

I'M BACK! I cannot tell you how much it means to me to be able to say this. Even as I say it, I must admit that I am doing the Missionary's dance; two steps forward and one step back.

Forward step #1: I was invited to speak at the Western Jamaica Christian Convention. Cindy and I also went there to prepare for teams going there this summer. It was a very uplifting and energizing weekend as we shared in wonderful praise and worship. No less than six congregations extended a welcome to us and invited us to come and work with their congregation when we have completed our assistance to the new church work in the Anchovy district, a rural community outside of Montego Bay. (*More details inside this newsletter on two teams of volunteers going to Jamaica in July*)

Forward step #2: More recently, I'm back from Merida, Mexico where a team worked with Craig Gates, missionary and founder of Christ's Mission to the Yucatan (CMY). (*More inside*)

Backward step #3: On May 28, after lifting some bags of cement, muscle spasms began in my left leg. I knew I was in trouble. I was experiencing the "mirror image" of pain that I had experienced in August 03, that led to lumbar disc surgery. The drugs from the Louisville E.R. were not touching the pain, so I was communicating constantly with our Lord to help me; either take me home or take away the pain - PLEASE! God works in mysterious ways. I HAD to go to the bathroom. The worst ever spasm hit just as I got into the bathroom and it threw me against the wall and onto the toilet. As the room spun, I changed my mind and headed back to bed. The pain increased and I passed out. About three hours later, I awoke and all the pain was gone! Thank you, Lord! A June 9th MRI determined that my only option was surgery. The June 29 surgery was a success so I was able to lead teams to Jamaica on July 15 and again on July 22. I had to promise to lift NOTHING!

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***The FCM website is getting a complete
makeover so check it often for all the new stuff!
Albums - Teams - Projects - Blogs***

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The dance continues - Forward Step: I was planning to paint the mission house in June. Most of Hurricane Wilma's damage has been repaired except for the exterior. My back injury left me immobilized. That's when a Christian brother, Don Hando, came to the rescue. He sent one of his professional paint teams to my house and in two days they had the entire house pressure washed, sealed, caulked, primed and painted. Then they painted the 99 feet of fence around my backyard; a job that was not even on my list.

Forward step: A new work in Haiti has risen from the ashes of the nine-year program that 1,500 volunteers and almost 3,000 supporters poured their prayers, sweat, and financial support into. The new work is pure evangelism, pure discipleship and it is growing weekly. Those involved in its inception have named it "Farsight Youth Ministries." Weekly, young men from all around the south side of Haiti come to Jacmel for two days of study. Our ONLY goal is to prepare young men to be able to defend and proclaim the Gospel boldly, accurately, and compassionately. Thirty were in attendance recently. Even more exciting was the report from Renaud that Benitho, Ezechiel, Nille Derissin, Eglantin, John St. Fort, and Robenson are all preparing for baptism after two months of study.

Backward step: I have never been much of a dancer and even less of one to dwell on the negative so this "backstep" is here for the sole purpose of redirecting all those who have not talked to me about the events that took place in Haiti this past year. If you are curious concerning the facts in this matter; I will be posting a letter on our website to chronicle the facts, events, persons and organizations involved and the actions or inactions of each.

Let's skip now to all the good things happening this year!!

MEXICO - Ten days in May

A team of Malone College students led by Audra Hatch joined me to go to the Yucatan region of Mexico to work on projects with missionary Craig Gates. The team included Melissa Bateman, Lindsay Landis, Kurt Williams, Ashley Lauer, Mikaela Sisco, and Audra Hatch.

Lots of hard work, salted with great cross-cultural fellowship and some really unique experiences, filled our time there.

First, was work at "the camp". The summer camp project started many years ago but has now evolved into a Biblical training institute. Students arrive on Friday evening for all-weekend classes in ministry and evangelism. At right, I watch as Craig shows Mikaela, Lindsay, Melissa (Missy) and Ashley how to make concrete Mexican style. Once mixed, they pass heavy buckets to Kurt who passes it to workers on the roof. It took a couple hundred buckets to cover the entire roof with concrete several inches thick. It would have been less of a challenge if the temperature had not been hovering around 100 degrees.

