

**John & Tammy
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Jamaica

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“Project Restore Grace”

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Dear Ministry Partners,

Thank you for your support as Tammy and I have transitioned from Ocho Rios to Mandeville Jamaica. With help from our missionary friends Rex and Jam Harmon our move from the ocean front to the mountains was as close to painless as any move we've ever made.

That said, July, and the first week in August, have been very encouraging. We have learned a great deal about the recent history of the small congregation we've come to help and they have clearly survived some difficult years. One thing virtually all missionaries share in common is the fear of a work failing after all of their investment when they entrust it to someone they've trained. Brother Amberg accomplished many good things in Mandeville, but, unfortunately, the Pastor entrusted with the work proved unfaithful and left the church in financial difficulty and, justifiably, fearful of trusting another Jamaican pastor. I wish I could describe the situation otherwise, but it is what it is. A good work undermined by an unfaithful steward!

So, that said, a group of maybe 7 people held on for more than 5 years waiting for someone they could trust to lead them before the Lord put us together. At least from our perspective, after six weeks together, we're pretty confident we can accomplish some things for the Lord, but it's going to be an uphill climb, at least at the start, trying to get the physical property of the church back to an acceptable condition.

Those who've survived the five pastor-less years have given faithfully, but they're going to need some help. We need to complete a concrete block wall at the rear of the property that we believe is going to cost about \$10,000 USD (American Dollars). We need your help with the majority of that because this week the termite exterminator will be coming at a cost of about \$1,700 USD and we will be filling in three exterior doors and a window with concrete block at a cost of about \$700 USD. Doing so will go a long way in making the building secure.

The members had already raised the money, and built an 8-foot-high fence where we're now wanting to build the concrete wall, but thieves cut the fence down and carried it away in less than a month after it was installed. The wall will be a far more sure and secure solution. The church has been robbed on multiple occasions and that, obviously, cannot continue without distracting us from the work of people-building we've come here to do.

We will also need to replace a significant amount of flooring already destroyed by termites when the above projects are finished, but doing so before doing what's necessary to secure the property would be pointless.

I know those figures don't sound overwhelming, but they are significant amounts for a Jamaican congregation attempting to turn things around.

Building material prices were already exaggerated in Jamaica prior to the current spike in inflation ignited by US inflation, but they are now skyrocketing. Steel, and other essential materials, have more than doubled in price. That's important, not only, because it has already made the church's meeting the challenge to get the wall built difficult, but because it has made getting it done urgent.

Brother Smith, a member of the church and construction worker, told us today that there is currently serious competition for materials because the bigger builders on the island are attempting to buy up all of the materials before the price goes even higher. That being the case, there may come a time when materials may be hard to come by at any price and, of course, the competition for the materials will continue to push the prices higher.

We know that you're all facing similar economic challenges where you're at, so we're making this appeal simply trusting that if the Lord wants us to complete the projects we think are essential, He'll provide the resources from where they're available.

Please forgive me for starting this new endeavor with a financial request. Doing so is one of my least favorite parts of foreign missionary work, but such is the work when serving in a third-world economy.

I actually have much more to say about both the potential and the challenges we're already seeing in Mandeville, but I will leave those for next month's report. Thank you again for how sacrificially you are already investing in Jamaica, and for praying that God will meet the immediate need in front of us.

By the way, Pastor Samuel, who is leading the last church we planted in Burkina Faso, sent us pictures of his baptizing three ladies at the service in the village of Ronsin this morning. That's why, in spite of the disappointments, it's worth it to keep pushing forward!

John & Tammy Cooley, Jamaica