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**Editorial**

Haiti has been off the radar for some times now giving the false impression that all is well. But that is very far from the truth. In some ways the situation is even worse. All the promises of democratization and economic recovery weren't but wishful thinking and now are simply a fading memory. Corruption, demagoguery and plain neglect have wasted some golden opportunities. While the officials bicker, hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian assistance are lost.

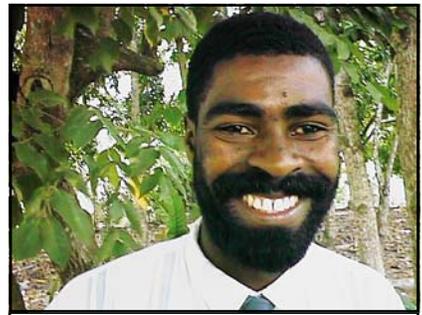
Being off the radar is also having some adverse affect on our ministry. Our income has never been lower; less than \$100,000.00 as of this writing. A number of our supporters may have concluded that we no longer need help. I am happy to report that our economic development efforts are succeeding and are indeed self-sufficient but our evangelistic and educational activities will always need your financial assistance.

I pray that the drive to tighten the grips on immigration does not shut the heart of the most prosperous and powerful nation on earth to the plight of the poor. It is only in giving and sharing that we fulfill God's vision of a just and equitable society where His resources are made available

**Building Bridges**

This last U.S. presidential campaign was filled with metaphors about a bridge to the past and the future. While most of it may have been political posturing, there is a lot to be said about looking forward to the twenty-first century with the assurance that our past has provided a solid foundation.

The Haiti Christian Development Fund has been working in Fond-des-Blancs for the past fourteen years. We came with a willing heart and open mind to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, to help build and equip the local church and to act as a catalyst for social and economic development.



Joel Guillaume, L'Exode teacher

Most everything we did over those years had to be filtered through the three 'R's of Christian Community Development - **Reconciliation, Relocation and Redistribution**. And as we begin to set the stage, even here in Fond-des-Blancs, for this new millenium I think it would be appropriate to once again look back and see how we have faired and what goals we can set for the future.

**Reconciliation** - Whatever else we may do, this is the only thing that has eternal values. From millenium past we have chosen to be enemies of God and it is only through reconciliation with Him through Jesus Christ can we assure our everlasting destiny. **We must be reconciled with God.** There is a marked increase in hatred, intolerance and racism in America today which casts a shadow of unbelief to the concept of reconciliation with God. Yet the apostle John makes it crystal clear that 'we cannot claim to be reconciled with God whom we have not seen if we are not reconciled to our brother whom we see.' This the message that we proclaim from our pulpit and manifest in our relationship with the people that we serve here in Fond-des-Blancs.

**Relocation** - Preaching is one thing but living out that message is another. Some our our best preachers have be actors. Too often it has been discovered that a lot are more actors than they are Christians! You cannot separate your message from your life. Relocation is the opportunity to flesh out the gospel as Christ did in His incarnation. All the message of God's love for us became reality when Christ became flesh. We too are called to be a visible demonstration of

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## Thomas Family News

The Christmas season is upon us and it is obviously time for another major update from the Thomas family. We spent all of 1996 in Haiti. However, the big current news is that we are on our way out for a Christmas break. My parents generously bought tickets for all seven of us to come to Oregon for Christmas. This will be the first Christmas I have spent in Oregon since 1978 and our first trip back to Oregon for any reason since 1990. The boys are particularly excited about the idea of playing in the snow. Lemec built a snowman with his Grandma way back when he was just 3 years old. He remembers that as a fun experience, but I doubt he remembers how cold it was. It will be interesting to see how any of us are able to withstand the cold of a winter in Oregon after so many years of fairly warm Haitian winters.

