

Dear Friends,

May 2010

There is good news coming out of Haiti. In this report I want to share some insights from my recent visit.

Haiti; one cannot help but be stirred in some manner by its mention. Having the distinction of being the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, its name has become synonymous with poverty and sometimes hopelessness. Coups, corruption, dependency, disasters, hurricanes, Voodoo, and now a giant earthquake is a small sample of a list of nouns associated with the name Haiti. We all were stirred by the news and photos of the devastating earthquake that struck just four months ago! The media outlets were full of reporting of the incomprehensible loss of life and property.

Many heroes rose to the occasion to help. I don't think the full story will ever be told or could be. Selfless individuals from within Haiti as well as those from abroad poured their own lives into the rescues and humanitarian efforts. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless in wonderful ways all those that reached out in love to the Haitian people.

The magnitude of the disaster is virtually beyond comprehension. The Haitian government places the death toll at nearly 300,000; the displaced at 2.1 million, out of a country of 10 million! The damage to infrastructure is in the billions of dollars.

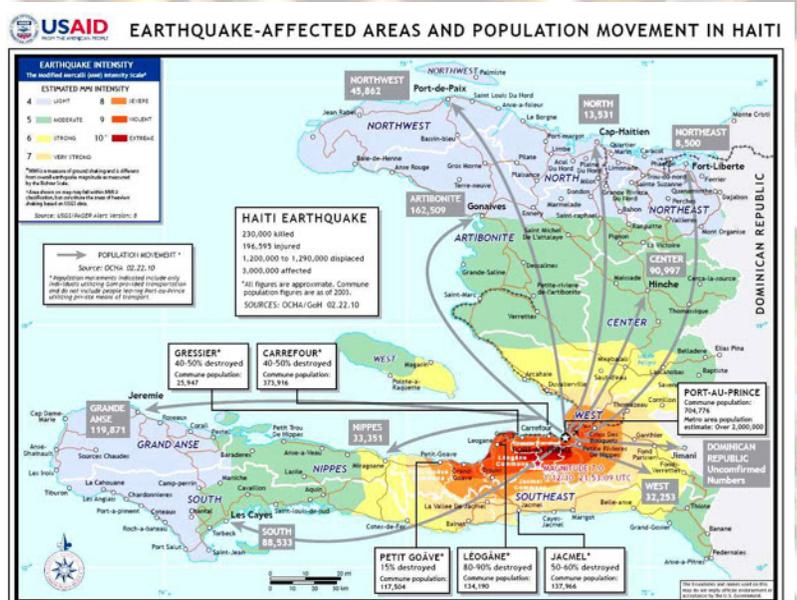
Many ask why? Jesus was asked this very question. In Luke 13:1-5 he answers this way: *....those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men....No: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Jesus shows us the larger picture: *eternity!*

Haiti has been shaken spiritually as well! The wonderful news is that thousands of Haitians are coming to the Lord Jesus Christ! Churches are overflowing. Lives are being changed. God is reaching down with His mercy in marvelous ways. This is the good news; really Good News!

FARMS Haitian Committee Update:

I recently made a trip to Haiti to encourage and provide training to our two volunteer loan committees. FARMS is not a relief organization, but we do respond to disasters with our loan program. Let me explain why this is important.

A large percentage of the displaced people had relocated in rural areas and cities not affected by the quake. This mass exodus out of the Port-au-Prince area is unprecedented, as 100's of thousands found their way back to relatives, friends, and open hearts in the countryside. This influx of people has stretched services, housing, food and resources to the limit. Many households find themselves with lots of mouths to feed with limited resources. Much uncertainty prevails. Family losses, combined with destroyed homes and businesses point to a bleak future for many of the refugees.



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How does FARMS International help? I am always reminded as I visit our programs, how there are many poor that never benefit from the billions of aid seen in the headlines! Remoteness, no advocate, and sometimes religious persecution prevent this publicized aid from reaching these needy people. In numerous instances, FARMS is the only program helping these people.

Our loan committees in Haiti, are located some distance from the quake zone, but the impact of refugees is acutely felt. Our **Family Life Outreach** loan program committee is located in the second largest city in Haiti, Cap Haitien. This program works with the Evangelical Church of North Haiti which consists of over 50 churches. The whole north coast of Haiti, where these churches are located, experienced an influx of refugees. **Expanding our programs will help many of these displaced families to get back on their feet.**

Our second program is located in Bohoc, on the Central Plateau of Haiti. This remote region is very poor. Jeff Boshart, who served as missionary to Haiti and now is vice president of our board of trustees, joined me in Bohoc to train our loan committee. The Christians there were thrilled that we were expanding the program. They really appreciate the biblical principles that are practiced by the FARMS.

During our training session we asked about other loan programs in the area, and the response was striking. They said the other micro credit programs were "mean"! They said the interest was very high and if they did not pay on time they were fined "1% per day on the whole principle" which is 365% interest! This animated interchange illustrated so clearly how FARMS differs from other loan programs. We thank the Lord for that.

Please pray about what you can do.

Love in Christ,

*Joe Richter
Executive Director*



Jeff Boshart, FARMS vice president, training new FARMS committee



Bohoc FARMS committee, Central Plateau



Children are the hope for Haiti's future