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June 1, 2019

Dear Friends of Faith in Action International,

When I last wrote to you in February it was to inform you that the board of FIAI determined that due to the nature and severity of the injuries Tom Braak sustained in March 2018, he would no longer be serving as the Executive Director for Faith in Action International. The circumstances we were facing at the time also forced us to suspend all operations in Haiti. When I shared this information, I asked for your patience on behalf of the board so that we might have time to properly discern the future of FIAI. The purpose of this letter is to share with you what the board has agreed upon and how we arrived there.

Summary:

At a meeting on May 13, 2019 the board of FIAI voted to dissolve the organization. We also voted to transfer all remaining financial assets to “Hands For Haiti.” This is a mission project with strong ties to FIAI and is located in the same area.

The Process:

We began the discernment process immediately after we had come to terms with Tom’s departure and severance. We focused our efforts on evaluating the overall status of the mission. Our plan was to list all the things we had going in our favor as well as our assets. Then, we listed all the challenges we faced and our liabilities. Finally, we came up with a list of possible options. This was a very helpful process, and the board did an excellent job of being positive, yet honest. Unfortunately, the list of challenges far outweighed the list of things in our favor. We concluded that in order to continue FIAI we would be facing a virtual re-start of the entire mission project. Consequently, we did not believe that pursuing another Executive Director was the best or most realistic option for the organization. We agreed that in order to continue to work in Haiti our best route was some kind of merger or transfer with another mission project. However, we kept all our options open. I spoke to a couple people that had been referred to the board as possible successors to Tom, but these conversations did not materialize with any possible candidates.

In the course of time, we became acquainted with the mission Hands for Haiti. This is a mission project founded by Debbi & Jeff Gischia of Cadillac, MI. They have been involved in doing mission work in Haiti for about 20 years. Through mutual friends, they became acquainted with Tom and worked together in Haiti on many occasions. Over the years, Debbi and Jeff have led numerous mission teams for FIAI. Several years ago, the Gischias had an opportunity to assume leadership of ministry in Verrettes that feeds restavek children. Since then, the work that Debbi & Jeff have done in Haiti has multiplied and now includes several impressive components. Christ is certainly at work in and through their mission. After much discussion, our board agreed that the best and most effective use of our remaining resources was to support the work of Hands for Haiti. Please note that in addition to the logic, there is also a legal aspect to this decision. As a non-profit, we are required to transfer our assets to another non-profit.

One final area that we spent much time discussing was what to do with the partially developed piece of land that FIAI had purchased some years ago. We had hoped that this land could be used for future mission work in some capacity. Unfortunately, there were a few significant obstacles we faced related to land use. We were not able to overcome these and saw no solutions on the horizon. In the end, we voted to simply walk away from the land and forfeit any claim on it. Tom has expressed great interest in doing something with the land, so we will see what the Lord yet has in store.

Final Thoughts:

I would like to conclude this letter with just a few reflections that I hope will frame the events of the past year in a helpful light. As soon as Tom's accident happened last year, the closing of FIAI became a very real and present possibility. In many ways Tom and FIAI were one and the same. Moving forward as an organization without him presented extraordinary difficulties. However, I caution anyone for getting overly saddened by our closure. Solomon teaches us in Ecclesiastes that there is a season for everything – including a time to start and a time to end. Every organization has a life cycle and FIAI is no different. Let's not forget that the end of FIAI is not the end of God's work in Haiti. Certainly, the work of the kingdom God will always go beyond the efforts of one person or one organization. Therefore, I strongly encourage everyone to read over Debbi's letter of introduction included in this mailing and consider how God might still use you in Haiti.

On behalf of the board, I would once again like to acknowledge our gratitude for Tom's many faithful years of service. He has endured much and we wish him the very best as he builds a new life for himself in Haiti. He plans to continue to serve the people of Haiti in whatever capacity he is able. We are grateful for the invitation he extended to us all to join him in his work. Tom reminded all of us about the great call of Christ to serve the poor. I would like to thank all those who heard that call. First, my fellow board members for the significant time they have invested in FIAI this past year. This has not been a fun time to serve, but they have done it faithfully and with wisdom. I would also like to express my thanks to former board members who have given helpful direction and support over the years to this project. I would like to thank all those who went on mission trips to Haiti as well as our many generous donors who made the dreams of this ministry become a reality. Finally, I would like to thank Tammy Davison. She has been an irreplaceable part of the story of FIAI. Driven by her passion to serve the people of Haiti, she has been the glue that kept everything together in this organization for many years.

In the end, we give all glory to God. During the years FIAI was in operation tremendous work was accomplished in the name of Jesus Christ. FIAI made a real difference in the lives of countless people in Haiti. This can never be taken away whether or not this particular non-profit organization exists. By His gracious hand, we celebrate all that was done even as we look ahead to what He will do next.

Yours in Christ,

John Kenny
On behalf of the FIAI Board