During the month of May 1996 my Grandmother died in Oregon. While our communication system with the outside world has improved 1000 fold since our first arrival in Fond-des-Blancs in 1984 it is still not up to the standards that most of you would consider adequate. I heard the news the day before her funeral which meant it was too late for me to even try to make arrangements to go home. This really bothered me. I might not have gone home anyway, but I didn't like not being able to make that decision because of lack of communication. Jean took pity on me and even though he had just driven three hours coming home from Port-au-Prince he agreed to drive to the nearest telephone an hour's drive away from our home so I could call my family to let them know I

had just heard and why I wasn't coming. There is only one telephone in that town and it was very fortunate that it was working. While the trip to make that call was very tiring for Jean it immensely calmed my heart and soul.

Many of you have written to ask if we have an E-mail address yet. I tell the above story to let you know that life in Fond-des-Blancs can still seem as if it is just a few years past the dark ages. Jean is very technically minded and is constantly working on improving our communication with the outside world, but it is not easy when he has to start from nothing. To effectively communicate with people in Port-au-Prince we found it necessary to buy two of our own repeaters. A group there is working on a radio E-mail service that we might be able to link into eventually.

In March Jean and I celebrated our 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We planned on leaving our children in Port-au-Prince with a member of Jean's family so we could have a private, romantic weekend retreat at a resort hotel on the northern coast of Haiti. Something came up at the last minute and we were not able to leave our children so we took them with us. It was a nice family time, but not the romantic outing we had been counting on plus we did not feel the hotel or its beach were that great. While Jean was working on the road project he came across a beautiful piece of undeveloped ocean front property which he bought. It does not have a sandy beach, but is very scenic with dramatic rock cliffs and a waterfall. We decided in the future we would have just as

much fun taking a picnic and maybe a tent until we can build something there and spend a quiet, relaxing time there. Having grown up just three blocks from the Pacific Ocean in Oregon I have always longed for a piece of scenic property on the beach. While our romantic weekend did not quite work out as planned I think Jean more than made up for it with the purchase of this land.

It will probably be a few years before we are able to build anything on our ocean property since we still haven't finished our home. This past year, though, we made a big step in improving our home by building an upstairs bedroom for the boys. It is the securest room in our house. Never again will we have to worry about robbers breaking into our home and getting to our boys before we do. Whenever I think of the night of November 26, 1994, I thank the Lord for allowing me to get our boys before the robbers did. Now all of us can sleep a little more soundly. Their room overhangs the downstairs rooms making it very difficult for anyone to climb up to their windows. Even if someone managed to climb up the windows are too small for someone to climb through. There is no outside access to their room and if they go into their closet no stray bullets can come through the windows to get them. We are very grateful to have been able to complete that room for them.

Manise, our oldest foster daughter has just been accepted into a private nursing

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## Millennial

### **For the Church:**

We have seven satellite churches with regular attendance between fifty and one hundred fifty each and baptized members between ten and fifty. By the year 2000 each one should have at least fifty baptized members and be considered a full fledged independent Church.

### **For L'Exode:**

We are striving to keep the enrollment around 500 students where it is now. But we need to increase support through sponsorship. We also need to have more local teachers. Joel graduated from teachers' college this year, Petronille will graduate next year. Both are young people who grew up in our Church. By the year 2000 we hope to have 300 children sponsored and two more teachers from our Church.

### **For the Credit Union:**

Like L'Exode, the Credit Union is a success story. But by design it is there to help those who have pre-existing resources. Beginning next year we will be introducing a new program aimed at

**Let us hear from you**



Dear Jean,  
As the Lord provides, I do hope to continue my support of you ministry to the people of Fond-des-Blancs. Below is my estimated pledge for this coming year.

Designations	*Staff Members	°Sponsorship	Pledge	When
<input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> °Education/Sponsorship <input type="checkbox"/> Church Activities <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Projects <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Union <input type="checkbox"/> *Staff Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Jean & Joy Thomas <input type="checkbox"/> Mario & Velouse Clerjeune <input type="checkbox"/> Remy & Idaliance Bernade <input type="checkbox"/> Muriel Juste <input type="checkbox"/> Joel Guillaume <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl  <input type="checkbox"/> Age _____ Between 4-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,000.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 500.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 100.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 25.00 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly  We would love for you to come visit our ministry in Fond-des-Blancs. Just drop us a note and let us know when you can come!

bringing the disenfranchised into ownership of a small business through a closely supervised loan, marketing and collective purchasing program. By the year 2000 we hope to help 200 families in this micro-enterprise program.

