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Thank You I.D.E.S.

Our joint spring planting project is a huge success! Acres and Acres of land was tilled by hand with the long-handled hoes and strong backs of many families. Many people who had moved to the area from the quake zone agreed to work now and be paid later when the crops are taken to market.

Along with the seeds and fertilizer, Nego and Ellen purchased a truck load of rice, beans, oil, milk, and other staples. They then recruited their youth group of about 60 young adults to go to Maplat and help with distribution. They were able to provide a VBS-type program for the children who were all out of school. Then they put on a concert combined with Gospel teaching.

The Maplat fields are now "White unto harvest". The crops are quickly approaching harvest time but even more importantly, the hearts and souls of the people have witnessed the love of Christians and heard the message of Jesus and they too, are fast approaching that life-changing decision to give their lives to the Lord.

To show all the fields that have been tilled would require pages and pages of pictures. I hope that these few pictures will convey the massive effort from all the families involved to make this happen.

One of FCM's rules is "A hand up, not a handout" and this project met the requirements perfectly.

For more information about all the great things that I.D.E.S. is doing, you can learn more at www.IDES.org.

Relief Project Part II

While in Haiti last week, I was able to secure the supply of lumber and other materials needed for the water supply project also for Maplat. The great thing about this project is that it serves two purposes without any additional cost. By putting a roof on the building pictured in my last newsletter, then installing a cistern inside the building we can supply thousands of gallons of water to the village AND provide a church/community building. It is located next to the current school building so I am sure they will find many uses for the building and the water.

Relief Project Part III

I was able to meet with many people and discuss their needs. I find it better to ask someone what they need rather than tell them what they need. If only some of the big charities would apply this concept to their programs, millions could be spent more wisely. More on part III when I get all the details worked out.



Tent cities now cover just about everything. Some of the tented areas appear to be organized. They have latrines, trash dumpsters, and water trucks. As you get closer to Port Au Prince or any of the more densely populated areas, it is much more chaotic. In one area, the median of a very busy street became a solid wall of tents with tent doors opening directly into the roadway. It is hard to comprehend, but for many who lived in the poorer parts of Haiti, a tent was a welcome upgrade to their previous living conditions. Some of the tents are big enough to double the living space of their cardboard shacks. So, even if their shacks were unaffected by the earthquake they quickly got in line to receive their new house and then went in search of open land to erect it. When I last checked the census of all the organized camps, they had about 1.3 million people in the camps. I would guess that there is at least that many more living in tents outside of the camps.



The total number of lives lost will never be known. Many large buildings, 3 - 4 stories tall, rest like stacked pancakes only 3-4 ft. tall. Many of these buildings still contain the uncounted.

Some positive observations.

As I stared in awe at the devastation around me, something caught my eye and my ear. It was people laughing. I saw people greeting each other along the streets with expressions of joy on their faces. I saw young lovers holding hands walking along the street or standing in the shade waiting for a ride. I saw a boy playing kick ball atop this huge slab of concrete only to quickly realize the concrete was the roof of his house, now resting on the ground atop the rubble that was once his home. Everything around the people can come crashing down but they have a spirit that cannot be crushed. I think Job must have been the grandfather of the Haitian people. "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord."



I wish that just for a day I could take 2.6 million people now living along the Gulf coast and have them trade places with the Haitians living in tents. Maybe then, they would moan, groan, and complain a little less and truly begin to appreciate the daily blessings of life, home, family, friends, and opportunity that we as Americans have more of than any other country or place on Earth.



Pastor Edde, on left, asked me to preach in his place. My topic was the Parable of the Bucket. In Haiti everyone carries all their "stuff" in a five-gallon bucket. Like the parables of Jesus, the message was tailored to the local people so I am not sure how well it would translate back into English and apply here.

1. Life is like this bucket. It goes with us everywhere and we fill it with all the things that we think are important.
2. Christ wants us to have a life that is abundant, full and free. He also says His yoke is easy and His burden is light.
3. Filling your life with God's Word, The Holy Spirit, God's love, mercy, and grace adds no weight to your bucket.
4. Satan also offers free stuff to put in your bucket. Pebbles that start out small and light but over time they weigh you down and take up space so there is no room for good things.
5. Take your bucket down to the river, tip it over, plunge it under the water, dump out all the rocks and dirt. Then let God fill it with His Spirit and go on your way rejoicing.

I guess here I would call it "The Parable of the Storage Facility." We just tend to carry around bigger buckets.

If they had as much A/C as they had volume from their instruments, which was matched only by the joyous worshipful voices of the people, we would not have been drenched in sweat, we would have been coated in frost!

They let me drive! If you can drive and survive in Haiti then you can drive anywhere in the world. Many Haitians come to Miami to be taxi drivers. Our plan was to drive to Maplat, photo the fields and then return to Jacmel. We crossed the two rivers and were well on our way when it started raining. We quickly turned around and raced the water back to the rivers and got across just before it got too deep and fast to cross.

Elle and Yves came by Nego & Ellen's place to say hi. I dug into my archives to remind myself just how small they were 10 years ago. They have grown into two fine Christian men. Elle was even preparing a sermon the the evening service.



Please lift me up before our Lord in Prayer

It sustains me
It gives me the will to keep going
It protects me
It gives me a life worth living
I can feel God's love through you when you speak my name to Him.

Pray for the team coming from Kinetic Christian Church, Charlotte, NC

They go with me to be your hands, feet, voice and heart.

Pray for Nego & Ellen

They are living on the frontline
Pray that God will allow us to bless them with all the things they need for God's ministry through them to succeed.

Pray for the people of Haiti

That their secret source of Joy will remain strong
That they will turn to God to sustain them through this adversity

Do you have a youth group that's looking for a summer adventure? The FCM Retreat Center may be just what your group needs. Call or write for more details.

I'm trying to locate as many of the 3,200 FCM volunteers as possible. Most have grown up, graduated, moved, and married. Some of you have maintained contact, sent me wedding pictures, baby pictures and all that good stuff but there are still about 3,000 that have wandered off with busy lives. I would love to hear from you too.

Our three children have given us eight grandchildren with two more due before Christmas. I would love to be able to put together a scrapbook with all the grandchildren of my extended mission family.

FCM is on Facebook

Levern Halstead is on Facebook

FCMInc.org is the mission website

My phone number and address is on page 1 and on the website

So, go ahead and send me a note and a picture - make an old man happy.
Then share this newsletter with someone you know who didn't get this newsletter.

I will keep all of you in my prayers.