

The Sowers' Hands

A Quarterly Newsletter for our Faithful Patrons

"He who plants a seed has faith it will grow, and he who has faith has hope." • Issue 19

Boldly Sending Seed Where Needed!

by Mike Mueller, Executive Director

On my most recent trip to Haiti, one of my most dear and trusted Haitian friends asked to see me, and of course I gladly said yes. As we met he quickly passed over the polite conversation and got right to his point... he asked me for money. How Bold! Now to most of us this is abrupt and somewhat rude, but know the man as I did I knew there was good reason. He quickly unfolded a piece of paper with three projects he was working on which needed resources to be implemented. Each one of the projects were to the benefit of others he was serving in one way or another. Not one request was to his benefit. I was moved to say yes, that I would help in any way I could to see that these worthwhile projects could be performed.

The lesson I learned that day from this man in Haiti, who by the world's standards is poor and perhaps rude, was to be bold when asking for help, especially when it helps others before ones self. You will see and hear me asking boldly for your money, to help with Hope Seeds and it's projects. I ask you to consider and evaluate our plans and purpose for asking, and then send.

In the past year we have been "blessed" with more requests which require "more work" than normal. And, we are seeing a trend of this for the year ahead. Places in Africa and Asia are trying to keep out any Genetically Modified Organisms (G.M.O.'s – which we do not stock) so they require more inspections and proof of production or genetics. This requires more for us when we purchase seed, and it means more costs and more planning ahead for the future. And we joyfully plan for this. The need is great for seed, we realize that a greater impact is made by the Christian worker who shares this valuable seed. So our theme for the year is **Boldly Sending Seeds Where Needed!** And we ask you to be bold with us and to support us in a sacrificial way –

Donate from your wealth, even asking others boldly to contribute, then watch and hear with us of the great stories from those who share and give away Hope Seeds.



Enoch Trains on the Job

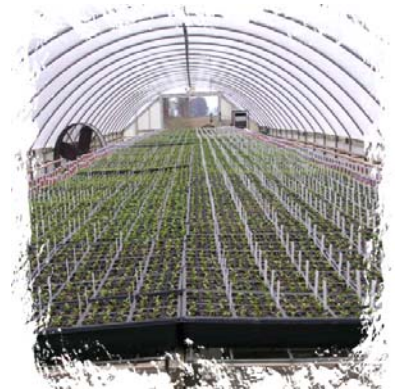
Enoch Firmin, Hope Seeds – Haiti Manager is here in the U.S. He has been granted a J-1 job experience visa with Mueller's Greenhouses and Hope Seeds for up to 9 months. He is excited and anxious to learn more about growing vegetable and ornamental transplants, managing a commercial plant production greenhouse, and working with the staff of Hope Seeds and Mueller's. We are all confident that after this experience he will be far better equipped to teach, train, and manage his duties in Haiti.

Mueller's Greenhouses is in southeast Missouri and is the family business jointly owned by Erich and Mike Mueller (Mike is Executive Director of Hope Seeds). This location in Missouri is also where Hope Seeds has its second test garden and volunteer seed packing station. Both companies will share the responsibility for Enoch's housing and income while here in the U.S. It is also planned that Enoch will be making some presentations at congregations who support our efforts, and he looks forward to meeting many of you in the months ahead.

Mueller's Greenhouses ►



▲ Mike Mueller and Enoch Firmin plan the work schedule for 2007.



Haiti Agricultural Seminar and Mission Trip

Excerpts from the journals of Dr. Aaron Welch, plant pathologist and Hope Seeds Board member and Jean Mueller, Inventory Manager Hope Seeds

Dec. 5, 2006 – Depart Ft. Pierce, FL 6 am and arrive in Cap Haitien, Haiti at 11 am. Flight by Missionary Flights International on DC-3.

Dr. Welch - DC-3 ride remarkable; smooth; a little nosier than used to. Pilot and crew very professional and religious – we prayed together before take off – How many pilots have ever done that with you?

