

# Making **STEPS** *A Progress Report*

Séminaire de Théologie Évangélique de Port-au-Prince

December 2004

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Politically and socially, Haiti remains explosive. In February President Aristide vacated the presidency under great pressure and the threat of a



Dr. Jean Duthène Joseph  
President

bloody civil war. In March, his supporters vented their anger in violent outbursts. Those outbursts have continued sporadically to this day, forcing STEP to close its doors for a month last spring and another month this fall.

You are all aware of the horrible toll in Haiti from Hurricane Jeanne this summer. Estimates place the number of dead at around 3,000. Tens of thousands more, perhaps hundreds of thousands, are left homeless.

Suffering in Haiti is immense, and the evangelical community has responded with resolve. Read inside about just one way in which STEP is responding to needs.

We are extremely excited about the prospects of STEP graduates serving in Muslim Senegal. A report on a September trip is included in this issue. Don't miss it.

This is the last time I will address you as STEP President. I am delighted to pass the baton to my colleague John Berger. Happily, presidential succession at STEP is a bit more peaceful than in Haitian politics! You'll read that announcement on this page.

I remain at STEP as Chancellor, and remain grateful for your partnership and interest in our ministry. May God bless you richly!

## NEW PRESIDENT NAMED

STEP's Board of Governors is pleased to announce the naming of John Berger as President of the seminary effective January 1, 2005. Dr. J. Duthène Joseph, who has served as president since 1981, will assume the role of Chancellor. He will represent the seminary at large, teach courses as he is able, and serve on the Board. He is currently on sabbatical in New Jersey, working on a doctoral dissertation and serving a Haitian church in Spring Valley, NY: *l'Église Baptiste d'Expression Française*.

Rev. John Berger, formerly a civil engineer in Oklahoma City and Austin, TX, earned a Master of Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1989. He has served in a number of roles at STEP since 1992: Professor, Academic Dean, Director of Institutional Development, and Executive Vice President.

Berger serves in Haiti with CrossWorld, a missionary sending agency based in

Pennsylvania and Ontario (see *Partnerships* below). "I have been reticent to accept this position because of my desire to see another Haitian preside over what is a thoroughly Haitian institution," he shares. "But Dr. Joseph, our staff, and our Haitian board members finally convinced me that this is the right move for the present. They truly believe that nationality is a secondary issue. There are certainly many qualified Haitian candidates out there, but it's a matter right now of timing, availability, and the Board being comfortable that it has correctly sensed God's direction for the seminary."

One thing is clear, Berger's reticence will not dilute his motivation. "I love this school, believe passionately in its mission, and am honored to serve in this way. I'm convinced that nothing can make greater impact in Haiti than preparing godly Haitian men and women to grow and mobilize the Haitian church."

## PARTNERSHIPS

STEP is affiliated with a number of organizations. UEBH, OCI, CETA, CrossWorld... who are these groups, and what is the nature of their partnership with STEP? *Making STEPS* will review each partnership in coming issues. On the occasion of one of its members being named president of the seminary, it seems appropriate to begin with CrossWorld.

Many of our readers know CrossWorld as UFM International. UFM was founded in 1931 as the Unevangelized Fields Mission, a non-profit non-denominational missionary sending agency. Its purpose was to announce the good news of Jesus Christ and establish indigenous local churches in previously unreached regions of the world.

Today, roughly 400 members are deployed on 29 fields in 27 countries around the world. The purpose statement reads as follows: *UFM International serves the church by mobilizing teams to make disciples and train leaders which will result in movements of reproducing churches among the unreached.*

*UFM has recently changed its name to CrossWorld.* Why a new name? "To better communicate what our missionaries do every day and what the Mission is about," the Board of Directors explains. "The *Cross* is the center of the Christian faith, the source of hope and salvation. We know that it is the power of what happened on the Cross that is able to change the life and destiny of all who believe."

