

I.U. Student Walks Again After Earthquake Injury Forced Amputation of Foot (By Pam Man, May 19-21, 2010)

Once I arrived home from school, I opened the bedroom window to let in some breeze. I began to peel off my uniform for a shower when my cell phone rang. "Dave," the screen read.

"Hi, Love."

"You've got to hear this good news directly from Hugues," Dave said. "I'm handing him the phone." In the second before Hugues could speak, I wondered: new grant money to keep the clinic operational? Another student scholarship for college? No customs to pay on the new bus?

"Hi, Pam! Lynne-vie walked!" Lynne-vie is the IU-grad quake victim who lost her right foot to amputation.

"She walked? You mean with a cane?"

"No cane. Randy put on the prosthesis and then we helped with some baby steps but she said to her try. And she walked on her own."

"Oh, my, she walked!"

"Yes! She walked. She was so excited. Her family was elated. A miracle ... a dream come true."

"Oh, I can't wait for the church to see her walk on her own down the aisle after they watched her lean on you to go up front to give her testimony right after the quake."

"Yes, we've already said she must do that and I want her to come on Friday to school so the students can see her."

"Ah, that'll be good."

"Everyone should see the miracle. Randy took a video on his phone." Randy is the US pharmacist/pastor who has been coming to UMC for the last five years on medical trips. He has a friend, an amputee himself, who works in the prosthesis industry, who was key in this transformation of Lynne-Vie's life. I'd love to see that footage on YouTube.

Friday late evening, May 21, 2010 Apartment Main Room

This morning I was in the art room, trying to finish grading all my 11th grade essays before my 8 o'clock class when I heard Hugues' miked voice in the lobby at the high school daily opening prayer. It's always student-led with an occasional comment from Joe. Hardly ever do we hear Hugues on the PA. Then I remembered that today Lynne-Vie was going to address the students. I went into Dave's office to remind him. Zoulit and Jaccin were in there too so I told everybody in Creole. We all stood in the hallway listening to Hugues recount how Lynne-vie escaped the quake but with a crushed foot which was then amputated. Despite the beastly heat, Lynne-Vie wore the hat and scarf which nurse Kristi had given her in February. Their black and white stripes set the color scheme for Lynne-Vie's apparel: white top, black skirt and, most impressive of all, TWO (I repeat TWO) white socks and TWO black shoes. She was not footloose and fancy-free but she did walk on her own TWO feet, one flesh and one synthetic.

I started thinking about how to get the best camera angle when I was stuck by how vividly Hugues described the destruction and difficulty of surviving the quake. *Gee, Hugues, tone it down*, I thought. *We have a lot of survivors here you're going to freak out*. No sooner had this thought struck me than I heard a hard "thunk" on the floor nearby. Frantz, one of the earthquake survivors in one of the 12th grade classes had collapsed. Dave ran to him and I ran for the nurse. Quickly he was helped into the nurse's office. He said that when Hugues mentioned blood, it was too much for him, Dave told me later. I tried to follow the rest of the Lynne-Vie presentation but I was just tearing up too much ... not in joy for Lynne-Vie but for the lost. So few were saved, so few have Lynne-Vie's happy ending and so very many were lost. How does God manage all that? The harshness of it simply overwhelmed me. I had to leave. I went back into the art room, collapsed at my desk and had a good cry. Life is such a bittersweet mix: a singular joy amid a myriad of sorrows. I never got that triumphant photo of Lynne-Vie. I only went through one Kleenex before I regained my composure. When I went back into the hall, Lynne-Vie, limping and drained, was clinging to Hugues' arm as the students filed upstairs to their classrooms. (She had walked so much the first two days with the prosthesis that her stump was sore.) There's still a lot of work ahead for Lynne-Vie.

I thought of the English sentence I had taught my 11th graders this past week: *When the going gets tough, the tough get going*. I explained how this idea is a favorite of football coaches at halftime when the team is losing. Also I said that it's a concept many Haitians seem to model.

"Do you think blacks are stronger than whites?" Romy-Clauselle asked in the front row. A funny question, I thought, coming from the lightest-skinned person in the room.

"It's not a question of race. Difficult circumstances demoralize some people while mysteriously motivating others, the tough ones."

*...we also exult in our tribulations,
knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance,
and perseverance, proven character;
and proven character, hope;
and hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Romans 5:3-5