20 Years of Ministry – So glad we accepted the invitation to “Come and See”!

by Ken Bever

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Hope for Haiti’s Children. The ministry started in 1995 with an invitation by a government health official turned full-time minister, Jeantyrard Elmera, to “come and see” the opportunities in the southern and central part of Haiti. Four of us from our newly-formed Connecticut congregation accepted his invite.

What we witnessed was truly amazing! We saw an incredible outreach effort to reach the poorest of the poor already underway by the Christians at the Delmas 28 Eglise du Christ in Port-au-Prince. This congregation did not own their own building, had a $200/week budget, and only 30% of the members had employment. We viewed them as extremely poor. Yet these Christians took to heart the words of Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”, especially as they saw the needs of the children around them. This congregation was attempting to build a Christian school in the seaside slum of Cite Soleil. They had received free property from the mayor to build on and had received a grant from the Choctaw Church of Christ to build a facility, but they needed to find sponsors to cover each child’s tuition and educational expenses. They desired our help to take on the U.S. side of a sponsorship ministry.

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Haiti...I Can't Wait to Go Back! — by Steve Cooner

This past January, I had the opportunity to take my first trip to Haiti. Having started in my new position as HFHC Development Director in December of 2014, it made sense that a trip would be required to fully understand our work. I have guessed that a trip like this would have made such an impact on my life. The week just flew by. I never would have imagined that a trip like this could have made such an impact on my life. When everyone was saying, “You just have to see it for yourself” — was that ever true. I can’t wait to get back and see those sweet children again.

As an integral part of HFHC’s Rebuilding Hope 2020 initiative, the Thomazeau Hope Center multi-purpose classroom and pavilion area was designed in June of 2012 to house the Thomazeau Christian Elementary School, the Thomazeau Church of Christ, HFHC’s after-school training programs, and future assemblies at summer camp. Step-by-step and prayer by prayer, God opened the doors to make this dream become a reality.

In September 2012 — thanks to Rebuilding Hope 2020 partners and a grant from the Center Hill Church of Christ — a school office, two classrooms (preschool and kindergarten) and an outdoor latrine were built. This launched the Thomazeau school and served as the meeting place for the new Thomazeau congregation.

By September 2014, two more classrooms were added. However, training sessions, church services, and Vacation Bible Schools were overflowing. A pavilion was needed! In February 2015, with the help of Dr. Don Henderson and many U.S. volunteers, wood and roofing supplies were purchased and trusses were cut. The lumber was palletized and transported from Cincinnati to a U.S. Air Force base in South Carolina to be airlifted to Haiti.

When we started out towards the clinic that provided me with the opportunity to improve the life of these children and children are being cared for and loved by Haitian Christian caretakers, while many children in this country have no place to live, much less nourishing food or clean water. The week just flew by. I never would have imagined that a trip like this could have made such an impact on my life. When everyone was saying, “You just have to see it for yourself” — was that ever true. I can’t wait to get back and see those sweet children again.

By March 7, thanks to our Rebuilding hope partners, the project was now 100% funded and the Air Force flew the pallets to Haiti! The pallets were met with a work team of 12 from Cincinnati, led by Thom Beus, which partnered with 14 Haitian men and women to assemble and lift 26 trusses (400 lbs. each) to the top of the pavilion by hand in high winds. Through the incredible team-work and exhausting physical labor of this amazing team, the 4,000 square foot pavilion roof was completed in 5 days!

The next Sunday, the church began using this new covered assembly area and a mission team from Crowleys Ridge College conducted a Vacation Bible School for 150 children the next week. What a blessing to that facility will be for years to come! We praise God for His help in bringing all the resources required together and thank everyone who played a part in turning this dream into a reality.

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This past January, I had the opportunity to take my first trip to Haiti. Having started in my new position as HFHC Development Director in December of 2014, it made sense that a trip would be required to fully understand our work. I was thankful to be part of HFHC’s annual child care clinic mission trip, which provided me with the opportunity to see a great deal in a short period of time.

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HOPE CENTER PAVILION COMPLETED! Joint American-Haitian effort raises the roof!

IN MEMORIAM

IN HONOR OF
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HFHC’s School Uplift! ministry brings focus to the needs of our partner schools so that the environment is as conducive as possible for learning. The children in the 5th grade classroom (pictured right) located in the mountain village of Robert sit shoulder to shoulder in this crowded classroom with a dirt floor. A concrete floor ($3,000) is currently on the top of the capital needs of this school. All of our schools need desk benches ($125/ea) and chalkboards ($200/ea). Larger capital projects include building a kindergarten classroom at the Pago Pele Christian School ($10,000) and replacing a worn metal roof at the

When you think of the word “school”, what comes to mind? In Haiti, the word school takes on an entirely different meaning than we might define in the United States. Gravel floors, blackboards, no air conditioning or electricity, and crowded conditions are where these young children go and flourish. HFHC-sponsored children attend school in less than ideal conditions but are so grateful for the opportunity to get an education and break the cycle of poverty.

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