

Aftershock! - Jan 20th

Written by Dan Diamond, MD

Saturday, 23 January 2010 10:12 - Last Updated Saturday, 03 April 2010 10:07

Jay Leno said calling it an aftershock is like calling the second twin an "after-birth". He is right. No matter how you look at it, we had an earthquake early this morning that was a 6.1. It was scary! But there is more to the story. You see, at home I usually sleep naked (TMI?) but here I have been wearing shorts. Well, last night I was just too dang hot so I decided to sleep in my bun-huggers. When you were a kid did you ever have the same recurrent nightmare that I did—the one where you went to school and forgot to put your clothes on? When the quake hit, I was sleeping and the room started to heave and rock. There was an amazing rumbling roar that was a very deep sound/sensation. Bill jumped up and yelled "Earthquake! We gotta get out of here now!!!" I jumped up and asked myself a quick question, "Dan Diamond, would you rather look for your shorts and possibly die or experience a compound fracture or would you rather run outside in your underwear?" I went for the underwear and ran outside. When I got outside I was the only one wearing briefs. Then a little girl passed out and I ran over to check on her. Now Nick, our video guy that is documenting the trip (eat your heart out Brittany Spears, he didn't film me in my underwear)--Nick said that the girl passed out BECAUSE she saw me in my underwear. Needless to say my staff and the Haitians at my new home spent the rest of the day laughing at me.

The tremor was really scary. When we arrived at the hospital we found our night crew outside with ALL of the patients. They evacuated all of them. They were amazing! They had them all organized with their names, medications, and their diagnosis. They even drew out a grid of the hospital grounds and mapped their location so they could be located. Fabulous! I am working with first rate people.

However, now we had a new problem. We had work to be done and surgeries lined up but the patients refused to go back in the building! It occurred to me to pray so I made an announcement and had it translated to have everyone that was able, come to the front wall, lay hands on the building and pray. It was an amazing, AMAZING moment as staff and patients alike came over to the wall, put their hands on it and prayed! I was blown away. People prayed and thanked God that He spared the building and the begged God to surround the building with His angels and protect it. It was a very emotional experience. Wow! Following that, the patients gradually returned to the building. We will still get it re-inspected but, as of right now, we remain committed to press on!

After praying Bill, Dr Todd, Dr Bill and I jumped in the car and went to Leogaine on a fact finding mission. I've never seen that much destruction in my life. They estimate that about 90% of the buildings were destroyed. How do I describe something that is that utterly annihilated? What can you say about a pile of rocks?

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We went to the main hospital in town that was closed down 3 years ago. They had a ton of the equipment that we needed but they wouldn't give us a thing. It was a bit discouraging but some people are like that. They put themselves first. I doubt that the current organization will ever get that hospital open. People like that don't thrive in the long run. We found out that there was a bunch of stuff going on at a nursing school that was located less than a mile away. Yes indeed, it was a busy place. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) had their tent up, the Japanese had planted their flag and they had a big tent system set up. There were a ton of people everywhere. At the end of the little gravel road was the Gates Foundation building where they are studying filariasis (the parasite that causes elephantitis). There certainly appeared to be a preponderance of healthcare workers so we decided to return to Port au Prince.

On the way back we stopped at one of the Baptist missions where 4000 people are living every night!!! There was a group working there operating a medical clinic. They will be leaving on Friday so we worked out the details and we will return on Friday with a team that will stay at the mission and run the clinic.

We then hustled over to the UN for the Health Cluster meeting. While we were there we met a woman that is the medical director for an organization called Haiti One. It is a conglomeration of 42 Haitian non-governmental Christian organizations the joined together before the earthquake. They are now working to provide medical care in the tent cities. They need help covering the needs. They also have an ambulance. So they could transport patients to us. It was an amazing connection!

The pieces are coming together very quickly. God is great!

Onward

Dan