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Preparing Haitians to Transform Communities

# STEP STUDENTS FEED NEEDY FAMILIES

United Nations Development Program statistics show that **more than 50%** of Haiti's population routinely **goes to bed hungry**. In the slums surrounding the seminary's campus, the percentage is surely much higher. STEP students have distributed emergency food supplies to 360 families in its immediate neighborhood in 2004.

STEP is not a relief agency—far from it—and the enormity of the problem presents a daunting challenge even for the best of those experts. Nevertheless, unable to ignore the hunger ravaging the area, the seminary decided to initiate some form of relief project for its *Fort Mercredi* neighbors. In order to plan its involvement in a way that would contribute to lasting development, STEP launched a community service program in 2003 seeking to collaborate with existing informal leadership structures and designed to mobilize the community itself to begin finding ways to improve the quality of life of people living there (see *Institutional Reflections*).

From December 2003 through March 2004, Haiti's political crisis deepened. Demonstrations, strikes, militia attacks in the north, and the chaos ensuing President Aristide's departure created a disastrous economic climate. The already catastrophic problem of hunger worsened.

In May 2004, with the help of *SousEspwa* (Source of Hope) and Food for the Poor, STEP students put together provisions for an initial distribution among the neediest families in the impoverished areas surrounding the seminary. Twenty churches along with 10 community associations operating in the area helped STEP identify 200 families in extreme need. STEP students then prepared and distributed 200 five-gallon buckets full of rice, beans, oats, and powdered milk. The following are samples of testimonies offered by the recipients.

*During a three-day fast I was observing up the mountain, God told me He had already supplied my needs from a source I would have never hoped. Who am I, that I should find a STEP student bringing food to my house!*

*Neither I nor my husband is employed, but here we are eating good food! We believe that it is God who used STEP to provide this food for us. Not only that, but for a long time I've been asking God for a container with which I could go get water. Voilà! He sent a 5-gallon bucket in a way I would have never expected.*

*I shared some of this food with an unsaved neighbor. When I explained where the food had come from, she said that God would bless those people. I'm committing myself to pray for STEP, that God would always use it to accomplish good things like this for the Fort Mercredi community.*

— Mrs. Deni S.



STEP student, community leader, and STEP Community Service Liaison, Jean-Denis Pétion, discuss the logistics of the food distribution



Jean Edner Jeany, STEP Director of Haitian Advancement, helps with the distribution

*What STEP did for me, only God knows how important it is, because I don't have work and everything is very expensive. Frankly, I can't find the words to thank not only God, but also STEP who took this initiative. I simply can't find the words. But what I do know is that God will always open doors so that STEP can help people in need.*

— Mrs. Faniz J.



A smiling beneficiary of STEP's food distribution

*I know God will bless STEP because they took pity on us who have nothing. That's what it says in Psalm 41: "Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble. The LORD will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes."*

*What STEP did touched me very deeply. I'm praying that God will always bless this institution.*

— Mrs. Mez L.

*When I received the bucket of provisions that STEP had prepared, I was really surprised. I was surprised because where our church is located at the top of the mountain, if it wasn't for God, it wouldn't be way up here that STEP students would carry this food. But that's what happened! The first thing I did when I received the bucket—anybody could see it—I lifted my hands toward heaven and said "Thank You" to God, because He's the one that did this for us.*

*My wife and I, neither of us have work, and a cup of rice and a cup of beans are very expensive these days! At the moment the food arrived—God is my witness—we had absolutely nothing in the house. That's why I can't find the words to adequately express what God did for me through this project. I can only tell Him thank you, and I say thank you to STEP because they're the ones God used to do this for my family.*

Since the initial wave of assistance, STEP students have made distributions to an additional 160 families. Long-term projects addressing water supply, electricity and roads are also in various stages of planning in collaboration with community associations energized by this initiative. If you would like to help STEP with the cost of this ongoing ministry, you may designate

your gifts for "STEP Community Service Project".

