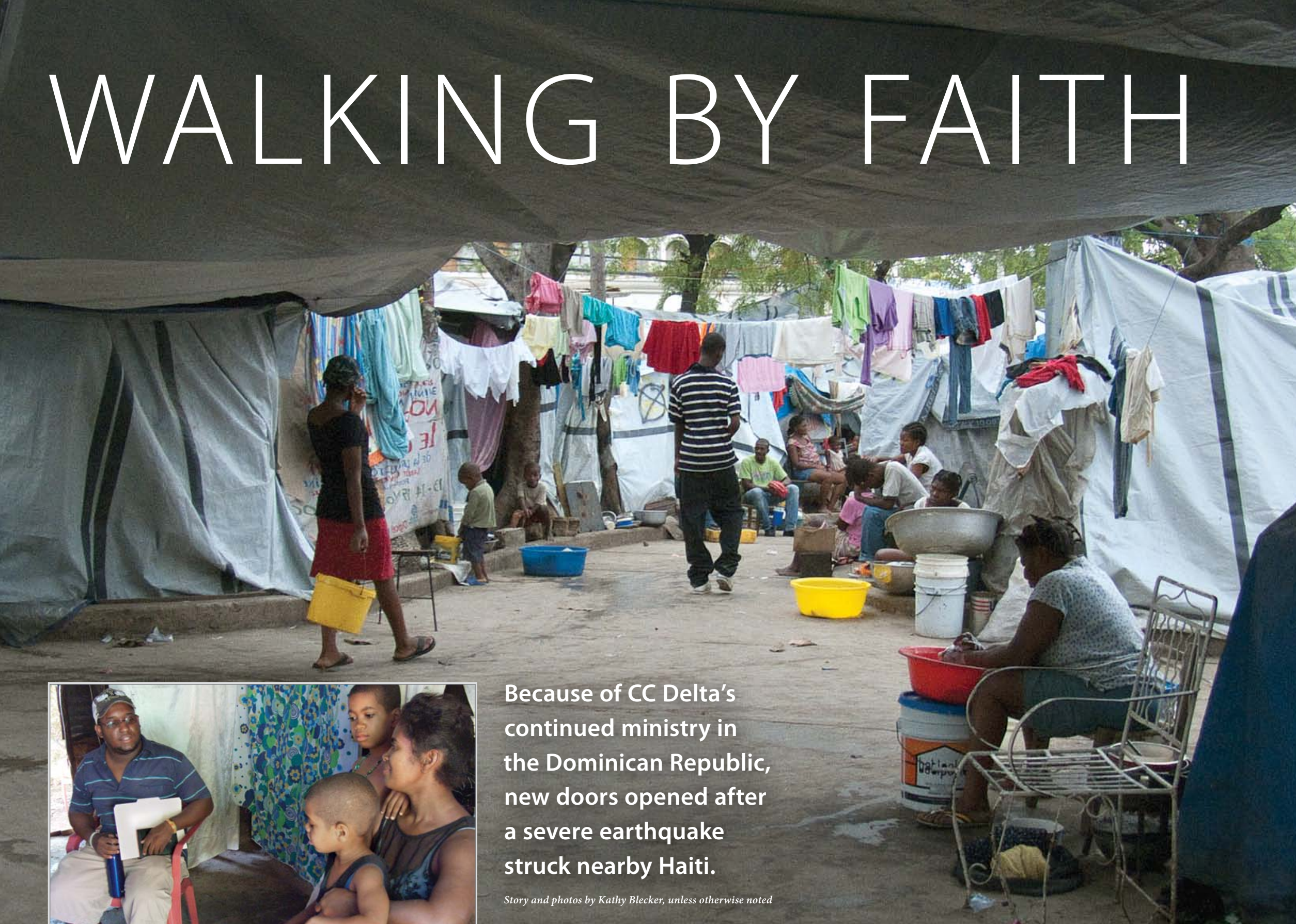


# WALKING BY FAITH



Because of CC Delta's continued ministry in the Dominican Republic, new doors opened after a severe earthquake struck nearby Haiti.

*Story and photos by Kathy Blecker, unless otherwise noted*

Haiti's devastating earthquake in January left more than 230,000 dead and displaced 2 million, most of whom now live in tents. Believers from Calvary Chapel Delta, PA, visited and shared Christ's love with people living in a tent city in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Vicente Carrasco, left, from a CC Delta ministry, speaks with a Dominican woman about her family's health and economic situation.

Pastor Doug McClean of CC Delta, PA, heard screams coming through the phone line. He was speaking with Lewis Gonell, a Dominican national who oversees CC Delta's child sponsorship program in Barahona, Dominican Republic. A 7.2 magnitude earthquake was then hitting the neighboring country of Haiti. In Barahona, which lies about 85 miles east of the epicenter on the same fault line, shaking buildings accompanied widespread power outages. Both men soon realized that an enormous tragedy had occurred.



Lewis Gonell

Dominican Republic

While there was no noticeable damage in Barahona, the Dominican believers were deeply affected by the suffering of their neighbors in Haiti. Over the years, many Haitians had immigrated to the Dominican Republic (DR) seeking an income. They usually found work in the sugarcane fields and housing in shanty-home communities called *bateyes*. Despite historical animosity between the two countries, both Haitian and Dominican believers, alongside CC Delta teams, had long been working together in the DR to reach the lost with the Gospel.

Immediately following the earthquake, Doug offered CC Delta's ministry house in Barahona for Calvary Chapel groups to use as a base of operations along the route from Santo Domingo, DR to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Several American teams used the house as they secured crucial medical supplies, food, and water in the Dominican capital and then transported these items to the suffering across the border in Haiti.

