

Haiti Christian Development Fund

Proclaiming good news to the poor...

The Fond-des-Blancs Update

Haiti Christian Development Fund

Post Office Box 490127—Fort Lauderdale, FL 33349 (954-727-3681)

Caleb's Mountain...

Caleb is one of the less celebrated heroes of the exodus from Egypt and conquest of Canaan. Everyone knows Joshua even though they traveled the same roads. Caleb and Joshua were the two out of ten spies to believe in the promise that in spite of intimidating giants the Lord would give them the promised land.

He was a fine lieutenant under the leadership of Joshua in the conquest of Canaan. But when victory was secured and a time of rest had finally come for the children of Israel, Caleb was still feeling a little frisky! He was eighty-five years old; the oldest of all those who left Egypt with Moses. He had earned a well-deserved rest; a nice meadow by a still water. Having surveyed all the prime real estate in the land, Caleb came to Joshua to claim the promise made to him by Moses (Jos 14:9). He asked Joshua: *'give me that mountain'* (Jos 14:12 -kjv).

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The Thalon Family



(Ruben, Ruth, Jean-Francois)

To many of you, Jean Francois, his wife Ruth and their son Ruben may be new faces but they are long time leaders within the HCDF family. Jean Francois is now the field director for all of HCDF's activities in Fond-des-Blancs. He is indigenous to Fond-des-Blancs. His birth is a story in itself. His mom was expecting her third child. On Friday she made her usual trip on a donkey to market from her home in Platon, seven miles east of Fond-des-Blancs to purchase the week's supplies for her family. Her labor started while in market. A family with a home next to market took her in. She gave birth in their home, rested a couple of hours and then got back on her donkey, holding her newborn son in her arms and return home. You can imagine her husband's surprise to receive such a bundle of joy from market. Two years later the parents accepted Christ and raised their children to do the same.

Jean Francois made a personal confession of sin and accepted Christ as his savior at the age of 16. Three years later he became a Sunday School teacher and soon thereafter he enroll in HCDF's Theological by Extension program. Having successfully completed this program he enrolled in our more extensive Bible Institute Program and was one of the star students and graduated in April 1999.

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Please consider making a contribution toward the needed bulldozer for Fond-des-Blancs

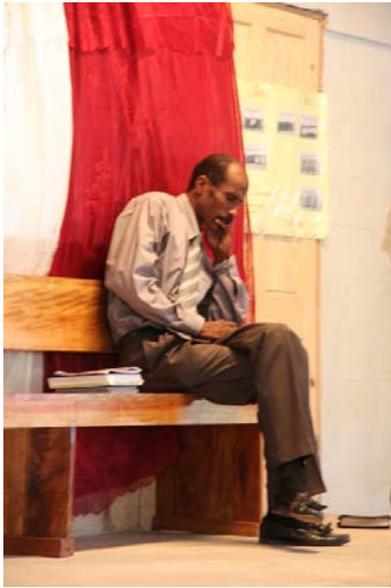
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Jean Francois Thalon...

(Continued from page 1)

Jean Francois started to distinguish himself at a very early age and the satellite Church at Platon recognized his abilities and sponsored his secondary education. While attending secondary school in the afternoon, he taught in the primary school in the morning. When the then principal moved the Port au Prince, he was the most qualified and committed to succeed him. In the Fall of 1999, HCDF offered him a scholarship to Teacher's College in Port au Prince. Again he distinguished himself and upon his graduation he returned to Fond-des-Blancs and the ministry of HCDF as the supervisor of its educational program to the satellite Churches; a position he held until his appointment as field director of HCDF last January.

Ruth is one of the teachers we hired from Cayes, on the south coast of Haiti in 2001. Her amazing leadership talent was immediately felt, not only in the school but also in the Church; qualities that did not escape Jean Francois' attention. Upon his return from Teachers' College in 2003 he started a courtship of Ruth that culminated in their wedding on December 25, 2004. Their first born son, Jean-Rubenson was born thirteen months later on January 7, 2006.

In addition to her responsibilities as a preschool teacher, Ruth is the music director at the Church and heads an all male musical group.

As we were praying and deliberating on the choice of a field director and preparing to hand over the local ministries before leaving for our sabbatical. Jean-Francois was always one of the top selections. When his talents were combined with Ruth's assets, he was undeniably the first choice.

For the four months of the transition while we were still on location, we were impressed with his level headedness and this has proven true since our departure. Do continue to remember him in your prayers. He has had to deal with much more than what was on paper. So far he has been able to rise to the challenge.

Give me that mountain...

(Continued from page 1)

I am nowhere near eighty-five, so I am nowhere near retirement. The last twenty-five years have had their challenges in Fond-des-Blancs and I am thankful to the Lord for what He has accomplished in that community. We had a successful transfer of leadership last January. Joy and I are enjoying a sabbatical in the US. But we are looking forward to taking on a new mountain when we return to Fond-des-Blancs next year.

If I had one word for what our new task will be it would be: replication... building on our experiences in Fond-des-Blancs, we want to replicate this model in hitherto neglected communities. In a nutshell, we want to be mentoring a group of six potential young leaders every three years as they plant Churches and develop holistic community development for their respective communities.

The plan is simple: Choose six dedicated young leaders through a screening process. These young leaders will be in residence in Fond-des-Blancs where they will attend theological, community development, English and management courses for three days each week. The other four days will be spent in three different communities where they will be laying the foundation for three new church plants. A new cycle of educational classes and practical implementations with new students should start every three years.

I am eternally grateful for the journey that the Lord has called me to travel for the sake of His kingdom and for your companionship throughout that journey. There is so much more that remains to be done and with the Lord's help I hope we'll be able to reach more life for Christ.

