

BEYOND BORDERS



WORKING IN HAITI FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE OUT OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST

Spring 2006, Issue 44. *Beyond Borders* is a ministry created by EAPE, founded by Tony Campolo.

Faith, Learning, and Leadership

“EVERYTHING WOULD CHANGE...”

by Kent Annan

The adults were streaming to Jesus. Little children, too. By this point in his ministry, Jesus was attracting a pretty good crowd wherever he showed up. Amidst all the clamoring, the disciples, naturally enough, took it upon themselves to help Jesus prioritize. Give precedence to the ones with seniority, with position, with more to say: that is, to the adults. The kids? Let them stand back, keep in their place, and receive any blessings from a respectful distance.

But Jesus, as he seems to do so often (even after you've read the same gospel stories a hundred times), upends expectations: *Let the adults watch and listen as the children come into my arms.*

I remember a seminary professor explaining that the Greek word translated *child* in this passage can also mean “one open to instruction.” He went on to say that we tend to misinterpret Jesus’ words in this story. It was not the naiveté and innocence of youth that Jesus was lifting up, but the intense curiosity and hunger for learning so often evident in children.

Not long ago, Enel Angervil was sitting in a circle with a group of Haitian children who were studying Scripture through our Living Words

Christian education program. Enel is one of the Living Words trainers, and through his leadership more than 300 people have started regularly using our materials in 12 churches, 5 schools, 4 community groups, and 14 families on the island of Lagonav.

These ten-year-olds were restless. They're accustomed to rows of benches where they learn by rote memorization under the threat of corporal punishment, except in rare

attend school. And those who do too often go to schools where they might get beaten with a switch for being late or for failing in classrooms that are themselves failing at teaching them.

But when Enel read the story of Jesus calling the children into his arms, they stopped squirming. When he read, they listened. And then he began to ask the children: “What do you think of this story?”

Photo: Dave Fonda



They're “open to instruction.” How about you?

schools like the Matènwa Community Learning Center, where Enel teaches. (These students weren't from his school.) Haitian parents make tremendous sacrifices to care for their children. But Haiti is often not an easy place to be a child. Many are abused. Many live in virtual slavery as domestic servants for families other than their own. Nearly half of Haiti's children don't

They answered, “If our teachers treated us like Jesus did, it would change everything.” They answered, “Imagine how it would be if our pastors or parents respected us like this!” They answered, “Everything would change...”

Yes, the change would be considerable—and that's part of what we're working for in Haiti. But it's

Change continued on next page.



Learning by Faith

(and Other Deep-End Swimming Lessons)

by Anna Dioguardi

Humility is one of many beautiful (if occasionally a little painful) things that can come from stepping outside our comfort zones. After several months here in the Dominican Republic, I still

feel that humility ever-present in my daily activities. As the first representatives of Beyond Borders in this country, the three of us—Tim and Leah Murphy and I—have begun our immersion experience by living with families and learning from those around us.

When we arrived in January, we spoke almost no Spanish. My vocabulary has grown, but I'm still unable to express myself using big words or complicated grammatical structures. This sometimes leaves me feeling misunderstood and vulnerable to prejudice and stereotypes. In

this space of humility and vulnerability, I am at the mercy of those who will take me in, teach me, look out for me, and comfort me.

The basic Christian principles of hospitality and mercy have been demonstrated to us through many people and actions. We've been blessed by kind and sympathetic language helpers, invited by strangers to join in baseball games, and welcomed into new families and homes. Our eyes have been opened to the struggles faced by Haitian immigrants to the Dominican Republic (the two countries share the island of Hispaniola). Haitians here are also strangers, up against a history of discrimination we can only begin to understand. And yet, on numerous occasions our new Haitian acquaintances have helped us communicate with our new neighbors, translating from Creole (which Tim and I speak) to Spanish.

As we learn more and consider how Beyond Borders might work here in the Dominican Republic with both Haitians and Dominicans—and across the Haitian/Dominican divide—we do so with humility, grateful for the gifts that come to us through new experiences and friends. Moving always from our position as learners, we look forward to the journey ahead. ♦

Anna Dioguardi
(above) playing the Dominican national pastime; Tim and Leah Murphy with their Dominican host family's mother and son, Lumi and Ignacio

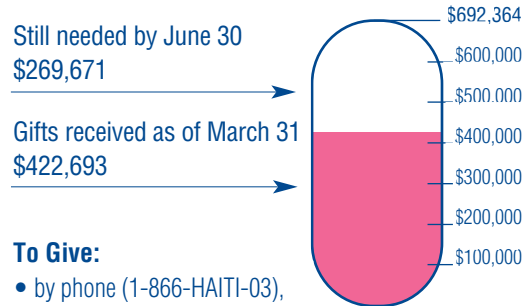


YOUR GIFTS ARE NEEDED

We are so grateful for the generosity of all who have given this fiscal year. Thank you for partnering with us to make liberating education available to many thousands of people in Haiti.

