

“The best year yet” statement I made in April is now a huge under-estimation of what God is capable of doing. The civil war was necessary. The results are an ongoing improvement, there is now some hope in the minds, attitudes and conversations of the people. The rains this year have been good for the crops and as I write this newsletter, it appears that Hurricane Ivan will miss the Island. The reason you did not get a mid-summer update was because I spent eight weeks, all of June and July, on the mountain. The month of June was filled with medical student interns from the University of South Dakota (their story follows), then, each week in July saw a new team of volunteers. In the middle of all this, Ethan Michael Halstead was born July 9th to Paul and Jamie. The longest five weeks followed before I was able to get home and make the trip to Jacksonville, Florida to see him and the rest of the family.



I also missed the 20th anniversary of my wife’s 29th birthday that took place on July 4th. I did get home in time to share in celebrating our 31st anniversary. Read on and I hope you will agree with me that this year has been better than I could have imagined.

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If Courtney Keith, Niels Harden and Marek Siorek could have read a journal of their experiences in Haiti, it could easily have scared them into staying home. I originally thought that the eight weeks of interns would involve their learning all kinds of things under the expert tutelage of Teresa, our resident missionary doctor. God had a better plan. His plan was to stretch the interns every day and more each day than the one before. Apparently, South Dakotans don’t break when they are stretched, they just get better and stronger. They filled every minute of every day seeing patients, studying Creole, studying medical books, cleaning the clinic, preparing for the next morning and lastly, sleeping more soundly than ever before. After just three days of guidance, Teresa flew to the U.S. to present her work to two VBS programs and then go to Wisconsin to see her new niece. On their own, their first patient was the victim of a bullet wound - twelve days old, and that was just the beginning. . .



Marek Siorek, born in Poland, fled to Greece, migrated to Canada and finally has residency in the U.S. Courtney Keith and Niels Harden have families in the Midwest. At right, Marek and Courtney practice their suturing skills on a hotdog. This was a skill they would use many times in the weeks to come. Niels treated one man, the victim of a nasty fall, by sewing his face back together. The finished product was a work of art.

I learned many lessons one day: The briefness and frailty of life, the inner strength of these three young doctors-to-be, the value of well-equipped and staffed hospitals, and modern medicines. A lot to learn in one day. A family brought their 17-year-old daughter to us one morning. At first glance she appeared well fed and fit. As the interns examined her, and with each passing minute, her condition continually changed for the worse. In perfect 20/20 hindsight, I could have advised the interns that there was only one ending to this day and we should send the girl home with her parents, But, neither I nor any of these compassionate individuals were prepared to give up without a fight. The young girl passed away as we approached the nearest hospital an hour's drive from the clinic. Once there, and still with slim hope of reviving the girl, the interns requested the most basic of emergency equipment only to discover that none was available. There was not even a doctor on site that day. We hired a special truck to take the girl and her family home and gave them a contribution to help cover the cost of the funeral.

Marek was scheduled to and did go home the next day. Courtney and Niels struggled physically and emotionally through the "Refiner's fire" of the next couple days, but came out of the experience stronger than ever. Don't take my word though, here is a recent email from Courtney:

"I miss Haiti so much. I thought it would get better, and it has a bit, but there is barely a day that I don't think about it and wish I could be back there. It's really a challenge to remember that God has me here now, not just to be wishing for the future to be elsewhere, but to be a witness and a presence here. I'm praying for joy and peace and God is blessing me with that to some extent, but the yearning is always there. But, I've decided that's okay, because it keeps me conscious of how God has changed me and where I think He is leading me. Every Sunday, though, all I want is to be on the mountain with Darlene on my lap being surrounded by the amazing praise and joy that fills the church." 9/9/04

At the end of each day, I look back to see if I have made a positive difference in someone's life. Some days are better than others. Some days are frustrating and some I fear I may have wasted. An occupational hazard of being a missionary is that some days my day gets turned upside-down by Satan and he does his best to convince me that I should quit this work and do something else. In retrospect, these are actually good days; I figure any day Satan tried to mess up is a day I did something to make him mad. The really good days stand alone, for all the others I need only to read through a growing stack of emails and notes like the one Courtney sent me. To all of you who take the time to pray for us,

think about us, call, write, or email us - Thank you so much! Jesus told his disciples that He had a source of nourishment that they did not know about; I know exactly what He was talking about. Your prayers, thoughts, and words of encouragement keep me going: especially this past summer when I was away from home for nine weeks. It was as if your encouragement became the air that kept me alive. Even more encouraging was to hear from Cindy that some of you were encouraging her, seeing if she needed anything and taking care of those needs. There is no need to name names; God knows you by your deeds and besides, we talk about you to Him all the time. To all of you - We love you guys. (Remember, I am originally from Michigan where the term "guys" is non-gender specific.) For all of you in the South - We love y'all too. I am humbled and yet honored to be the servant that God has chosen to work through, to touch and change lives both here and abroad.



