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August 24, 2010

Dear Adoptive Families:

I am writing to you about the situation in Haiti. I know some of you have been very eager to hear from me. I apologize for the delay. The Haiti Task Force work has had to be done while we all have been very busy with other normal tasks and responsibilities. Also, because of the seriousness of this situation, we have tried to take a patient and careful approach.

In May I asked two of my colleagues (the "Task Force") to assist me in gathering information and hearing from people who have been involved in one way or another in Haiti. Since then, the Task Force has been working almost daily to learn everything we can about the concerns and allegations regarding conditions at the "In the Father's Hand" Children's Home in Port-de-Paix.

This Task Force is comprised of three members:

1. Pastor Michael Collins of Charity Chapel in Pensacola, who is also the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Globe International. Pastor Mike has over 30 years of pastoral leadership in one church in this community. He has extensive experience working with missionaries, and has personal experience dealing with abuse issues.
2. Sandra Carter-Britnell is a veteran Globe missionary working with children in Nicaragua. Sandy founded and oversees two orphanages there. She has over 30 years of experience in missions; she grew up on the mission field as the daughter of a New Tribes Missionary in South America. Sandy also helps coordinate Globe's humanitarian aid ministries under the newly forming brand called "Globe Hope."
3. Douglas Gehman (me). I am the President and Director of Globe International. My wife and I and our four children served in Asia for fifteen years, mostly in Thailand and Sri Lanka where we helped plant more than 35 churches. I have served at Globe International headquarters, first as Assistant Director, and now as Director (since 2001) and President (since 2004) of the corporation.

Pastor Mike Collins volunteered to lead the Task Force in the inquiry phase, and to take the primary role of interviewing and communicating with adoptive parents. Sandy Carter volunteered to assist him in this work. I have spent my time assembling our findings, and also communicating with others who are involved, including the Lashbrooks.

Rather than go into detail about our inquiry, let me summarize as best I can. Besides the specific allegations related to specific people – most of which is probably known information to most of you – the bigger concern seems to be an allegation of a "culture of abuse" that was allowed to exist at the Home.

My main commentary about this allegation is that it is undoubtedly true. It is our observation that a culture of abuse is thriving in Haiti. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. It is also one of the most dangerous. Rampant poverty, violent crime - including homicide, sexual assault and rape, and child abuse – plus violent religious practices, and other such heinous crimes, are common. Haiti is known in missions' circles as the "graveyard of missionaries" because of the nation's reputation to chew up workers and spit them out broken, damaged, and defeated. Normal services that are taken for granted in much of the world – like consistent electricity, running water, a functioning economy with a supply of goods and services, and an organized police force – are severely lacking on most of the island. Even the United States State Department has issued strong warnings to anyone going to work in Haiti, especially during, but not limited to, the recovery efforts after the earthquake of January 12, 2010. An attached addendum to this letter is included – the information was downloaded (on August 10, 2010) from the www.travel.state.gov website.

It is the opinion of the Task Force that abusive activities took place at the IFH Home. We have no direct knowledge of these things, but it appears some of these things happened. Concerning Americans being involved in abuse of children: the children's stories, the Staff's suspicions, and the follow up by the FBI in the U.S. would indicate that some allegations were based in fact. There were two American volunteers (not affiliated with Globe) at the home who were implicated specifically as having sexually abused children. They will not be named in this report. Both were or are being investigated by the FBI. We do not know what the FBI findings are.

Concerning other abusive activities - by the children towards each other, or by Haitian adults who had worked at the Home - the Task Force has found it impossible to learn what the facts actually are. While the allegations are difficult to investigate, we are taking them seriously. For example, one hired person was fired by Pastor Andy within days of us learning about the allegation and forwarding it to him. On the other hand, some of the allegations could not corroborated, via available means - inquiry with the leaders through phone calls, emails, and a visit to the IFH Home by Sandy Carter. We do not doubt that some of the children were abused. But trying to discover what factually happened, who the abusers were, when the abuse happened, and how often, was impossible.

We did NOT find that there was indifference to such things, or an attempt to cover up by the Staff or the Lashbrooks. Conditions have not been perfect, and certainly can be improved, but we have not found there was wrong intent. We did find, however, that the missionaries and Haitian staff were seriously over-worked and understaffed for a very long time, and were, in our opinion, naïve' about how much the IFH Home could handle in terms of the numbers of children they could take in and adequately manage. It is not difficult to believe that in such an environment mistakes were made. Perhaps because of this reality, some things happened that could, in better circumstances, have been prevented.

We have found it difficult to be critical of this naïveté and of the nationals and missionaries working at the Home. Making a decision to take a child in, or turn him or her away to an uncertain future that included further abuse or death as likely outcomes, was not a decision we have had to personally face. Passing judgment - from the comfort and safety of America, without living in the environment - is not something we can do.

