

# The Fond-des-Blancs Update

**Haiti Christian Development Fund**

Post Office Box 490127—Fort Lauderdale, FL 33349

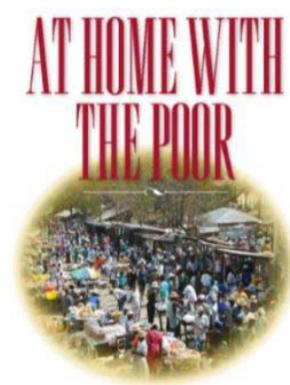
## In His Steps...

2004 should be a very special year for Haiti. It will be celebrating two hundred years of independence. The first slave colony to gain its independence by defeating the greatest military power of its day. Napoleon was so concerned with maintaining his hold on the 'pearl of the islands' that he entrusted the command of the expedition to his brother-in-law, General Leclerc. Neither betrayal nor a superior army could deter the slaves' thirst for freedom. So far reaching was the defeat that it affected Napoleon's entire design for the Americas resulting in the Louisiana Purchase by the United States.

What ensued from those days of glory to Haiti's current status as the second poorest country in the world and the third most corrupt is subject to arguments. There are a number of excuses such as the world was not ready for a nation of former slaves in a world of slave holding nations so they alienated the new republic, setting it adrift toward destruction. Others would blame the liberators, Jean Jacques Dessalines, Alexandre Petion, Henri Christophe for their inability to govern. But their mentor, Toussaint Louverture, had succeeded as a statesman several years before their ascension.

Of the various excuses that have been presented, the one that bothers me the most is the one being propagated by protestants leaders in Haiti.

This one states that Haiti is in its current state of turmoil because its founding fathers dedicated it to the devil in a voodoo ceremony that launch the slave revolt over two hundred years ago. This is great stuff for a preacher who wants to wax eloquent but the very admission of such a success of the devil is a slap at the power of Christ and the ministry of his Spirit for the past two hundred years!



JEAN L. THOMAS WITH LON FENDALL  
Foreword by John M. Perkins

The absurdity of this theory is seen in the continuing movement to prevent the current president from rededicating the country back to Satan when the two hundred years of that so called dedication was celebrated more than a decade ago. Voodoo worship happens everyday in Haiti and will continue for the foreseeable future. Another meaningless worship is no excuse to neglect a focus on

transformation through the power of Christ.

In spite of its long history of failure, of the oppression of the Haitian people by its leaders as it is happening today, I do believe that Haiti has a very special place in the heart of God.

As we approach the Christmas season, I cannot think of another place that more resembles the community with which Christ identified most when he was on earth. Instead of demagoguery, Haiti is in need of prayer, in need of discovering the power of following in the steps of the Savior.

From the first day we set foot in Fond-des-Blancs, our commitment has been to rely exclusively on the power of the gospel of Christ to break any barrier that men, Satan or his angels can erect. For the past two years we've been trying to relate our journey through a book which is now available through Barclay Press. The message we've attempted to convey is that 'we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.' We would like to encourage you to get a copy directly from the publisher (information on the right). As we celebrate Haiti's bicentennial, we can indeed believe that historical evidence or present chaos is no match for the power of Christ's blood.

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We at HCDF  
Wish You  
A  
Merry Christmas  
And  
Happy New Year!



### Special Book Bulletin

Be among the first to get your copy of **At Home with the Poor**, my just published book on Haiti in general and the work that God has enabled us to do for his Kingdom in Fond-des-Blancs.

The price of the book is \$15 and is published by Barclay Press in Newberg, Oregon. It can be ordered from them by phone (800.962.4014) or online at [www.barclaypress.com/jthomas](http://www.barclaypress.com/jthomas).