The passing of Pastor Maxeau Bernadel...

It is with a heavy heart and great personal loss that I have to inform you of the sudden calling of the senior pastor our evangelistic ministry into the presence of our Lord. Pastor Maxeau Bernadel went to the hospital on Tuesday (August 19, 2008) because of some minor respiratory difficulties.

He was held overnight for observation and released on Thursday. He returned to the hospital on Saturday with the same symptoms and went to be with the Lord soon thereafter. The medical conclusion is that he suffered a blood clot, possibly caused by a trans-Atlantic flight a couple of weeks earlier.

Pastor Maxeau leaves behind his wife and four children. We request your prayers for his immediate family and well as the flock that he shepherded so lovingly for the past four years.

A pastoral committee made up of several lay leaders in the Church is assuring the transition until a new pastor is appointed to the post.

Thomas Family News...

This year, 2008, has been a year of many many changes for us as a family. The first three and half months were fairly normal except that we were packing and putting the house in order so we could leave it in the care of the Jean Francois family while we spend several months in the US. A group from Chicago came in the middle of April to help Joy celebrate her 55th birthday and then to help us carry baggage on the plane over to Florida. From Florida we drove up to the Atlanta area where we had found, online, an apartment in a suburb of Marietta. Our son, Jacques, lived in the suburb of Alpharetta during his senior year of high school. He attended Midway Community Church which took him in as a son and became partners in our ministry by encouraging Jacques through his lung collapse and the rest of his year and then quickly encouraged us by sending two different work groups to spend time with us in Fond-des-Blancs. We are visiting lots of churches, but this one we have chosen as our base while here even though it is not as geographically as close to us as we thought it would be.

We have two objectives for our leaving Fond-des-Blancs and coming to the US for this year. As a ministry, we are giving Jean Francois and Ruth, Naomie, Adona, the church deacons and the economic development staff a chance to lead without us in their faces every day. It has been a difficult time so far because of the hurricanes and death of Maxeau, our senior pastor so we have been in contact with them a lot, but through that communication we know they are doing well and making wise decisions and implementing them well. Our other, more personal, objective is to be with Josiah, our youngest child, while he completes his high school career as a senior at



Wheeler High School. So far he is adjusting very well and is actually currently a straight A student. He is also preparing to be on the school's soccer team by playing on the local YMCA team. The Y team is good practice, but basically only mediocre so Joey is really looking forward to playing with the school team with players he has already begun scrimmaging with and feels it will be more satisfying playing with them.

After arriving in the US in April we had a couple days to move our few things plus a few pieces of rented furniture into our



rented apartment. Then we flew to California to attend Lemec's graduation from Fresno Pacific University. He was allowed to walk with his friends, but in truth he still has two more classes to complete before he can officially receive his diploma. After several unexpected events it has been decided that he would move to Marietta to live with us and work on those two classes from here. We and his brothers are delighted to have him with us and he seems happy to be with us. In this time of difficult job searches he found a job within five miles of our apartment in less than two weeks after he arrived. His was a business management major. His job is with Hampton Inn. His long-term career goal is to manage a hotel or resort on one of the Caribbean islands.

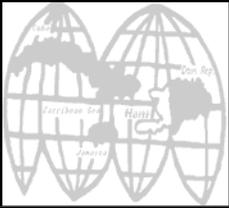
Over the summer Jacques stayed with us for a couple of months. He is now a junior at Berea College in Kentucky which is roughly a 5 hour drive from our place. We had the opportunity to visit Berea the day after Jacques' 21st birthday and watch



him play in his school's first soccer game of the season which they won. He took a Danish gymnastic class last year and is now a part of the Danish gymnastic club at his school. He is one of four chosen from that group to visit Denmark for their January short-term. As you can imagine, he is very excited about this opportunity. We have not seen him do this in person yet, but have seen him in action on a video and hope an opportunity arises for us to see it live before this school year is over.

Our "daughters" from Fond-des-Blancs, Manise and Fonia, are also in the US and doing well. Manise is in her third year of a four year dental school in Nashville. This year she is allowed to begin working on humans. Fonia graduated from Jackson States University this year and is currently living in New Orleans with her husband and their two young sons.

Jean and Joy continue to be in good health. We are enjoying spending time with our sons just as they are getting ready to launch into their adult lives. We are adjusting to life in the US although sometimes it now seems like a foreign culture. At the same time we are still keeping our hearts with the future work we have envisioned for Haiti. We enjoy hearing from many of you via phone and email. We hope we will have the opportunity to see many of you in person either through us visiting you or you coming to see us.



*The
Fond-des-Blancs
Update*

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Address correction requested...



Visiting Groups...

Every year various groups visit us in Fond-des-Blancs and it is always a blessing to us, to the Church and to the community. The year started with Midway Community Church (above); making their second trip within six months and they are looking forward to coming out again this coming year.

For the past four years, a group of ladies from Kansas have dared unrest, flood, political insecurity to visit every year without missing a beat! Most of the pictures you

see on our website were taken by Shawn (center picture, left). Her two daughters have accompanied her on every trip. On the right is Anita. There are three other regulars, Laurel, Paige, Diana (not pictured) who usually come, often accompanied by a couple of first tim-



ers.

The last group of the summer came from Fresno, California (bottom right). They were there for two weeks. They did some roofing for a new church/school building in a village east of Fond-des-Blancs,

joined in youth activity at the church and helped repair books for the school.

The Van Laningham family, whom we have known for many years brought their family down for a week.

I hope you too will take the time to come visit us. It is not a luxury vacation but it will be a meaning experience for you, your children and your church. You can visit our website (www.hcdf.org) for more information on what to expect and how best to plan your trip.