Here is an update on your giving. Please prayerfully consider making a special gift today to help us meet our remaining, significant financial need by June 30.

You can make a difference.



To Give:

- by phone (1-866-HAITI-03),
- email (mail@beyondborders.net),
- mail (PO Box 2132, Norristown, PA 19404),
- or visit our website at www.beyondborders.net.

Change continued from page 1.

not only Haitian parents, teachers, and pastors who must change. We North Americans must also be “open to instruction” in our own learning, voting, shopping, working, and giving. In doing so, we can make a difference in these children’s lives. One important way Beyond Borders makes a difference is by providing access to good education in which children are treated with great respect in schools and in churches.

Our organizational mission statement affirms that we work “out of devotion to Christ.” In other words, we seek to put ourselves in the circle with Enel and those ten-year-olds—where we can listen to Jesus, follow his example, seek grace, and be learners.

I need to keep coming back into this circle, because I think those kids are right: if we’re willing to respond seriously to what we learn from Jesus when we’re gathered together, everything can change. ♦

For more information about Living Words, visit www.living-words.org. Reach Kent Annan at kent@beyondborders.net.



Victims of Rape Work Together for Healing and Change

by Anne Sosin and John Engle

The section of Port-au-Prince where Eramithe Delva and her colleagues have long worked is overwhelmed with the smells, sounds, and violence of the struggle for life. Women sit every day near dirty puddles in clouds of exhaust fumes, selling their goods for pennies. Gunshots ring out from time to time, but nobody moves unless it's really close. In the midst of this—even when the instability and violence prevent many other groups from meeting—Eramithe and the other women in the group she co-founded still gather to reflect, learn, work, and plan together. They believe it's worth the risk.

The group is called the Commission of Women Victims (KOFAVIV). The founders were rape victims during Haiti's last military dictatorship (1991-1994), and they are seeking to respond to the continuing terrors of rape in their city.

Rape and violence against women occur in daylight and late at night in market areas, transport vehicles, police stations, and private homes. When women are raped in their homes, aggressors frequently kill or kidnap others in the household, steal money and commercial goods, and destroy the house. Victims often contract sexually transmitted diseases and suffer from lingering medical problems; few have the resources to seek medical treatment. Many lose their means of economic survival and are forced to look for shelter elsewhere.

In response, KOFAVIV provides medical care and health education, organizes solidarity groups for psychosocial support, and works in



Eramithe Delva (left) and women in a Circles of Change training



partnership with an organization called Fonkoze to provide victims with micro-credit loans to facilitate economic recovery. As one woman from Cité Soleil said, "When this happened to me, I thought I was the only victim and that I had to hide myself. Now I look around the room and see I am one of many. I know we are all together."

The Beyond Borders program Circles of Change (www.CirclesOfChange.com) has been providing KOFAVIV with training in the participatory learning and leadership methods of Reflection Circles and Open Space since 2003. We recently spoke with Eramithe Delva about her important work:

Why did your group begin using Reflection Circles and Open Space?

Eramithe Delva: The victims in our program need help. These methods create space for our women to reflect on their experiences and to share openly with one another. Everyone participates.

How many women in your network use these techniques regularly?

Currently, there are about 400 women who regularly participate in Reflection Circles. We've used these methods since 2003. In May 2005,

nearly 200 women participated in our first large-scale Open Space event on "Women and Poverty."

How does this benefit your organization?

We use these methods to solve problems and to ensure decisions are made with everybody's participation. We've watched women develop communication and collaboration skills. In the past we've had conflicts with other groups that kept us from moving toward our goals, but these methods have enabled us to come to agreement without fighting amongst ourselves. It's because of Reflection Circles and Open Space that we've been able to accomplish so much in a short amount of time. When we met during times that were dangerous in Port-au-Prince and when most other groups weren't meeting, we felt a collective strength.

What type of leadership is needed in Haiti?

We need transformational leadership that helps people gain confidence in themselves and in the people they're leading. Transformational leaders recognize each individual's value and are sensitive to their differences. What I've learned has increased my capacity as a leader in my community and in my organization.

Is faith important to women in your group?

