



*Sonlight Ministries exists to reach and train Haitian people to reach and train others for the kingdom of God by effectively communicating the gospel through lifestyle and words*

## *What Has Been Happening This Fall?*

### **Hurricane Season in Haiti**



As I am sure many of you heard either from us or from the news, Haiti had a very difficult hurricane season this year. The city of Gonaives, located in the center of the country, was hit particularly hard enduring much devastation. Haiti is a place where people often go hungry. After the hurricane food wasn't available for several days in Gonaives. Bridges and roads leading in and out of the city were destroyed, which made it difficult for emergency services to get to people in need. The death toll, estimated by CNN, was around 800 people due to the high flood waters, where in some areas it reached ten feet.

Unfortunately, Haiti was in pretty bad shape before the hurricanes hit with almost non-existent infra-structures, soaring unemployment rates, extremely low literacy rates, rampant corruption within the government, and an estimated 2.3 million people with food insecurity. Before the hurricanes, the world food crisis had hit Haiti in a pretty major way, causing the price of staple foods, like rice and beans, to reach all-time highs. After the hurricanes, though, the infra-structures are much worse, and an already poor and impoverished country has found itself in dire straights.

In Port-de-Paix, there was flooding and deaths, but the devastation was, thankfully, not nearly as catastrophic. Sonlight lost two generators, one of which was on it's last leg, and the other received some

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damage. During Haiti's most humid and hottest seasons, Sonlight staff was without power for two full weeks. Using a small generator, they were able to power the refrigerators, ceiling fans, and communicate via internet when the need arose. Roger was able to fix one of the generators, restoring the power just in time for a group of thirty to arrive. Unfortunately one generator was completely lost.

Sonlight's generators provide power to the Academy, Bible College, to the missionaries' homes, and to Norma's kitchen- which provides meals for the staff and visiting groups that come in almost weekly during the spring. These generators also provide power to at least one hundred Haitian homes and businesses. It will cost Sonlight \$22,000 to buy and ship a new generator and another \$5,000 in customs fees in order to get it off the boat. Sonlight is hoping to have it in and working before Christmas, but we are in desperate need of funds to make it happen.

With all of the damage and lives lost during this hurricane season, there is much work to be done in Haiti. This means that not only do we have a lot of work to do here at Sonlight, but Sonlight and Haiti need your help to do it. We humbly ask that you keep Haiti in your prayers: pray for peace on all levels. Pray for the families to whom loved ones were lost; pray for those of us here at Sonlight. Pray for ways to get involved with Haiti and Sonlight; whether that be having fund-raisers for Sonlight's needs, supporting us monthly, sponsoring a student, or visiting the mission here in Port-de-Paix .

### **Fall 2008 at Sonlight Mission**



So far this year at Sonlight has been a real doozy for those who have been here since August.

Due to the destruction caused by the hurricanes, President Preval ordered all schools to close for two weeks. Although it put the teachers and students behind schedule, there was some thankfulness in the school closing down for two weeks. It was during those two weeks that Sonlight was completely without power. Although beginning school and then having to immediately close was quite annoying, in the end, it was for the best for everyone.

To add to the craziness of this fall semester at Sonlight, the mission has also seen both a fire and a flood that occurred separately of the Hurricanes. In one of Sonlight's buildings, where much equipment is stored, some wires went bad and caused a fire. This meant that all of the stuff they were storing had to be moved, so that the fire could be contained. Fortunately, they were able to contain the fire without anyone being injured, and without too much damage. This happened after the same building also flooded.

Like we said, this has been a crazy year at Sonlight! We believe, though, that this is no less than "the enemy" trying to prevent God's kingdom from growing and flourishing, and we truly believe that this is what Sonlight is doing here in Port-de-Paix - spreading God's kingdom one Haitian at a time.

**Meet the Alexanders**



In 1983, Roger and Norma Alexander moved to Haiti with their two young daughters, Cara and Amber. They moved to the northernmost city of Haiti, Port-de-Paix, a mere 70 miles from Cuba. When Roger and Norma arrived in Haiti, their goal was to teach and train church leaders. They desired to educate them in New Testament principles and procedures, so that Haitians could better minister to their own people. The Alexanders believed firmly that no one would reach Haiti as well as Haitians themselves. Therefore, their goal from the outset was training church leaders and lay pastors. It soon became clear, however, that Voodoo was far too entrenched in many peoples' lives to un-teach their false beliefs. In order to reach the people of Haiti before they became completely devoted to Voodoo, it would be necessary to begin instruction at a younger age. Thus was born the idea for a Christian school.