## Computer Center

After years of dreaming about it the computer center has become a reality. It opened its doors to its first students the first week of June this year. We offered the first class for a very small tuition price and over 40 people signed up for the 6 week class. Every Monday they would attend a theory class together and then they were assigned times of the day when they could come practice on the computers. The same young man, Ishmael Dora, we hired as the church musician was also hired to be the administrator of the computer center. He was and is always there to help the students when they get confused over something. Lémec, who was home for the summer, Jacques and Josiah were hired as summer help since

there were so many students needing help at the beginning. The skill level lessons had to begin with the very basics of how to turn the computer on and how to control the mouse. After the first 6-week session the students were able to produce Word, Excel and Publisher documents.; not to mention being able to play a few games! Most of them signed up for an advanced second 6-week course that focus on advanced techniques in Word and Excel At the same time the first students were taking their advance courses another beginner's course was offered. All the courses were completed by the end of November. New classes will begin in January or February. In the meantime a "cyber café" with Internet access has been set up to allow former students and/or others to come into the center for whatever reasons they may find for needing a com-

puter at a nominal cost.

The computer center was made possible by the Atlanta Bible Church pastured by John McNeal. This was Jean's home church when he lived in the US. They put together enough money to buy a generator large enough to meet the electrical demands of 13 computers working at the same time. It also provides lighting for the director's office and several classrooms at L'Exode school where the computer center is located. It was also made possible by Dan Vial and Brice Bertram from the church in Kansas where we attended for the year we lived there. They provided us with the first computers needed to start setting up the program. Work groups helped paint the room and build the tables

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## L'Exode Update

This is L'Exode's 14<sup>th</sup> year of existence. It started as a one classroom school for pre-schools and has grown into a school with two separate locations. There are 7 classrooms at the church used for pre-school and kindergarten. The elementary school has 11 classrooms in a building built over several years to house the school. We have a record number of students this year with over 500 enrolled between the two schools. Secondary school in Haiti begins with 7<sup>th</sup> grade so our students complete their time with us after 6<sup>th</sup> grade where they must take a government exam to continue their schooling. Much to the dismay of the parents we have not found the time or the resources to do a secondary school. This year we are putting a greater emphasis on

language skills. The children are raised in homes that speak Creole and must learn French when they start school. In the past, they have learned it well enough to read it and write it. Now we are encouraging them to become more conversational in it. We have begun implementing picture flash cards for the younger children and fun images for the older children to use to give them practice in observation and asking questions or making conversation about what they see. We have also had fun giving them opportunities to do activities with Legos and Lincoln Logs. They are learning to work as a small group and to follow instructions to complete a project. We hope these activities are helping them learn to think things through to completion instead of just learning things by memory.

Most of the teachers have taken the com-

puter courses. We hope in the near future we will be able to put a computer in each of the classrooms. The teachers would be able to use them to keep student records and to introduce the children to simple computer so they'll be ahead of the curb when the technology becomes widely available in Haiti.

We are also planning to use the electricity the school receives for the computer center to enable us to show movies to the children as part of their language skills program and simple enjoyment. We've shown some in the past, but it was a big production to get a generator to the school and position it where the noise wouldn't affect hearing the movie. We will be showing them "Spirit - Stallion of the Cimarron." as part of their Christmas party enjoyment.

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## Church Activities

The main emphasis of growth in the church this year was through new musical programs. One of the kindergarten teachers, Ruth, started a young men's choir. Under her leadership they became very good very fast. Other churches began inviting them to come sing for their special services. It is a wonderful encouragement to the young men of the church to be a part of something so successful. They sing every second Sunday at our church. The teachers from the pre-school and elementary school formed their own choirs and sing at the church every third Sunday. Early this summer we hired a new musician for the church. His

name is Ishmael Dora. He was born and raised in Fond-des-Blancs, but moved to the city for secondary school. While there he learned to play the piano and became an assistant musician at a large church. We were thrilled when he agreed to move back to Fond-des-Blancs to be the musician at our church. He also has put together a church choir which sings every first Sunday of the month. Besides these choirs there is a young girl's choir led by the pre-school principal, a young boy's choir and a woman's choir led by our pastor's wife, a men's choir led by the pastor and two or three other smaller groups. Ishmael doesn't necessarily practice with each of the choirs or groups, but he does a good job of accompanying them anyway with his practiced ear

and skill. At the beginning of the year, a group from Tabor College in Kansas visited us and brought along several musical instruments to donate to the church. A handful of our young people are trying to learn to play them. Perhaps in the future we will have a small church band as well as the choirs.