Faith in God has great importance in our lives. For some, it is more important than others. What's important is the experience they have with God. When you have faith in God, you can accomplish what you didn't believe was possible. ♦

Anne Sosin has lived in Haiti since 2003 and is co-founder and director of Vizyon Dwa Ayisyen (VIDWA), a health and human rights organization of which KOFAVIV is a part. Her email address is asosin@gmail.com. Reach John Engle at john@johnengle.net.





FAITH, LEARNING, AND LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Living Words

We just printed 4,000 more copies of the adult and children's Bible study booklets (2,000 copies of each) that will continue to be used in trainings around the country. See article on page 1.

Circles of Change

Two groups of teachers and community organizers (total of 47 people) recently completed six-month trainings. New collaborations with Oxfam, Haiti's Teacher Training College, and six Haitian primary schools ensure that thousands more will experience our educational and leadership practices. Visit www.haitisalon.com to learn how we'll use Open Space in Brooklyn, New York, to support development and democracy in Haiti. See article on page 3.

Campaign to End Child Servitude

We recently did two radio broadcasts and held a seminar on childhood trauma for 24 key leaders who work with children in servitude. We also held three gatherings for rural parents about the root causes of child servitude, as well as the dangers children face if sent away as *restavèks*.

Schools Alive

This school year we organized a teacher exchange for teachers from Port-au-Prince and Lagonav. The focus was on classroom management and discipline. A two-part seminar on "Nonviolent Discipline" began in

February. More seminars are planned for Port-au-Prince this spring. The city of Jacmel will soon host its first Schools Alive exchange.

Apprenticeship in Shared Living

Maria Roesler and Lindsey Strauch continue their apprenticeships in the Little Haiti area of Miami—and both plan to move to Haiti in early May to continue there. So far, one additional candidate plans to join the program in Haiti in the fall.

Transformational Travel

We hope to resume receiving groups in Haiti this summer. Also, staff members Anna Dioguardi, Leah Murphy, and Tim Murphy arrived in the Dominican Republic in January and are learning Spanish in the capital city, Santo Domingo. They hope to begin receiving Transformational Travel groups in the Dominican Republic in early 2007.

Matènwa Community Learning Center

Because of the success of the school garden, several local women's groups have formed in order to start their own cooperative gardens. Also, a great school year will conclude with the graduation of 15 students.

Adult and Child Literacy

We're moving into the second phase of an impact study of our child literacy program. Results will be used to improve this program and shared with other organizations funding education in Haiti to better use their limited resources. Also, five adult literacy centers have organized community gardens where participants learn sustainable gardening techniques. They take seedlings—as well as what they've learned—home to their own gardens (see photo above). ♦



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An Evening with
TONY CAMPOLO
& special guests from Haiti
To benefit Beyond Borders

Tuesday, October 17, 2006
At Willow Valley Resort, Lancaster, PA
Learn more at www.beyondborders.net.
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Tony Campolo's speaking schedule can be found at www.tonycampolo.org.

Attend our
ANNUAL OPEN MEETING
September 22-24, 2006

Share **IDEAS, MUSIC, PLANS,**
and **HAITIAN FOOD** with our staff,
board, and representatives from our
Haitian partner organizations.



Temenos Retreat Center, in a rural
setting near Philadelphia

Reserve soon with:
Jonathan Haggard at
mail@beyondborders.net or
toll-free at 1-866-HAITI-03.

BEYOND BORDERS is a group of people who join together out of devotion to Christ to work for justice and peace by fostering transformative learning within and across cultural and economic borders. We foster transformative learning by
✦ supporting indigenous organizations in Haiti,
✦ placing volunteers who are seeking to learn from and live out the gospel within Haitian communities,
✦ hosting short visits of small groups of people from industrialized countries who want to learn more about how to confront human misery and hunger in the world.

Beyond Borders Staff and Apprentices: Kent Annan, David Diggs, Anna Dioguardi, John Engle, Jonathan Haggard, Coleen Hedglin, Leah Murphy, Tim Murphy, Maria Roesler, Lindsey Strauch, Kris Stoesz
Limye Lavi Staff: Jude Appolon, Guerda Lexima Constant, Samson Joseph, Emmanuel Milien (*Limye Lavi is our main partner organization in Haiti.*)
Beyond Borders Associate Staff: Bayyinah Bello, Carla & Ron Bluntschli, Fremy Cesar, Ulrick Denis, Chris Low/Matènwa Community Learning Center (*Associates work in cooperation with various local organizations in Haiti.*)
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