



Grace!

SUMMER 2003

AT WORK IN HAITI & THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

International Child Care Transforms Lives through Mission Education Encounters

The growth and success of International Child Care's programs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic are possible, in large measure, because of individuals who have gone and seen the programs in action. After a Mission Education Encounter, ICC mission travelers return to North America with a greater understanding of the goals and obstacles facing the Haitian and Dominican people every day. Many also come away with the realization that they are needed to help carry on God's work through ICC; whether it be through prayer, by telling the story of the needs of others, giving of their resources, or by returning, and possibly leading others, to the mission field.

ICC's Mission Education Encounter Teams (MEET) provide an opportunity to broaden awareness and understanding, both personally and of others, by spending time in another culture. Seeing first hand the lifestyles, values and beliefs of another country can give invaluable insight into people's similarities, not just their differences. Confronting the poverty and the wealth of countries like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, with their conflicts and glories, better prepares individuals to see their own world with different, questioning and compassionate eyes.

Being aware of the needs of others often motivates people to go beyond intentions and move into action. This action can take many forms, but radiates from the conviction that each human being is important and that the conditions that exist in parts of Haiti and the Dominican Republic must not continue. Christ makes this position very clear in Matthew 25, "...whatever you do for the least of these my brothers, you do for me."

Each year many people, with different reasons or motivations, chose to experience a Mission Education Encounter with International Child Care. Some participants simply have a desire to experience a foreign culture, while others want to exercise and increase their faith. No matter what the initial motivation, MEET participants are forever transformed by their experience. Participants are placed in settings that are thought provoking, emotionally enriching and spiritually fulfilling.

For this issue of Grace, we would like to share the insights and experiences of some of our mission travelers. We hope their

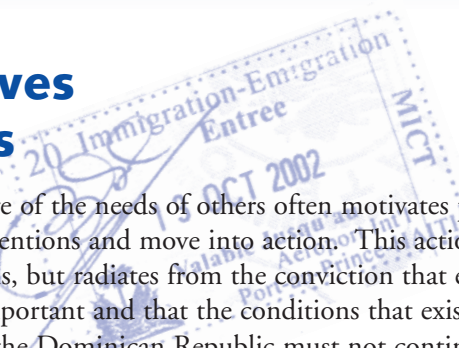
heartfelt and transformational stories will encourage you to join ICC in bringing health and hope to the children of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. ■



Photo © Keith Mumma

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds..."

(Romans 12:2a)



Ways to Participate in Mission with ICC

- Join ICC on a Mission Education Encounter
- Share the ICC story with friends and family
- Pray for the children of Haiti and the Dominican Republic
- Organize an ICC fundraiser in your community
- Become a Partner in Health with ICC



Photo © Carol Hunsberger

Empowerment through ICC's Intergrated Community Health Programs

By George W. Boyd, Senior Pastor, Grace Chapel
Oakville, Ontario

Our short flight from Port-au-Prince to Cap Haitian, located on the north side of the island, preceded a road trip that felt like driving on a freshly ploughed field. "Rough" doesn't begin to describe the experience. As we traveled to Grande Rivière Du Nord, the masses, noises and smells of Port-au-Prince gave way to increased poverty and yet a strange "contentment" that may come as a result of being preoccupied with attempts to survive.

We visited two remote program sites while staying in Grand Rivière. The first day we witnessed a gathering of community health workers, micro-enterprisers and literacy trainers who had been enabled and empowered through ICC initiatives. The following day we went further into the mountains and witnessed a community health worker in action. I cannot begin to describe the impact these initiatives are making! ICC's model is to de-centralize, making health care more accessible to over 160,000 people living in remote villages in Northern Haiti, specifically children under age five and their mothers. People are learning to read, or as one lady testified, it was like she was walking around in the dark and now she could see. Others are being trained and given loans to start small businesses through a "micro-enterprise" program. Babies and their mothers, instead of having to walk for hours to the hospital, find the ICC community health worker coming to them.