## Financial Update

Generous partners like you gave nearly \$260,000 to STEP's ministry during the 2003-2004 school year. **Thank you!** We thank God daily for you. We fell short of our \$330,000 goal, but the Lord sustained us through some tight days. The most serious shortfall was in our Student Scholarship Fund.

We have slashed and pinched our 2004-2005 budget in every reasonable way we can imagine without cutting salaries. Again, the greatest need is to fund student scholarships, and many friends have already answered the call for help. ***Will you prayerfully consider making STEP an important part of your year-end giving?*** Thank you!

# INSTITUTIONAL REFLECTIONS

## Where Ethereal and Earthy Meet



John Berger

Many of our readers are aware of the social context in which STEP is operating. The campus itself is a mountainside oasis of lush greenery, once located on the outskirts of the capital city. In recent years, however, the “desert” surrounding this oasis has deteriorated. The STEP campus has been swallowed up in *bidon-villes* (shanty towns), communities dominated by poverty and oppressed by violent gangs with dangerous political ties.

This degradation has directly touched STEP and its personnel a number of times—extortion, robbery, violent confrontations, school closings—to the point where the Board of Governors seriously considered the option of relocating. The environment imposes constant stress on students and staff, and at times can severely impede STEP programs. Recent problems, for example, have caused the seminary to miss a full month of classes and forced us to revamp our daily schedule and semester calendar.

*Why stay?* We are tethered in part by financial constraints and local relationships. The most important consideration, however, is STEP’s ethos of community transformation.

STEP’s mission is *to prepare godly Haitian leaders who make disciples of Christ in order to transform their communities, to the glory of God. We believe that men and women who learn to live according to God’s design for mankind will be a positive force in their communities.* Even as they experience the personal

transformation of new life in Christ, disciples of Christ serve as agents of community transformation as well.

God cares deeply for hurting people—even those who declare themselves enemies—and so must His people.

The foundation of STEP’s program is Bible, theology, and practical ministry training in the traditional sense. The reality of Christian leadership in Haitian communities, however, requires the seminary to give increasing attention to community development and care. The challenge enters not only the realm of “how to”, but also the “heart” of community ministry.

STEP has decided to stay put in part to serve as a change agent in our enormously challenged community. We must be careful to remain focused on Christian leadership development — *STEP cannot and should not pretend to be a relief agency* — but why not engage our students in this laboratory of human needs that we call home? What better way to prepare them for the challenges of the communities where God may lead them to serve after graduation?

God’s will can be difficult to discern, as all believers know from experience. Will the Lord eventually lead STEP to a safer location? Perhaps. But for now, we sense Him directing us to stay. We have only begun to understand how our environment should affect our programs. Progress toward genuine effectiveness in this sense will surely be slow, and can only be realized with God’s help. Will you join us in praying to that end?

## PARTNERSHIPS (continued)

The word *World* calls attention to the enormity of the Great Commission — “Go into all the world and preach the good news...” — and also carries the obvious international and cross-cultural aspects of missionary service.

UFM missionaries played a key role in developing STEP and its Haitian leadership. Today, a relatively small number of CrossWorld personnel cooperate in strategic ways at the request of Haitian leadership: experienced professors with earned doctorates, help with strategic planning and resource development, assistance in construction and major maintenance projects, and leading reflection with Haitian colleagues on how to mobilize a Haitian cross-cultural missions force.

Importantly, CrossWorld provides the tax-exempt status in the U.S. that enables STEP to inexpensively offer that benefit to prospective donors. CrossWorld ensures adherence to IRS regulations, and actually processes gifts sent by American donors who desire to invest in STEP’s ministry. STEP in turn is accountable to CrossWorld for the proper use of tax-exempt funds. This healthy partnership permits both STEP and CrossWorld to more effectively pursue their respective purposes.