**In Agriculture:** Over the past fourteen years we have planted over five million trees. Most are full grown ready for harvest. With the reduction in our reforestation program they are in danger of over-harvesting. Through a new cooperative venture aimed at the tree growers we hope to establish by the year 2000 a wood mill that would produce board for carpentry work and charcoal with the by products while

**Happenings...**

**New Associate Pastor:** For the past two years we have been prayerfully considering the hiring of an associate pastor for our growing congregation. Over the past twelve years our church grew from a small gathering of four people to over five hundred with outreach in seven communities around Fond-des-Blancs.

Pastor Remy Bernadé, his wife Idaliance, and their three boys arrived in late September. Pastor Remy is our minister of evangelism and will be responsible for implementing our objective for the new millenium.

**Church Relation:** When I first stumbled upon what is now the Fond-des-Blancs Evangelical Church it wasn't but a small congregation of four which once was part of a larger fellowship of Churches operating in southern Haiti. Last May our church rejoined that fellowship which promises to provide greater opportunity for fellowship

for our members. Our layman theological training program has been expanded to adapt a program offered by that fellowship. Right now we have twenty students following a systematic set of courses. Those who can complete the three years program will graduate with a diploma.

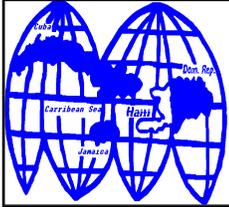
**L'Exode:** We are celebrating the graduation of Joel Guillaume from teacher's college and his return to Fond-des-Blancs to teach at L'Exode. Joel came to know the Lord through our church. After several years of observing his gifts the church gave him a scholarship to further his education. He graduated last June and is now teaching sixth grade. We wish we had six others like him. Another member of our church, Petronille will graduate next June.

Enrollment was up again this year. Over one hundred and thirty came to register their three year olds in May. It is getting beyond our capacity to accept every one who comes on the only day of registration.

To proceed from primary to secondary education in Haiti every sixth grade student must pass a national test. This year will be L'Exode's first promotion to go through this right of passage. We are praying and working for a one hundred percent success rate.

**Road Improvement:** Over the past three years we completed the improvement of over 100 miles of road and provided over 10,000 temporary employments. For travel in and out of Fond-des-Blancs the improved roads have been a lifesaver. Even during the rainy season small commercial pick up trucks without four wheel drives are still able to come in. Those projects were very time consuming but helped both the





The  
*Fond-des-Blancs*  
Update

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The Fond-des-Blancs Update

mandating that each participant plant ten trees for every tree cut.

**Thomas Family:**

We have been in Haiti now for fourteen years with three months of vacation apart from fundraising trips. Next Fall our oldest son Lémec will be taught at home and Jacques should complete his primary education in two years. Josiah will still be in primary school. But by the summer of the year 2000 we would like to take a

**Building Bridges**

*(Continued from page 1)*

Christ love in our community.

**Redistribution** - From His mandate at creation through New Testament theology God's call for us in relation to His creation is that we should be good stewards of the resources He has put at our disposal. We are not the owners because 'the earth and all that it contains belongs to Him.' That is the starting point for an understanding of redistribution. Every one of God's children should have his piece of God's creation to manage. The apostle Paul makes it clear

that it is our responsibility to make it happen.

These principles have been our guiding light for the past fourteen years. Whether it be through our Church, school or development activities we strive to show that every one in important before God. As we plan for the next millenium we want to stay with that message.

You should read the sidebars as an integral part of this meditation in order to share in our goals for the next few years. I am confident that with God's help and our combined efforts we will realize them

**Thomas...**

*(Continued from page 2)*

training university just starting in Port-au-Prince. We are very proud of her and pleased for her. She was required to take and pass a week long entrance exam and only 40 of the applicants were admitted. Fonia, our other foster daughter is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

From the bottom of our hearts we wish each an everyone of you a very **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.** We pray that the Lord will continue to shower you with His blessings!