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We are still looking for more musical instruments; especially trumpets, drums, base guitars. Do contact us if you have any musical instruments available that we might be able to use.

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**Let us hear from you**

Dear Jean,

As the Lord provides, I do hope to continue my support of your ministry to the people of Fond-des-Blancs. Below is my estimated pledge for this coming year.

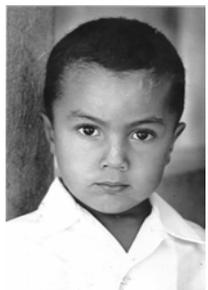
Designations	*Staff Members	°Sponsorship	Pledge	When
<input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> °Education/Sponsorship <input type="checkbox"/> Church Activities <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Projects <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Union <input type="checkbox"/> *Staff Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Jean & Joy Thomas <input type="checkbox"/> Mario & Velouse Clerjeune <input type="checkbox"/> Naomie Regis <input type="checkbox"/> Maxon Thelusca <input type="checkbox"/> Jean Francois Thalon <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl  <input type="checkbox"/> Age ----- Between 4-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,000.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 500.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 100.00 <input type="checkbox"/> 25.00 <input type="checkbox"/> -----	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly  We would love for you to come visit our ministry in Fond-des-Blancs. Just drop us a note and let us know when you can come!

**Thomas Family News**

2003 was a momentous year for the Thomas family; at least for a couple of them. Joy turned 50 and Lémeç went off to college. Both events made us all aware of the passage of time. The photos on either side of this page also make that clear. Our babies are growing up. When we moved to Fond-des-Blancs, we did not have any children. Lémeç came along a year later. His arrival totally changed the dynamics of our family. We weren't just a couple anymore, we had become a family. Traveling became more difficult, but Lémeç gave Joy a topic of conversation when visiting people. Jacques joined us almost 3 years later. Lémeç was a doting brother that made sure mama took care of all his little brother's needs. A little over 3 years after that Josiah rounded out our family of three boys. It has been very fun having all boys. Despite their age differences they have always shared the same interests and played well together from sandbox days to dominoes to basketball and soccer to video games.



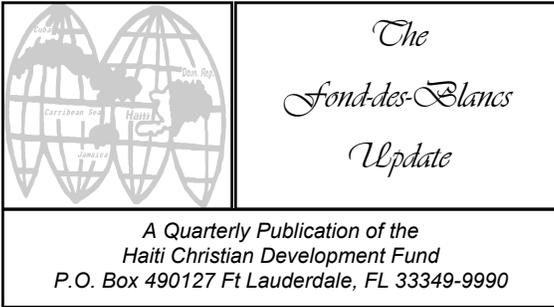
We have enjoyed all the stages of our children's lives so far. We have been given the opportunity of a life style that allowed us to be with them almost 24/7. Lémeç went away last year to do his senior of high school. He got to come home for the summer to participate in the computer center and the soccer tournament. Seeing him off to college was not any easier than the first time we saw him off for his senior year of high school. This new stage in his life is enjoyable for him, tough for us. Tough because we miss having him in our daily lives, not because we fear for him.



Jacques is currently a sophomore in high school and Josiah is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. They do home schooling every morning, play soccer almost every afternoon, take piano lessons every Friday, read books, and in between video and internet games find time to play basketball and pickleball with their papa.



Turning 50 was less painful than expected. My main comfort is that I still have a pre-teenager who is still shorter than me. Lémeç and Jacques are both nearing 6' and they are no longer physically our little boys. The pictures show their physical changes. While all three are showing physical growth they have also grown in personality and maturity also, but from the beginning until now they have remained loving, nice, respectful, fun to be with young men. As we watch them grow, we realize that our time with them is way too short. We miss Lémeç terribly and will miss Jacques and Josiah when they have to go too, but in the short time Lémeç has been away we have had many unexpected and planned times of seeing him or staying in touch which give us hope.



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## Thank you for your Support



To all of our friends who visited us



this past year, Tabor College (top left), Heartland Community church (center), Western Springs Baptist Church (bottom left), Westminster Presbyterian (top right) and Rock-



away Community (bottom right), we say a hearty THANK YOU for the



way you have touched our lives by your presence, labor and generosity. Please come back to see us again!