Met Enoch Firmin, Hope Seeds Haiti Manager and Agrinom – Delightful young man!

As we left the airport Enoch said that this (road by the airport) was the best road in Cap Haitien. As it turned out he was speaking absolute truth because soon we were on the absolute worst road I've ever been on.



In an effort to get a feel for the gardens and problems we'd be talking about (in the next two days of seminars Hosted by Hope Seeds) Mike (Mueller) had Enoch take me to some of the gardens in the area. The gardens were inspiring and heartbreaking. They can and do grow some very good produce but the problems they face are staggering. They have all the same problems American growers face but none of the technology to use as solutions.

My command of the English language is not adequate to describe what I saw in driving around Cap Haitien... The poorest of the poor in the U.S. don't know what real poverty, filth and squalor is.

Jean Mueller - The first time I got to meet Enoch – a very gentle young man, passionate about his work... very tall and humble.

Roads are a mess, and sure glad I don't have to drive here... seems to be no rules except watch out for whatever is bigger than you... you seem to drive as fast as you can, which is slow because of the deep potholes, trying to go around anyone else going slower... sure glad I don't have to drive here... I say that every time I get in the car.



Dec. 6, 2006 – Seminar #1 held at Living Hope Mission

Dr. Welch - When you go to bed at 9 pm it is easy to get up with the roosters who start yelling about 4 am... By 9 am we had 36 people signed in for the seminar. Mike and I made presentations about Integrated Pest Management, Insect identification, common sense pest control and crop rotation. The men seemed to really appreciate our efforts. They asked lots of questions and sometimes discussion was spirited. Most of the participants seemed to be very dedicated and of above average intelligence. Enoch's father, Isaac led the group in a devotion to start the meeting. As part of the devotion the men sang hymns...beautifully in 3 part harmony. Most of these men did not know each other and there was indeed no practice and no sheet music... this was from memory of some common hymns they all know. Very inspiring.



Jean Mueller - Roosters all night long! ... Seminar went quite well... lots of questions and dialog...took a photo of an older woman doing laundry in a tub with a washboard and hanging clothes over bushes to dry...Hope the roosters are as tired as I am.

Dec. 7, 2006 – Flight to Les Cayes, Haiti to prepare for seminar #2

Dr. Welch - At Les Cayes we visited "SEED" (Service, Evangelization, Education, and Development) founded and run by Pastor Frantz Clotaire and wife Doris. SEED has a 2 year Ag program and 18 acres of teaching garden, including an animal husbandry program to teach better care of the goats, cows, pigs and chickens.

Jean Mueller – A real pleasure to see the SEED complex and what can be done for education and sharing Christ in one place... We stayed at the complex in a 2nd floor room overlooking what appeared to be a tranquil rice field... but then the sun went down and discovered that the chicken coop was right below... again, roosters all night. They don't seem to know when to shut up and wait till morning...

Fri. Dec. 8, 2006 – Seminar # 2 at SEED, Les Cayes, Haiti.



Dr. Welch - Certainly this complex is a tribute to Frantz and Doris's dedication, determination and Christianity. When I congratulated him on this amazing facility he took no credit but simply said "God be Praised". Our second seminar was again a success. We had 26 agrinoms in attendance and they asked serious and informed questions.

Jean Mueller - Seminar was very good, and Pastor Frantz and Enoch did a great job of translating for Mike and Aaron. The atmosphere was professional and appreciative. After seminar we went on a short tour of the town of Les Cayes...many areas very rundown and deplorable by our standards.

Sat. Dec. 9, 2006 – Return to Cap Haitien

Dr. Welch - Traveled with Enoch to where his father Isaac was working with a bunch of children, about 40 or so, in a garden plot. Isaac was entertaining them and maybe preaching/teaching as well. I got to give each of them a lolly pop. Its amazing how a little piece of candy can make a child's face light up.