Roger and Norma conducted a pilot program in 1986 with four students. All subjects were taught in English, and Bible education was a major part of each day's lesson plans. It was a success. The following year, another of the Alexanders' daughters, Carmen, graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a master's degree in education. In the fall of 1987, Carmen moved to Haiti and became director of Haiti's first and only Christian, English-immersion school. Since all instruction at the school was in English, and Haitian children did not speak English, it started with only a preschool class. As the original preschool class progressed, another grade was added each year. Land for building soon became a need for the mission, and it sought incorporated status in the United States in order to purchase property adjacent to the Alexander home. In 1989, the mission in Port-de-Paix became incorporated and adopted the name Sonlight Ministries. The school was named Sonlight Academy. Soon, Sonlight students came to know Christ. In 1991, Sonlight's staff decided to start a church, so that students would have a place to worship where the teaching was consistent with what they were learning at school daily. The new church began with an English service, but soon added a Creole one. Over time, members of the community gave their lives to Christ, and the Creole service grew. Eventually, the English service was discontinued.

Although Roger and Norma are not involved with teaching anymore, they still keep themselves busy here at Sonlight with many other important tasks. They are both still the founding missionaries here, and so they both help oversee our staff here at the Academy, the Bible College, and the Church. Roger also does a lot of work on maintenance issues, because he can fix just about anything, and when it comes to the generators, he is our resident expert. Norma enjoys using her Mid-western charm and hospitality to help provide for and take care of all the groups that come in. She makes sure they have a place to stay and three good meals a day, and believe us they are good meals! Sometimes groups as large as 30 come here to visit, and so I am sure you can imagine, managing and caring for 30 visitors and 20 missionaries is no easy task. Roger and Norma not only do it well - they do it joyfully and lovingly.

All in all, the Alexanders have lived and served in Haiti for 25 years. It is their home, and they are wholly and completely part of this city and community, and believe us when we say this: their presence here has made a lasting impact on the city of Port-de-Paix for the cause of Christ.

**Reflections from the Jones Family**



Well we must say that a lot has changed since we left Haiti back on May 31st: we traveled around the country raising support, Kyle performed two Wedding ceremonies, Kyle officially walked with his graduating class from Seminary, we lived for a few months in Phoenix, we moved and sold all of our possessions, and, oh yeah, we had a baby! We certainly can never say that we live a boring or uneventful life. The hard part about this crazy lifestyle is that sometimes we do not feel stable nor settled, and sometimes our hearts long for a little bit more normal and mundane life. What we have come to realize, though, is that each person must live the life they are called to, not longing for more and not longing for less than the station to where they are called. In other words, we have learned to, as best as we possibly can, to be content with whatever situation we are in as long as we know that it is truly where the Lord has called us.

This reminds us of the Apostle Paul and his correspondences with the church in Corinth. In I Corinthians, Paul repeats throughout the letter for the Corinthians to "remember what [they] were when [they] were called," (1:26) and to "remain as [they] were when [they] were called" (7:17, 20, 24). Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians not to create their own calling from the Lord, but to simply be content with the position for which they were called. Paul later in II Corinthians talks about his contentment with being an Apostle even amidst all of the trouble and strife it had caused him; and this was a man who endured a lot (II Cor. 6:3-10; 11:23-29). After hearing Paul's call to "remain" stated in I Corinthians and Paul's perilous journeys found in II Corinthians, suddenly the crazy life we have been leading, doesn't seem so crazy, and doesn't leave us wanting less. The truth (as we know Paul also discovered) is that we have seen God move in mysterious and truly amazing ways in our lives - by providing for us and guiding us and making himself unequivocally real. We say this, as Paul does in II Corinthians 11, not to boast on ourselves, but to boast about the goodness, realness, nearness, mysteriousness, creativeness, and most importantly faithfulness of the God we serve. Our reflection is certainly a reflection on our own journey, but we truly believe that this may encourage all of you as well. For God has called you to be where you are, and he has a purpose for you there; and until he calls you onto something new, be content and look for God where you are at - we promise you will see Him.

**Prayer Requests:** Please pray for peace in Haiti; pray that we continue to have good health; pray for us to form relationships with our students; pray specifically for our friend Ms. Anadette; pray for our house issues (poor toilet, shower, and stove); pray for our search of a maid; pray for Allison & Lenny as they are expecting in January; pray for traveling safety for all Sonlight staff over Christmas break.

**Sonlight Needs:** Funds for the new generator, Funds for the copier, Sponsors for our Academy Students, Sponsors for our Bible College students

**Personal Needs:** We still need to raise more financial support! Time magazine for Kids subscriptions (If interested send us an email for more info), your prayers.