

How Holy Spirit Is Using Rural Women to Accomplish His Agenda

The International Day for Rural Women on Oct. 15 was established to acknowledge “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty.”

In the rural community of Thomazeau, we are proud to work with many rural Haitian women who are working to make their families and communities better.

Yvonne* is a true matriarch in the Thomazeau community. When LiveBeyond first purchased land to use to facilitate our programs, Yvonne led the charge to clear rocks and build a boundary wall, carrying rocks on her head that many men could not lift! She has been a faithful employee of LiveBeyond since the beginning, arriving early and staying late to ensure that many other people stay on track and have the tools they need to be successful. Though she has little formal education, everyone in the community respects Yvonne because of her strong Christian faith and unstoppable work ethic. In her free time, she even sweeps streets to make her community a more pleasant place to be. We could all stand to be more like Yvonne.

Another LiveBeyond employee seems to do it all, too. When we first met Cherie*, she was a mother in desperation. Her infant daughter was suffering from a medical problem that was impeding her ability to breathe. She brought her into our mobile clinic we were running in the town of Thomazeau. Doctors and nurses worked through the night to save her life, and thankfully their efforts were not in vain.

Inspired to help pregnant and nursing mothers in similar situations, she asked to be part of Live Beyond's Maternal Health program. She has served faithfully on the Maternal Health team for seven years! Each year, they help nearly 250 pregnant and nursing mothers by monitoring the progress of their pregnancies and babies, distributing vitamins and other nutritional support, educating women on how to properly care for themselves and their babies and conducting home visits to women in the week after delivery.

Cherie has become a pillar in her community through her development work through the Maternal Health program. And her work is never finished! Many more rural women are waiting to be served by our Maternal Health program, which saves lives of both mothers and babies, helping to significantly reduce the maternal and infant mortality rates in Haiti, which have been decreased by 66 percent since LiveBeyond began these services in 2012. For just \$40 a month—a “maternal sponsorship” rather than a traditional child sponsorship—a woman can receive the care she needs during pregnancy and up to a year post-delivery.

Yvonne and Cherie are just two women in a community of around 200,000 people who are working to improve the situation for those around them. This International Day for Rural Women, we celebrate Yvonne and Cherie and the thousands who are like them around the world who work so hard to make life better for others. They are the backbone of their society, and their contribution to society should never be forgotten.

*names changed

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