

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

You may remember my husband, Dr. Benjamin G. Dennis, who was a member here for many years. He always loved his people and had pleaded with President Tolbert in 1972, to have a road made over the Cambui Mountain Range which had isolated his father's village of Vahun from the rest of Liberia. In 1973, a crude road was bulldozed by a Swedish company. In the course of time, my husband was instrumental in bringing the LCMS to Liberia, particularly to Vahun. In 1982-83, our family spent a year there assisting the white missionaries who led the Vahun Lutheran Church.

When my husband was dying in 2009, he knew he would never return to Liberia and dictated letters to me to be read in Vahun and in Somalahun, his father's and mother's villages. He asked our son Peter to have his ashes spread both places. Recently, Peter, along with his two teenage children, Mali and Morlu, traveled to these remote villages from Monrovia, the capital city, to Lofa County. It was a treacherous ride over the Cambui Mountain at night in the rain. At one point, they had to detour around a vehicle that had crashed and fallen down into the ravine at the edge of the road.

Peter was part of numerous Mende and Gbandi ceremonies. In each village, special gravesites were constructed honoring their ancestor who had done so much for them. The farewell letters of 15 years ago were read at each funeral.

In Vahun, a cow was killed for the feast. The soccer game on the mission hill had uniforms with my husband's picture on them with Mali and Morlu participating. The masked beings once again came out to honor Ben as they did in the 1970s. The tombstone in Vahun read, "Dr. Benjamin G. Dennis, Sunrise-1929, Sunset-2009, Follower of Jesus Christ. 'I never forgot you.'"

The mission house where the missionaries lived was in great disrepair, overgrown with jungle foliage. During Liberia's two civil wars, it had been used as a place to murder villagers. Now it has been completely cleaned up and hopefully it will become a rededicated place of worship for the second Lutheran church in Vahun now called the Dr. Benjamin G. Dennis Memorial Church.

A Lutheran Mission called Hope & Care Outreach is currently operating several orphanages, churches, schools and radio ministry in Liberia. The trip couldn't have been done without their help, and we are so grateful.

Love in Christ,
Anita Dennis