The greatest challenge for the interns was the language barrier. To solve this problem God sent us two people, first Renaud, a Christian brother from Port Au Prince, who was able to put his life on hold and come live with us on the mtn. for a total of three weeks. Best of all, though, was Mezeda Meze (at right visiting Tony in his cornstalk house). She is co-chair of the Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA) at Nova Southeastern University. Last year we had a dental team from CMDA and after a spring break trip had to be canceled due to the civil war, we were looking for a future date. When I learned that she was Haitian, fluent in Creole and French, and a med-student; I was prepared to beg, if necessary, to have her come work with the USD interns. When I explained our need, she canceled her other summer plans and came to work with us. The fact that she was Christian first and doctor second did not go unnoticed by teammate nor patient.



Jason Myrmoe, another USD intern, joined the team in July after first Marek and then Mezeda had returned home. He was able to work for a week with Courtney and Niels. They returned home the day Teresa arrived so Jason was able to work with her for two more weeks.



Along with all the usual rashes, parasites, infections, fungi, and malnutrition that he observed and treated, he also got to assist in what we consider to be a highlight in the clinic - the birth of a child. These five med-students are going to be phenomenal Christian doctors in a few short years. There is a very good possibility that a major portion of their practice will be on the mission field. I would welcome them back anytime. I really miss them already.



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Four Teams Came Back-to-Back in July

I am not sure if I can describe the logistical challenge that I left for Cindy to manage. Before I even mention the FCM needs, she was already busy teaching six college courses on four different college campuses. Now, for what I needed her to do for me and FCM. First, team pre-packing. She had to purchase all our food as well as a never-ending list of supplies and tools that I would send her via email. American Airlines added to the challenge by imposing a box embargo, as they do every summer. This means that everything has to be packed into duffelbags. I could agree with a "no cardboard box embargo" since summer luggage has a good chance of getting rained on in Haiti, but my plastic cargo boxes work better than any suitcase or duffelbag. Fortunately, Twinkies taste just as good pressed pancake thin as they do in their original form. Next, comes team pickup. This summer we had people coming in from all over the U.S. at different times and on a variety of airlines.

Thanks again to all the van/SUV drivers that made the airport runs at all hours of the day and night to pick up teams as well as that 5:00 a.m. run to take them back to the airport the next morning.

During a team's brief stay at our house, Cindy supervised the team's consolidation packing, where the team crammed their smaller duffles and suitcases into our larger duffles in order to maximize our baggage allowance of two 70# checked bags per person and one carry-on bag plus one personal bag. Most of our volunteers, especially those returning for a 2nd or 3rd trip are able to pack all they need into their carry-ons. This means Cindy can send 140#s of supplies with each person. This is how we get all our school supplies, shoes, clothes, medical supplies, etc. shipped into Haiti.

I must praise American Airlines for all the things they do to support mission teams. They give me a discount on the airfare that is unique to the industry. They smoothed out every ticketing problem so that in the end everyone got to their destinations. They give me credit for the miles I fly plus I get credit for every dollar spent on everyone's ticket. I also appreciate all they and the workers of TSA do to keep us safe as we fly.

Cindy makes me look good, but I work hard too. I just came up with a list of all my titles. They are chef, chauffeur, travel agent, handyman, dad, and my favorite - servant.



July, week 1: Forefront Christian Church, Va. Beach, Virginia sent over 100 of its members on short-term mission trips in July and August (about 10% of their entire congregation). Two teams came to Haiti and one went to Costa Rica with FCM. Dan & Julie Reese, Chuck & Julie Cason, Rachel Pool, and Paul Simonson joined the interns and me for the first week of July.