## 2004-2005 Giving Update

	Gifts to Date (Sep-Nov)	Annual Goals (Sep-Aug)
General Operations	\$13,020	\$112,000
Student Scholarships	44,760	185,000
Feeding Program	50	6,500
Community Service Project	0	6,500

# HAITIANS IN SENEGAL

*“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*  
— Jesus Christ

Welcome to “the ends of the earth.” If you don’t live in Jerusalem, Judea or Samaria—and none of those addresses appear in our mailing list—you live right here in TEOTE. The sad news is that a significant number of our fellow Teoteians have never received the witness of Jesus Christ.

Happily, Haiti is receiving strong doses of that witness—in fact, Haitian disciple-makers have been and are being trained to bear clear witness of Jesus Christ. They are teaching their fellow Haitians to live according to Jesus’ teaching so that lives and communities may be transformed. [Now it’s time to mobilize the Haitian church to bear effective witness to unreached regions of TEOTE.](#)



Meet Kwashi and Davi Amenudzie, CrossWorld missionaries from Togo working in nearby Senegal, West Africa. Dr. Bruce and Cindy McMartin, both teachers at STEP who have lived in Haiti for more than 20 years, were challenged to consider moving to Senegal to work

with the Amenudzies. The McMartins have invested significant energy to promote world missions at STEP, and the invitation to Senegal added clarity to their vision: [“Haitians should seize this opportunity to work alongside these Togolese colleagues!”](#) [Haitian believers have much to offer outside their borders, and cultivating a missions vision will energize the Haitian church.](#)

Haiti and Senegal—both formerly under French rule; sharing French as a common language; sharing a common ancestry. Africa’s west coast, including Senegal, was where European slave traders rounded up huge numbers of Africans for transport to the New World. Haiti’s population is largely descended from those slaves.

There is one glaring difference: Haiti’s Christian church is blooming while Senegal is 95% Muslim. A measly 0.1% of Senegalese are Christian. [The entire evangelical church in Senegal could be contained in a single American mega-church!](#) The need for effective witness can scarcely be overstated.

On September 18, a team of seven bound for Senegal boarded their plane in Port-au-Prince: three Haitian doctors (Dr. André Jeudy, Dr. Mireille Salomon, Dr. Rodney Destiné), three STEP graduates (dentist Dr. Milo Pierre, pastor Serléus Simon, evangelist Johny Philippe), and Bruce McMartin. The Amenzundies had arranged for the team to set up a makeshift medical and dental clinic in a Serere village in the interior of Senegal. The Serere are a major tribal group numbering more than a million.



Most of the patients treated were Muslims who believe that Christianity is a white man’s religion. [They were amazed to see Haitians coming from so far to care for them in the name of Jesus!](#)

The patients were asked if they wanted someone to pray for them, giving the pastors opportunity to express just how much God loves the Serere. Davi organized two sessions for children



and mothers who eagerly heard the good news of God’s kingdom. Evangelistic films were shown to others, and both Simon and Johny were invited to preach to Sunday morning gatherings.

These Haitians impressed Kwashi with how easily they adapted and got along in Africa—they could communicate, they felt at home



*Dr. Milo Pierre attends to a patient at a makeshift dental clinic.*

in the conditions, they worked hard and took everything in stride. The doctors consulted more easily than expected, having a built-in understanding of the culture and quickly recognizing many of the same health problems they see in Haiti.

[As a result of this ministry, 600 patients were treated and 136 Serere decided to put their faith in Jesus Christ!](#) Team members returned

home eager to encourage Haitians to see their potential for being witnesses of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and to share responsibility for doing so.

STEP’s mission statement envisions community transformation as the result of well-prepared Haitian leadership. The Board intentionally avoided formulating a statement that would limit the vision to *Haitian* communities—[the vision includes Haitians integrated into communities outside their national borders.](#)

Please pray about this growing momentum. Partner with us in asking God to send Haitians where they can effectively communicate God’s message. [We invite you to support STEP’s efforts to lead the Haitian church to deeper maturity.](#)



*Johny Philippe meeting Serere villagers.*