Lewis remembered, "The doctors in Haiti needed bone saws and narcotics for amputations. Otherwise, they would have to perform amputations on nearly 40 people without any pain medication, using makeshift saws and equipment." The supplies were secured in Santo Domingo, then Lewis and the Calvary Chapel relief workers utilized police protection to deliver the food and water to several locations in Haiti. "The people were so desperate. It was very sad, but we were able to pray with many and show them the love of Jesus," Lewis added.

Because of the overwhelming need as CC Port-au-Prince set up a tent city to house its people, Lewis began transporting food such as dried fish, rice, beans, spaghetti, sugar, and salt about twice per week. Gradually, the frequency dropped to once a week and then to an as-needed basis. As time went on, it became more difficult to cross from the DR into Haiti. While the border had been open immediately following the earthquake, increased traffic and demands for exorbitant fees made the trip more challenging.



Photo by Leidy Matos Medina

Pastor Doug McClean, right, and others from CC Delta, PA, pray with a batey resident who rejected the Gospel to surrender to Christ. Teams from CC Delta often minister in bateyes, communities of Haitian sugarcane workers in the Dominican Republic.

Observing the gratitude and faith of the believers at CC Port-au-Prince's tent city encouraged Lewis. "It was amazing to see how they praised the Lord even though they had nothing," he recalled. Several other locals from Barahona crossed the border into Haiti during this time and found it difficult to express their experiences in words. Although living in poverty themselves, none had witnessed such widespread, immeasurable suffering and devastation.

Doug said, "We're seeking guidance from the Lord on how we can continue helping in Haiti while remaining dedicated to our sponsored children and their communities in Dominican Republic." The sponsorship program, In Calvary's Care (ICC), serves youth in Barahona's mountain villages. The ministry began in 2006 when Doug was on a mission trip in Barahona and was invited to teach a group of batey pastors. During that visit, he learned that a large charity was ending their sponsorship program in

Barahona. Having met some of the families and seen their living conditions, Doug knew they needed help. Within a few weeks after returning home, CC Delta had assumed leadership of the child sponsorship program.

Many of the youth cannot afford to attend school or eat regular meals, and ICC seeks to demonstrate Christ's love to these children in a tangible, relational way. Each month, the families of sponsored children visit the ministry house. The staff converse

with them about their lives, pray for them, share God's Word, and give the family \$20 worth of food staples for each sponsored child. ICC also aids families in extreme need due to other situations.

ICC's main goal is to nurture the people spiritually. Lewis noted, "When I worked with other ministries, distributing rice and beans in the bateyes, I saw the physical needs, but I didn't see the spiritual needs as much. As I started sharing God's Word with people, I began to see the spiritual need."

This awareness led him to begin teaching a weekly Bible study. An elderly neighbor named Gabriel is one of the most faithful attendees. Gabriel commented, "This Bible study is helping me grow in my faith. ... This is where I learn about God." One girl in the sponsorship program, Amaly, told Lewis she was sad because her school session was in the afternoon and she therefore couldn't attend the concurrent Bible study. As soon as school ended for the summer, Amaly was there every week, always bringing friends with her so they could hear about Jesus.

Early on, large crowds would come to the Bible study when the Americans were in town, but numbers dwindled between their visits. Recently more people have attended on a regular basis. Lewis teaches the adults, and ICC's two other field staff lead the kids in Bible songs and a lesson. Since ICC's heart is the children, Lewis would like to see more activities for them throughout the week. Sadly, there are few stable family situations in these villages. "The children see us as family," Lewis said. "They need love. Sometimes the parents aren't in the house or the mother has to work. They don't have that kind of love. That could be why the Lord put us here."

CC Delta sends three to four mission teams to Barahona each year to share the Gospel from house to house and spend time with ICC children. The CC Delta ministry house is available to other Calvary Chapel groups that would like to share in this vision. 🙌

**And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**

Galatians 6:9



Photo by Myriah Sochurek

Kathy Blecker presents a gift and letter from a sponsor to a girl who is part of CC Delta's sponsorship program, In Calvary's Care, which serves Dominican families.

### Calvary Chapel Haiti Initiative

"The vision of CC Haiti Initiative (CCHI) is to build up the body of Christ by serving churches and planting churches," said CCHI Administrative Coordinator Jeff Kotrady. "Through outreach to the local community, we want to point people first to Christ and then to a local Bible-teaching church." Jeff, who is on staff at CC Fort Lauderdale, FL (CCFTL), coordinates Calvary Chapel teams ministering in Haiti.

Groups of 10-20 believers at a time lodge in a house near the Jacmel site that CCHI has secured to use as a missions base. There the ministry plans to create a community center that will offer vocational training in woodworking, carpentry, electrical, and other construction trades. CCHI also desires to provide the community with playground equipment, basketball courts, and soccer fields to supplement the discipling of the area's youth.

CCFTL and Parakletos International, a disaster relief ministry of CC Costa Mesa, CA, have partnered to lead the Calvary Chapel movement in responding to Haiti's earthquake. Over the past several months, teams from CC fellowships across the U.S. have helped Haitian churches recover by doing construction, children's ministry, medical supply inventory, and evangelism. They have served primarily in Jacmel, a town 25 miles southeast of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. Jacmel and the surrounding region endured colossal earthquake damage.

In July, the ministry hosted a three-day conference for Haitian pastors and leaders. The more than 200 attendees studied through 1 Peter, taught by CCFTL's Outreach Pastor Chet Lowe and several other American CC pastors. CCHI desires to partner with like-minded Haitian church leaders and to support them with ministry tools they currently lack.

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In the backyard of the ministry house, Vicente teaches a Bible story to children while Lewis leads a study for adults at the house.



Believers in the Dominican Republic load supplies to transport to CC Port-au-Prince's tent city.



The Dominican Republic is east of Haiti on the Caribbean island the two nations share.

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