

The Life of Vonnie Larue

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In the world of healthcare, few professional people chose to dedicate their lives or work to serve those in poor health living condition in underprivileged countries. Christian missionary nurses are individuals who devote their lives to serving impoverished community, by providing healthcare, and by preaching the gospel around the world. The work of missionary nurses is vast and demanding. While in missions, they provide medical care, health education, emotional support, spiritual support, and sometimes educate and train other local healthcare professionals. Not only they provide medical assistance, they also share the love of God with the people they serve. Vonnie Larue is a retired nurse from Green in 2011. She worked as a pediatrician but also as an occupational medicine nurse at Akron General Hospital. She was recruited as a volunteer after a presentation that took place at the Holy Cross Lutheran church, seeking healthcare worker to help out people from Haiti. This assignment aims to explore the effect on spreading the Gospel in Haiti, examine the challenges Larue faced, the profound impact she made on the community, and her unique physical and spiritual experiences that came with serving people throughout her mission in Haiti.

Condition of Haiti

Nurse Larue has been on mission trips a few times in Haiti. Her very first mission was in fall 2010 when the country was hit by a terrible earthquake that caused multiple deaths and left thousands of people injured and homeless. During her time there, she served in many locations without electricity, runny water or bathrooms. According to her, the island is rife with malnutrition and the lack of basic infrastructure. Per consequent, the condition in which the community is living largely contributes to their medical condition.

The effect on spreading the Gospel

Spreading the Gospel can have significant impacts on the life of people. As a nurse, Larue was able to touch the lives of children, young people, elderly, patients, educators, healthcare workers, and colleagues by sharing her faith while providing medical care. The compassionate nurse used this opportunity to speak about the Word of God to her patients and offered hope to those struggling with different illnesses and loss. Her mission included several pastors and other volunteer members from her church. There were also Haitian pastors with the group that contributed to the spread of the Gospel. According to Larue, most Haitians heard and already know about Jesus, however, this doesn't prevent them from practicing voodoo. Because these people don't trust traditional medicine, they often go to voodoo doctors for healing. Therefore this nation desperately needed to hear, see and experience love of God in another level. During the mission trip, the love of God was manifested through kind actions, compassions, care, emotional support and spiritual comfort. The gospel was shared in various different ways there. The team preach the gospel through teaching, preaching, worshiping, testifying, distributing Bibles and by meeting these individuals' needs. In order to meet their practical needs, the group provided food, shelter, money, medical care, medications, clothing. This created the opportunity to bring the members of the community together to listen to the gospel and demonstrate the love of God.

The effect on health care in the community

A major problem the Haitian community is facing is the lack of healthcare. This is an issue all around the country especially in the poorest area, more precisely outside of the city in the mountains. Nurse Larue talked about the lack of medical supplies in the hospital which is the

primary reason basic local care couldn't be provided around the country after the catastrophe. Common health issues Haitian adults suffered from include; hypertension, diabetes, skin disease, communicable disease, lack of immunizations, malaria, measles, chickenpox and other rare viruses. She even mentioned that one of the members had a heart attack and the hospital did not have an EKG machine to monitor the patient because in these hospitals, patients have to bring everything including all essential medical equipment. These Haitians needed care, such as vaccines, topical cream, IVs, glasses, oral medications, eyedrops, eardrops, ambulatory equipment, all type of basic and necessary medical resources. Therefore, the health assistance delivered by the missionary group in this island was welcomed and made a huge difference in the lives of some people.

The effect on her physical and spiritual life

For nurse Larue, the mission was necessary to help her develop a strong spiritual foundation to connect with God and share the gospel. The experience reminded her of her first mission on earth which is to spread the Word of God. While doing so, she utilized her skills as a nurse to provide care for the ill. Overall, her involvement in this Christian missionary trip helped her grow spiritually and in her career because she was able to acquire new experiences since she had the opportunity to provide good care even though she had to work with limited medical supplies. Despite all challenges, Nurse Larue desires to return to Haiti because she thinks the people are wonderful and need more medical assistance. She believes that her presence and contribution made an impact in the lives of individuals. They were grateful for the help because their belief, their health, and their condition of leaving improve tremendously in a short period of time.

Furthermore, her contribution to this mission relieved the pain of some people and will prevent them from getting many diseases in the future.

To conclude, Larue feel grateful and lucky to serve the Lord and many vulnerable people from Haiti. This mission affect the lives of hundreds of people physically and spiritually, including hers. Reflecting on her experience, it is important for Christian nurses to travel to poor countries to provide help. Basic health care is essential to save lives. Matthew 4:23 says “Jesus went through Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom , and healing every disease and sickness among the people”. This verse suggests that Jesus Himself was a missionary. Larue’s work aspires me more to becoming a missionary nurse because not only these people received medical treatment but also received the Gospel that will allow them to live like Christ demands, and to be able to receive eternal life.

Resources

Goshay, C. M. (2021, November 14). *'the people are wonderful': Retired green nurse helps out in Haiti*. Canton Repository. Retrieved March 4, 2023, from <https://www.cantonrep.com/story/lifestyle/2021/11/14/the-people-wonderful-retired-green-nurse-helps-out-haiti/6284225001/>