Jean Mueller - Got to see Isaac in action with children... a real Pied Piper. He keeps them occupied with garden work at this location, as well as teaching them Bible stories and life lessons.

The children sang to us and we handed out Tote bags for each family. I can see why Mike has always said that Isaac is a mighty Christian Warrior... this is but one of Isaac's projects in sharing his faith – others include a prison ministry, teaching adults how to read by using the Bible, and a children feeding program along with devotions and songs... very inspiring Haitian Christian.



Sun. Dec 10, 2006 - Sunday Worship in Haiti

Dr. Welch - An early start this AM... Mike wanted to go into town to hear pastor Megy at 12th Street Evangelical Congregation for their first service of the day... which begins at 6 am. I said "you're kidding". As we made our way into the sanctuary they were setting up TV monitors and chairs in the down stairs rooms and in the streets. By the time the choir sang the main floor of the sanctuary was packed... I'd estimate about 700... and many hundreds more on the lower floor and in the streets. When the pastor saw us in the congregation (we were hard to hide) he began his sermon in English and then Kreol and he did this for the next 45 minutes, never missing a beat. It was amazing... We met Enoch's parents for lunch and they were very excited to learn that Enoch was getting a work visa to the U.S.. Now Enoch will come to Hope Seeds and learn more about the seed business.

Jean Mueller - The experience of seeing hundreds of people jammed into pews sideways so they can worship, pray and hear God's Words was beyond what I had expected. It was quite warm for me, so I sought out a window to stand close to for a breeze... Pastor Megy did his sermon in both English and Kreol so we would understand God's message – I felt honored and blessed. After church we had lunch with Enoch's parents – his mother is a lovely and loving woman.

Mon., Dec. 11, 2006 -

Dr. Welch - After Breakfast we went to the Hope Seed's Garden at FLO (Family Life Outreach) headed by Pastor Hudson Hess and wife Lucy. The project for the day was to complete installation of a pump Mike brought in from Florida and get water up the hill, across the road and up yet another hill to a cistern(reservoir) built on top of the hill. From the cistern on top of the hill H2O would then be available via gravity through a PVC line already installed (by Hope Seeds group in June 2006) down the other side of the hill to a small village and garden area. A tower frame holding a 700 gallon tank is at the bottom of the hill for distribution and regulating the water flow. The pump was started and water was on its way... Having that water in the little village will be a major improvement in their lives. Before this they (usually children) had to walk about ½ mile to the community water carrying 5 gal pails several times per day.



Jean Mueller - *Watching the water being turned on from the cistern and pump down to the small village was real joy. The families there were really thrilled, and the children were simply beautiful to behold... big smiles and hungry hearts. A real treat.*



During the day while we were waiting to get the pump going I was able to sit in a sheltered area with many local children to keep me company. We drew pictures on paper and practiced my Kreol with them... they know more English than I do Kreol. We also handed out Tote bags to each family of children... always a smile and thank you – usually in song.

Tomorrow we leave – and I am ready to go home, but heartsick to leave at the same time. Made new friends and will come back soon I hope. Sometimes we are asked why we go to Haiti and other places when there is so much need in the U.S. In our country there are so many other helpful organizations and government agencies. Here and in other such countries there is no help unless we help as Christians... and after experiencing this week in Haiti I am energized to continue doing all I can.

I pray that I can find the words to let others know how important this work is and just how many depend upon us.

******The trip ended with a safe landing back in Florida on Dec. 13. We are still getting positive feed back from participants in the seminars and photos of joy from the Tote bag recipients and water project. This type of special trip-project is designed to promote and encourage the gardeners and families we have begun to work with, and we know more will be identified in the years ahead.

A special thanks to each person who made this trip possible by generous financial support.



5250 CR 675 • Bradenton, FL 34211
(941) 322-8200 • www.hopeseeds.org

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