

TAKING THE SAVING GOSPEL TO A LOST WORLD

RONALD COLEMAN
8813 WOOD GLEN DRIVE
ROWLETT, TEXAS 75088
(972) 412-4273

"...GO INTO ALL THE
WORLD AND PREACH THE
GOSPEL TO EVERY
CREATURE..."

CENTERVILLE ROAD
CHURCH OF CHRIST

1102 E. CENTERVILLE ROAD
GARLAND, TEXAS 75041
(972) 278-3179

DECEMBER, 2009

MONTSERRAT

I left the day after Thanksgiving for my third visit to this small island nation in the Caribbean. It's located about 300 miles east of Puerto Rico and is reached by a twenty minute flight on a small plane from Antigua. Montserrat is about 12 miles long and 7 miles wide. In 1995 the island's Soufrière Hills Volcano, dormant for hundreds of years, rumbled to life and in 1997 there was a massive eruption, sending forth pyroclastic flows of hot gases and boiling hot ash, sometimes traveling downhill at hurricane velocity. The island's airport and Plymouth (the only town) were destroyed. The Lord's church had a building there but it was completely covered. There was ample warning so Plymouth had been evacuated but 19 people died as a result of ignoring the warnings and staying in the danger zone. Much of the southern part of the island was rendered uninhabitable and is now in the "exclusion zone." More than half of the people had to leave the island due to the economic disruption and lack of housing. The 12,000 population decreased to less than 5,000. Most members of the church migrated elsewhere leaving a small, struggling group that really needs help. The volcano is still active; there was a major eruption on July 12, 2003 when the volcanic dome collapsed, sending ash and rocky debris 50,000 feet into the sky over Montserrat. Some islanders found themselves removing five-foot drifts of volcanic debris from their property. My first trip to Montserrat was exactly two weeks after this event. There was another big deposit of ash over the island this past October. Material is still erupting and ash is sent skyward daily. It is like fine powder and it gets *everywhere!* We had some high quality breathing masks but, thanks to cooperative prevailing winds, did not need to use them.

As on my previous trips, my coworkers were **Everett Chambers** from Fort Worth, Texas and **Stephen Eusell** from London, England. Stephen was born on the island of Dominica and was the preacher in Montserrat when the volcanic tragedy occurred. He now preaches for the congregation in London where Rose and I worked for four years.

We may return to Montserrat next summer for a campaign but the purpose of this trip was to strengthen and encourage the small congregation. Our lessons in the public meetings of the church had this focus. This was also the emphasis in the private studies we had during our stay. **Benjamin Rasool**, a 29 year old policeman, was brought back to Christ after several years of neglecting the Lord. The church has no preacher and **Vernon White**, in his 60's and baptized on our first trip in 2003, does much of the teaching and furnishes most of the leadership in the congregation. We studied with these two men and three teenage Christian boys about their responsibilities in leading the worship services. Another day we had a long session with Vernon and Benjamin discussing how to prepare sermons and Bible lessons. We are sending materials from here to help these brothers. In some of the meetings video lessons from the US are used. A preacher, **Cornelius George**, does come from Antigua to help them one Sunday a month. One day Stephen and I had a wonderful time of Bible study with about 15 children in one of the schools. We also had some good studies with two non-Christians who, I believe, are good prospects. Attendance at church assemblies is now up to about 30 and interest and enthusiasm are high. All of these things are very encouraging and, compared to what we saw on previous visits, the future looks bright.

A SPECIAL THANKS

This year is soon to end and I want to give my heartfelt thanks to the congregations and individuals who have helped support our work in 2009. We have been very busy and, with God's blessings, it has been a very fruitful year. If you see the regular reports you know of the various works in which we have participated—in several different areas of the world. Preachers have been trained, churches strengthened and many people led to the Lord. We have plans for some great things next year, beginning with work in India in January. None of this would be possible without your faithful help. I know the work is **important**. I know the need is great! I know God is glorified as we spread the message of His Son. THANKS AGAIN. Much love from Rose and me....

Your coworker,

Ronald Coleman