We are grateful for the adoptive families who extended their own hands of mercy to help bring healing and help to some by adopting one or more of these children. We are aware that in most cases these families have been faced with many more problems and challenges than they were prepared for. We are reminded that, while the adoptive families face serious challenges in raising one, two or more such damaged children, the IFH Home in Haiti is attempting to raise a hundred of the same kind of young lives.

At the height of the Lashbrooks' work, prior to the Haitian-American Humanitarian Parole, they were caring for over 120 children, plus managing a day-school for 300-400 more Haitian children, having to live in a very difficult environment with few creature comforts, and having to raise the necessary funds in the U.S. to pay for it all. Today the staff, under the leadership of the National Director, Pastor Andy, continues to care for 93 children. The Lashbrooks have taken a reduced role in the local administration of the Home for at least six to twelve months.

The Task Force has concerns about improving management and conditions at the Home as quickly as possible. With that in mind:

- The Task Force is looking for people who have training and expertise in this kind of ministry who may be able to assist. This too is a difficult task as there are not many who are qualified and able to serve in this capacity in Haiti.
- Sandy Carter and other Globe International missionaries are planning another trip to Haiti in the fall of 2010 to conduct further reviews of the Home's operations.
- The Task Force has recommended that the Home does not accept any more than 100 children until they are able to improve conditions.
- Improvements also will include building adequate housing, providing sufficient numbers of trained Staff, and have established policies and procedures that can be enforced.
- The Task Force is NOT in favor of reducing the number of children at the Home if it means putting them out on the street.

The Task Force must also clarify Globe's role in this matter. It must be understood that Globe International sends missionaries to the field. Globe does NOT as a rule build organizations on the foreign field. Ministries, churches,

non-profit organizations, and other such entities are created by missionaries and are governed locally with a local board, in compliance with local laws. Globe's association with such entities is solely defined on a casual basis, by our connection with the missionary who founded the organization and who may or may not be leading it. This is true in Haiti. In the Father's Hand Children's Home is a Haitian ministry.

Furthermore, Globe has not been involved, either officially or in any casual manner, with any adoptions from Haiti. We have not managed documents, handled money, or been associated with any children or families in the adoption process. That Globe is now participating in the current situation, through the work of the Task Force, is based on our care and concern for all the children involved.

Some requests have been made from adoptive families to Globe for financial assistance to help with counseling and other remedial work for their adoptive children who have suffered abuse. While Globe is sympathetic to this need, it is outside the scope of our means and our responsibility to provide this kind of aid. For example, on the subject of "means" (i.e. resources), nearly 100 percent of funds that are regularly received by Globe are "designated" to a specific ministry or missionary. Globe simply does not receive discretionary (i.e. undesignated) money in any significant amounts. As a matter of law, Globe is required to allocate contributions to ministries and missionaries appropriately, which, in the simplest terms, means "We must designate contributions according to our fund raising efforts (i.e. the missionary newsletters) and the contributor's response through their giving." Even funds that were given to the "Haiti Relief Fund" are expected to be used inside Haiti to bring relief to that nation and to the people who live there. That would include the people at the IFH Home or others who live in the surrounding communities.

Finally, I want to speak graciously but clearly about some of the communication we have received from some adoptive families. In early interviews, at the beginning, when some of the stories first emerged, we expected parents to feel and express strong emotions. Hearing about abuse is shocking and grievous.

Later however, some of the communication began to change. The members of this Task Force came under attack and were subjected to cynical, sarcastic, and mean spirited comments. To question the way we are managing this process is one thing. We realize some of you would like to see things happen more quickly, and that some do not agree with how we are handling things. But to attack the character of people, to disparage and mock in this way, is inappropriate behavior. To stand on a platform of righteous indignation about abuse but then excuse verbal assaults towards members of this Task Force is grossly inconsistent.

We continue to be open to hear from those who can provide legitimate and helpful new information, even awful information, about the Haiti situation, but no one on the Task Force will listen to or respond to verbal assault.

The Task Force and Globe International will continue to work toward improving conditions at IFH Home in Haiti. We will continue to advocate a healing environment for the children under the care of the ministry at IFH. We have no illusions about how difficult this task is, and we are well aware of the surrounding environment in which the IFH Home exists. But we will continue to work towards this goal, a goal I believe we all want.

My request, as President of this organization, and also as a fellow follower of Jesus, is to ask that you believe that we want the same goal as you. I also ask that, as you pray for your adoptive Haitian children, pray also for their home country, the nation of their birth, and ask God, as He brings healing to their young lives, that He would also extend mercy to this precious Caribbean land and its people, and to His people who are serving there.

I pray daily for you. I don't know any of you personally, and know only a few by name. But I pray for you and ask God to help you – to provide for your needs, to strengthen your families, and to give you wisdom in your parenting role as you raise your children. The members of the Task Force are doing the same.

Sincerely,


J. Douglas Gehman
President/Director