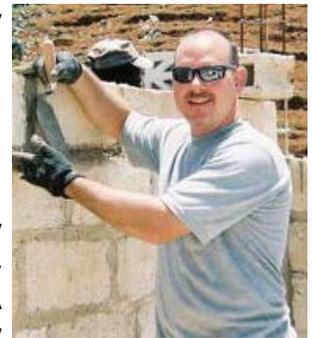
Paul is a perfectionist when it comes to concrete work so we put him in charge of the floor of the school building. The rest of us did the muscle-work. Julie R. initiated our dental program on the mtn about four years ago. She went to work in the clinic, assisted by Julie C. and Rachel whenever I didn't have them carrying cement blocks. If a dirty shirt indicates the amount of work accomplished, then Dan did the most work every day. Chuck was slowed by a back injury. Seeing the pain in his face with every movement was like looking in a mirror as I remembered my own back injury from a year ago.

July, week 2: Dan stayed on for a second week and was joined by Michael Nootnagel and Howard Tant from Virginia. Mark Meredith had to cancel due to a back injury. Kenneth & Lacy Hancock and Tammy Worcester, from Ft. Lauderdale, joined the team.



Daily, either the sun or the rain would beat down upon us. It seemed as though taking the time off and coming all this way was not challenging enough. Having the

added challenges to smile at and sometimes to laugh at made the week that much more rewarding. Couples who lay blocks together develop a special bond, just ask Ken and Lacy. At the end of the day there was usually enough mortar on them so that they could bond to just about anything. Howard (right) was relentless with the block laying, although he did take time out to use his computer skills to develop report-card files for the school. Mike rewired an emergency siren to my truck to take the place of the horn. The original horn got submerged with each river crossing and ceased to function. A working horn is critical equipment for driving in Haiti. Below right, is the building at the end of week two.



To Be Continued: The next newsletter, coming soon, will report on weeks 3 & 4 in Haiti and the week in Costa Rica in August. I will include an envelope with this letter and then not send one in the next letter as I hope to send them just a few weeks apart. As always, if you determine in your heart that the work being accomplished is worthy of your support and God has blessed you with enough to share, then please do so. If you are unable to support FCM but enjoy receiving the newsletter, please let us know so we will keep you on the mailing list.

Don't Stop Reading - Great News on page 6: More pictures, stories, news, and announcements continue on pages 5 and 6, so please keep reading.

Our newsletters are also available on our website along with lots of other information about the mission. We are continually adding new things so if you have internet access, please logon at www.farsightchristianmission.org.

Life in Haiti

The five pictures on this page were taken by our short-term volunteers. These are images that caught their eye, then their heart and finally reached deep inside and touched their soul. As the designated driver, I spend 99.99% of my travel time focused on the road and I am often surprised by many of the photos that are sent to me after the trip is over. Each of these photos have a thousand-word story to tell. What do they say to you?

I watched the post-hurricane news this past week and saw our storm-relief people handing out cases of food and water to people in need. One needy family, driving a Lexus SUV, had been in line for over an hour with their engine and a/c running as they waited for their handout. They complained that their home had been without power for two days.

The sign in the picture, at right, says this land is FOR SALE. Someone will buy this land and try to build a house and live on the edge of this open sewer. My first thought is that this land should not be built upon. Again, I was watching the news and saw a million-dollar beach home destroyed by wind and waves. Again I thought, this is land that should not be built upon, at the same time knowing that this homeowner has insurance that will restore his home on the beach and in the path of the next big storm.

Some reports say there are 8 million Haitians. Another report says there are 11 million. On a recent flight to Haiti, one man said; "No one knows how many of us there are".

One census set the average age for the entire population at seventeen. Think about that for a moment; millions of uneducated, unemployed teenagers. When Haiti was known as the "Pearl of the Caribbean" the population was $\frac{1}{2}$ a million.

I pray that these pictures help to open your eyes and touch your heart and soul concerning the lives that these people must live everyday.