To cool off, Craig took us for a swim in an underground river. This beautiful, domed pool was discovered by accident when a local Sotuta resident was blasting a hole in his backyard. After installing some scary steps and lights, he now charges \$1 per person to go swimming.

Since no one works on Sunday we took the afternoon and visited some Mayan ruins. After climbing on hot, sun-baked rocks all afternoon, I have a new respect for lizards.

Fellowship night is always a high point in the experience. Craig divided us into pairs and then sent us off to visit, fellowship, and share a meal with a family from church. They don't speak English, we don't speak Spanish. It turns into a couple hours of charades and non-stop laughter.



Next assignment - Merida. Our task was to turn a carwash-office into a cozy apartment for Craig & Rhonda. The team assembled and installed kitchen cabinets, built a block addition for storage and laundry, wired lights in the bathroom, kitchen, and laundry, cleaned the back and front yard, and poured a new section of concrete for the driveway.

Each day for lunch, Craig took us to Raul and Sandra's home where she prepared a delicious Yucatecan meal. We got to know the family well. Each day our desire to help them in some way became stronger and stronger. This is their situation: the secure part of their home is a single room made of block and concrete about 12x12, the remainder is built from debarked trees covered in tar paper with too many holes to count, the kitchen and bathroom areas, pictured below, are outside.

The entire family is focused on evangelism and ministry. Their meager income from this work and other part-time jobs provides for their daily needs but leaves nothing to spend on home improvement.

Craig estimates that about \$5,000 worth of material along with volunteer labor would complete Raul's home and bring the kitchen and bathroom inside with actual plumbing.

Please help me to provide this dedicated ministry family with these much needed home improvements. Funds sent to FCM and marked Raul's house will buy material for this project.

If you want to volunteer to go and help with the construction, then call, write or email me and I will put you on a team list.



JAMAICA - Two teams and fifteen days in July

An eleven member team from Crosspointe Christian Church in Cary, NC kicked off this tag-team two-week event. Every morning was VBS and every afternoon was construction. Carriel and Donna Graham, the missionaries in Montego Bay, Jamaica were hoping for 60 kids for VBS. Our two-week average was 71. The odd statistic with this VBS was that we had up to 38 teenagers each day. Both teams are already brainstorming on ways to better minister to the huge youth group with age-appropriate activities. The teams are becoming more family oriented. Members of the first team were: Ed, Missy, Morgan, and Mitch Hintz; Dan and Chris Grinstead, Joe and Melody Ballard, Courtney Scholl, Carla DosSantos-Webb, and Steve Ament. At right, Morgan, Melody, and Carla are energizing the song and worship time.



Courtney was our designated VBS leader and kept the team on track each morning. Each afternoon it was an all-out effort from each individual to do more than they did the day before. I estimate that over 1,200 buckets of rock were shoveled and then hoisted onto the second story roof. Above, Carla, Arielle Graham, and Morgan fill buckets while Missy works out on the hoist rope. At the same time Joe, Steve, Ed, and Dan were building forms and laying out plywood to create a platform upon which to pour the roof over one of the unfinished sections. Once the platform was finished Chris and Mitch laid out rebar; they got lots of help from the girls as they untangled the bars and then passed them over to the boys.



A few hours after dropping off Crosspointe at the airport, I picked up the 12 volunteers from Novesta Church of Christ, Cass City, MI. They were: Gary Anderson, Lena Teller, Sandy Wright, Karen & Lindsey Speirs, Jace & Zach Carter, Dave & Cory Mayer, Katie McIntosh, Bev Auten, and Kendra Grady.

The boys, Jace, Zach, Cory, and Dave found a great way to keep the VBS kids under control by tying them into bundles with crepe paper streamer. The bundles competed in a "12 legged race" and were disqualified if they broke the streamer.

Last week's rock became this week's concrete. The two roof sections each had to be poured without any seams. The tenacity and strength of this Novesta team impressed the Jamaican masons as they poured in 9 hours an area that took another team 14 hours to complete.