Every night before heading off to bed our team would meet for a time of "debriefing." Each one of us was asked to report on what had left an impression in the last twelve hours. I think all of us would agree that the needs are overwhelming. The question is not "what can be done?" but "where does one start?" One of the key words in ICC's philosophy of ministry is "empowerment." As an organization they are attempting to help Haitians help themselves. I believe that the education we received from the Mission Education Encounter has uniquely equipped us to be informed advisors and effective supporters as ICC attempts to continue their "good work." ●

Things I brought back from Haiti:

- A changed attitude. I remember leaving for Haiti with an anticipation of discovering how we might better help the Haitian people (from our position of expertise) and returning with a sense of how much we have to learn from them. Poverty is NOT necessarily an indicator of stupidity! I met many intelligent and articulate Haitians who are striving to make a difference.
- Evidence that the lack of a self-centered approach to life really does foster interdependence and a sense of community. Generally, I found Haitians wanting to do what they could for their communities not out of self-serving interests but because they were genuinely concerned for the health and welfare of others. The commitment and sense of pride, in spite of minimal or no compensation, demonstrated by those involved in delivering health care service, is remarkable ... a model of what it means to be faithful.
- A renewed appreciation for the abundance that we have here in North America . . . and yet knowing that abundance offers no real advantage when it comes to experiencing "life in all its fullness."
- The importance of prioritizing. The needs in Haiti are overwhelming and can leave us paralyzed if we don't prioritize and then focus on the one or two things that we can do. If we don't do that, then all the things that we can't do will keep us from doing what we can.
- The reality that I will never be able to communicate enough information so that others will experience the impact that only a personal encounter offers.



George Boyd in Haiti

Amazing...

By Mary Jo Larson
Woodbury United Methodist Church
Woodbury, Minnesota

This past March I had the opportunity to travel to the Dominican Republic and Haiti with International Child Care. Although I had never taken a mission trip before, participating in a Mission Education Encounter enabled me to experience, first hand, what ICC accomplishes and opened my eyes to both the organization and the many people it helps. One of those people was an amazing Dominican woman named Batania.



Mary Jo Larson (right) at Grace Children's Hospital



Batania and Wellington

I met Batania, and her son Wellington, on my first full day in Santiago, Dominican Republic. Trudy Bekker, ICC/DR National Director, drove us to "The Fly," a neighborhood so named because it sits next to the city garbage dump and attracts flies, to visit some of the families enrolled in ICC's Community Based Rehabilitation program. At our last visit of the day, we bumped and jostled over a battered, dusty street until we stopped in front of a house - a house that reminded me a bit of my grandpa's chicken coop on the farm, with unevenly slatted boards and a tin roof. Outside the front door stood Wellington.

I had never seen anyone who looked quite like Wellington before. He stood only a couple feet high, with a tattered t-shirt, and no pants, just underwear. His belly button was distended over an inch, and his head was shaped like a kidney bean. Trudy wanted Wellington to go to the hospital where more tests could be run to determine what special needs he had.

Wellington's mother, Batania, greeted us with a 100-watt smile as we entered her modest home. In addition to caring for her own disabled son, we learned that Batania also taught the neighborhood children how to read and write. On her small sitting room wall was an old chalkboard. Little green benches were stacked next to the wall, where 22 neighborhood children would arrive the next day to sit down with their studies. Although Batania accepted a few pesos from those parents who could pay, those who could not were invited to come and learn, as well.

Meeting Batania opened my eyes. She was a delightful, vivacious, giving individual in a place that might not be conducive to giving, but rather a place that may make the lesser of us look out only for ourselves. It reminded me of the Bible story where the poor woman came to the temple and gave only a coin. That one coin was more than all the riches the wealthy gave because it was all she had. That was Batania - giving her "coin" which was everything to her son, Wellington, and to the kids in "The Fly."

After returning home from the trip, I couldn't get Batania off my mind. And sadly, upon our return we received word from Trudy that Wellington had died four days after we visited, due to complications with his liver. I know Batania must be hurting over the loss of her son, but I'm praying that her spirit of survival and love of life live on in her, as she continues to help and change the lives of those around her.

International Child Care is touching amazing people like Batania and many others all over Haiti and the Dominican Republic. I only hope, as I return to my world at home, that I keep the lesson Batania taught me not only in my heart, but on the tip of my tongue. Her story needs to be told over and over again. ●

We invite you to be transformed this year...