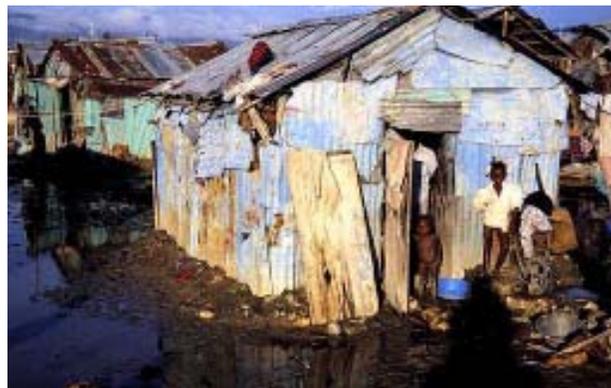
Take a mental picture of your life and lay it along side of these pictures and then thank God for the blessings He has given you. As you see how blessed you are please consider what you could do to help improve the lives of these people.

Cindy and I need your prayers to keep us going.

246 of the 400 school children need sponsors.

Danny & Leann Pye need support. (See the next page)

The school lunch program needs additional support.



Tony, at left, wrote me a letter, in English, recently. He told me his father had died and his mother has gone to the city to live. He and his brother live in this house. He asked me please to take him to America. With your help I could at least provide him with a rat-and-leak resistance place to sleep. You want to help?



Danny & Leann Pye

The Pyes are joining the FCM team and will begin language school in October. By January, they should be ready to begin work on the mtn. fulltime. I have given them a rather long list of objectives to keep them busy:

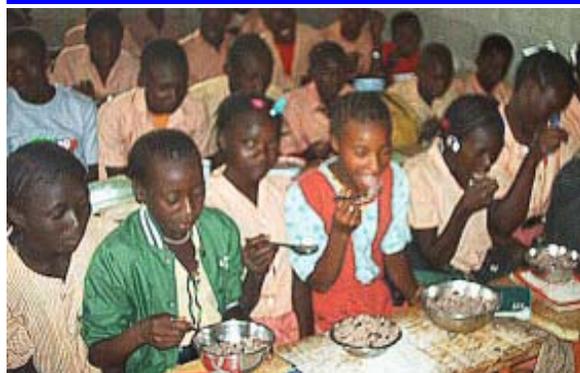
1. School administration
2. English classes
3. Bible studies
4. Library program
5. Community outreach

Along with our new minister, Manes Petion, that was added to the team in February, evangelism will be a much more focused objective in the months and years to come.

We have begun building an apartment atop the new school building but still have a long way to go before its ready for them.

There are many one-time startup costs involved in getting them ready to serve. Things like: A vehicle, furniture and appliances, residency visas, language school, and room & board while at school to name a few. There will be more details in future newsletters and also on our website.

Their email address is farsightcm@aol.com. I am sure they would love to hear from you with prayer support and words of encouragement. They and FCM would also love to hear from you concerning either a one-time support gift to get them started or better yet, we would love to hear that you would provide monthly support as they begin their three-year commitment.



School Lunch Program

The lunch program was a huge hit with the kids and families last year. We were able to fund two meals per week. Each child brought their own bowl and spoon on lunch day and took them home to be cleaned. The kids pay two gourdes per meal, about five cents. The cost of the meal is about twenty-five cents. This year we will start with three meals per week and if we can either get support specifically for the lunch program or get enough children sponsored to cover the cost, we would like to be able to feed them every school day. Call, write or email me today if you can help.

Attention Child Sponsors: For several reasons we have had a significant number of drop-outs, so you may have been assigned a new student. We hope all of you will continue your support and help us to recruit new sponsors. The number of sponsors is at a two-year low, while our student enrollment is at an all-time high.

Farsight Christian Mission News

In Haiti: Jeff Crawford of Livonia, MI and Chelsea Britton of Buchanan, MI are planning internships starting in January. Jeff for almost 1 month and Chelsea for 6 months. The short-term mission trip calendar is filling fast. I expect to have my 2005 schedule mostly complete within the next month.

Around the Caribbean: Almost every Island in the Caribbean has sustained tremendous damage from the hurricanes this summer. We have many Christian families who are suffering in silence, praying that God will answer their prayers and help them through this time of need. FCM is making contact with Island churches to see how we can help. If you want to help, let me know. We will need those who can pray, those who can send support and those who can go to do the work.

Here at home: Transporting teams, trailer loads of supplies, and pallets for shipping has become a major challenge here at home. My little "mission truck" can't carry the loads I have been hauling in it. I am prayerfully looking for a truck that will carry 5 passengers, pull a trailer and/or carry a ton of cargo to port for shipping. One more small detail, it needs to fit into a missionary's budget. Do you know where I can find this truck?