God continues to amaze me. Each of these two teams were perfect in their make up. Each had the right number of guys and girls, mature and youthful, skilled and able-bodied. Even the order in which the teams came to work was perfect. The forms were well-built by team 1 to hold all the concrete that was mixed and moved by team 2. The two weeks of VBS contained the perfect balance of consistency and diversity to keep the kids coming back for more. **(Check our website for more pictures of these teams and information on new teams forming for this fall - winter - next year.)**

As much as we all wanted to lay blocks for the new building in Jamaica, it was not meant to be at this time. God, of course, has a better plan. The roof our teams completed would have been done a few years ago except that Carriel and Donna spent their construction funds on life-saving surgery for Carriel's father. A little more work on the mission house and it will become the housing facility for future teams. The greatest expense for a team going to Jamaica is the lodging expense. A few more teams will complete the groundwork for future teams and we will be ready to begin on the new church building.

They have a desperate need for the new building, the current building is on borrowed property and the landowner wants to do something with the property. As if they needed more reason to move, an August rain left the building flooded with water standing over a foot deep inside and out. Above right, Carriel is sharing his dream with members of the Novesta team. The footings are dug and when the dry season arrives they are eager to begin the construction.



The missionary dance seems to be universal. In Jamaica though I think they do one step forward and two steps back. Just when they got approval to build on their land (forward step) the cement industry in Jamaica shut down so there was no cement to be found for six months (back-step) and then daily rains filled all the footing trenches to the brim (back-step).

FCM went to plan B to work on the mission house (forward step). This was God's plan A. We were quickly aware that something out of the ordinary was also in the works and discovered that Donna was going in for a biopsy of a recently detected lump. The report came back while the second team was there and confirmed the presence of cancer. To reaffirm the teams' perfect make up, Bev was there to lend prayerful support as a 12-year survivor of breast cancer. On July 29, as we departed Jamaica, Donna was in surgery. The post-surgical prognosis is positive and hopeful for full recovery.



The Grahams
Brielle, Carriel, Donna, Arielle

This comes not as a single blow but a volley of blows. The financial impact of hospital/surgery costs on the family and their mission work will be insurmountable unless God touches the hearts of many to come to their rescue. The domino effect also impacted Brielle's college plans. Brielle just graduated second in her class and was planning to continue her studies in aeronautical engineering. She wants to work with NASA someday. Her travel plans had to be postponed and now her college funds may also be affected.

Cindy and I have known the Grahams for over 20 years. We have followed their steadfast work in Jamaica. We know them to be trustworthy, compassionate messengers of the Gospel. I am asking you to help them in this time of need. They need your prayers; they need your financial support to overcome this great challenge. I promised them that I would do everything in my power to help them and that I would call upon everyone I know through FCM to help also.

Farsight Christian Mission (FCM) is in the midst of rebuilding and restructuring so that we can reach farther, move faster and accomplish more with less. I see two hourglasses: the first one is my life-time and there is clearly more sand in the bottom than in the top; for that reason alone I need to maximize my time and effort. My body is demanding that I work wiser and leave the heavy lifting to the younger people. The second hourglass is recording the time until Jesus' return. I can see a lot of sand in the bottom but can't see the top half. My concern is that this world's current events COULD be an indication that **time is running out**. Regardless of world events, we all must realize that **time IS running out**.

The FCM "Army of Ants", all those who sent others and those who came to work with FCM, has been like Gideon's army. In the early days there was over 2600 individuals, families, and churches involved in and supporting the work. This newsletter will reach out to 567. So, I truly am trying to do more with less, knowing that God can do more with less, leaving no doubt that HE is in control and with HIM nothing is impossible.

FCM NEEDS YOUR HELP! - We need your prayers - We need your support

Pray for and support FYM. We have a two-person staff (some of you will remember Renaud & Nego) and the students need assistance with transportation, lodging, and food expenses. More details will appear on the FCM website soon.

Pray for and support CMY. Raul's family needs a house with walls and a roof.

Pray for and support the Graham family and their work in Jamaica so that the hospital expenses can be paid, so that Brielle can continue her education, and so that the congregation will have a building they can worship in without fear of flooding.

Please let me hear from you. I need to know that this newsletter is reaching you and that you want to continue receiving it. You can write, call, or email your desires.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send your designated support; either for FCM, FYM, CMY-Raul, and/or Grahams-Jamaica. Your ideas, comments, and especially words of encouragement are always cherished so even if you are unable to support FCM or one of the designated projects, please use the envelope to share your thoughts and to let us know that you did get this newsletter.

As always we pray that YOU and our LORD will find us worthy of your support.