduated this last year and she began working for us. She functions as a mobile nurse who travels into a large mountain community called Grand Rivier. This large, spread out community is only accessible by hike (5 hours), and there is zero medical assistance available to them as no hospital, no clinic, and no medicine is present there. Juliet was born in Grand Rivier, and we have hiked there many times to offer free clinics to the people. So, Juliet is helping greatly with the medical and evangelistic effort there as she brings medicine and the gospel to these people who greatly suffer physically and exist in the dark spiritually. What we desperately need to keep Juliet and her ministry arm of Charis established in an effective way, is funding for medicine.





Medicine is greatly needed for these people as I have witnessed simple infections kill people here. A healthy person is a happy person, and a happy healthy person is a much better recipient of the gospel than a depressed and sick one. So please consider donating to this very worthy and crucial cause. We currently have 2 more young girls entering their second year of nursing school who we are supporting with the same agreement. The goal is to get a team of nurses traveling to numerous isolated unreached mountain communities so that we can bring the gospel in on a medical platform.

A quick story about Juliet, as she has become my protector in many ways. We were hiking to Grand Rivier with a mission team about two years ago, and Juliet was with us. I made a wrong turn with 5 of the team members and quickly became lost on this huge mountain. At first I wasn't really worried but after about an hour I started getting concerned. I couldn't find my way back and a group of white college kids lost in the mountains of Haiti was not a good thing any way you look at it. When I started to realize that we might not ever make it back to the correct path I heard footsteps in the bush running rapidly toward us. Not knowing what to expect I moved in the direction of the approaching runner, putting the team behind me. Out of the bush pops Juliet sweating and completely out of breath.

Upon noticing that I wasn't with the group any longer she had left in urgent pursuit of me and had been running up the mountain, down every path, for over an hour. When she saw me she fell onto me with a hug and told me to follow her back to the path. I had not been happier to see someone as I was to see Juliet that day, and that is just one example of her fierce allegiance to my family, the ministry, and me. This one dedicated young woman not only changed her own life with her hard work, but this ministry changed her temporal and eternal future just by physically being on the mission field. It is my prayer that you, the reader, are also on a mission field, and that your persistent efforts and presence is giving God the opportunity to use you to accomplish His will on earth in the lives of His elect sons and daughters. God bless you, and please continue to pray for this ministry and support its ground efforts.

*"And if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday. And the Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail." - Isaiah 58:10-11*

## How to continue helping

As we continue to share the gospel in Haiti, the following list will provide some very practical needs. Please prayerfully consider how you can help us win over Haiti for Christ this year.

Regular monthly giving dedicated to **support more individuals exiting vodou**. The funding is used to create sustainable income for them, as listed above, by way of purchasing land to farm, purchasing a motorcycle to use as a taxi business, purchasing animals to raise, breed and sell, etc.

Ongoing need

Regular monthly giving dedicated to **schools/education**.

Ongoing need

Regular monthly giving to support the **travel and miscellaneous costs to bring the gospel** to additional unreached mountain areas in Haiti.

Ongoing need

*How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" – Romans 10:14-15*

Regular monthly giving dedicated to **supporting more indigenous Haitian Christian workers** (pastors, nurses, translators, etc.)

Ongoing need

\*Note: Any donations of school supplies, medical supplies, backpacks, uniforms and/or musical instruments can be sent to our main address and will then be shipped over to Haiti in barrels.

**Charis**  
**3015 E. New York St, A2-295**  
**Aurora, IL 60504**

## Mission Statement

Charis (Greek for God's Grace) operates in complete obedience to God, giving Him His rightful place in determining the path and goals of His ministry that He has, by grace, allowed us to perform. Charis primarily focuses on the unseen spiritual needs in Haiti, and secondarily on the seen physical needs, always remembering that our success is completely dependent on the will of God, the gospel of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit working effectively through us, His willing servants.