Take a trip to Haiti and the Dominican Republic and learn, first hand, about the power of God's love at work in the mission field. As a Mission Education Encounter participant you will have the opportunity to:

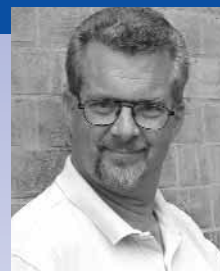
- Serve the emotional and convalescent needs of the children at Grace Children's Hospital
- Visit an Urban Community Health site
- Join a rehabilitation worker on a home consultation in the Dominican Republic
- Travel to a mobile clinic in a remote village and much more!

Your transformation and growth will begin as soon as you start planning your Mission Education Encounter Team (MEET). Contact your ICC national office and schedule a MEET today!

New International Director

James W. Hofstetter has been named the International Director for International Child Care. He will serve as the head of the Senior Leadership Team from ICC's four countries of operation:

- Dr. Harry Geffrard, Director General, ICC Haiti
- Trudy Bekker, National Director, Cuidado Infantil Dominicano
- Charlie Guy, National Director, ICC Canada
- Rev. David David, National Director, ICC USA



Jim Hofstetter

Jim previously held the position of US National Director for ICC since 1998. The addition of an International Director will allow ICC to better integrate and focus the work we do throughout our countries of operation. By working together, the Senior Leadership Team will maintain strategic direction and ensure the success of our organization.

"International Child Care is moving toward some new and wonderful opportunities for our ministry," states Ellen Palmer, the International Child Care Joint Ministry Chairperson. "Jim's position will allow us to reach out to donors, constituents and the international community in new and exciting ways, while empowering and supporting each of the National Offices toward success."

The ICC International office will be located in Columbus, Ohio. Jim can be reached by calling 1-800-722-4453.

REFLECTIONS

By Reverend Steve Good
Sugar Grove United Methodist Church, Sugar Grove, Illinois

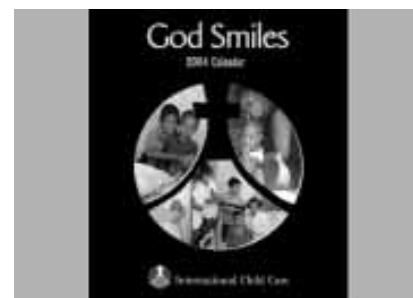
I first visited Haiti as a 20-year-old college student for a three and a half year study/service experience. It was then that my eyes were first opened to the beauty and the struggle that the Haitian people live with daily. Their spiritual awareness and hospitality toward others was something I had never experienced back home. When I returned to Illinois, I longed to find a way to reconnect with my newfound brothers and sisters in Haiti, whom I had come to feel close to. But, I could not find a path back to the land of many mountains.

Seven years later, I found the path I was looking for through an International Child Care Mission Education Encounter. An ICC Board member named Baz Cunningham, a member of the church I was pastoring, invited me to learn about Grace Children's Hospital and its public health ministries. I joined a group from Illinois, Michigan and California for an experience I will never forget. Though the encounter was cut short because of a military coup, I felt that the Lord had connected me with a ministry I felt passionate about. I responded by joining the ICC Board of Directors and helping to lead six more Mission Education Encounters to Haiti and/or the Dominican Republic.

I have been blessed in many ways through the people I have met from my own country as well as those in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Most recently, I was thrilled to bring four teenagers from my church who were open to broadening their perspective on the world and on God's call in their lives.

I feel it is a privilege to be in the presence of the ICC workers who have dedicated their lives for the health and wholeness of others. It is humbling to meet the parents of the sick children, knowing all the sacrifices they make to care for their little ones. It is gratifying to know that through my support of ICC, the Lord is reaching more people that I can imagine, as the ministry declares to the world the way God intends us to live.

2004 God Smiles wall calendar now available!



Please use the enclosed order form to request your copy today!



Grace! is published quarterly for friends of International Child Care. ICC is a Christian health agency working in Haiti and the Dominican Republic to change conditions which make people sick, hungry, unemployed and afraid.

ICC depends on individuals, churches, and donor agencies for the financial means to serve. A response card and envelope are enclosed for your contributions. Your gift will be accepted for income tax purposes.

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Canadian International Development Agency

Agence canadienne de développement international



UMCOR Advance Projects:

Grace Children's Hospital: 418520-7
Integrated Community Health (Haiti): 418847-3
Community Health Development Program (D.R.): 410215-6

Child to Child Health Promotion: 418242-1