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Finding Hope in Haiti

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Touching Like Jesus

Maranatha projects in India are unique. Maybe it is the open hearts of hundreds of thousands of people.

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One-Day Church and School

Read updates about the One-Day Church and School projects.

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Though nothing’s really changed, something was vastly different when we visited Haiti in May.

Tap-Taps, broken concrete, and trash still clog Port-au-Prince streets. Roving salesmen (more women than men) carry pharmacies, hardware stores, fruit markets, and shoe stores the length of every sidewalk. Rain in the mountains brings floods to the roadways, snarls traffic, and intensifies odors.

Haiti is much the same as it was ten years ago. But some things are vastly different.

The flame trees still wave green and gorgeous, the piles of fighting conchs continue to grow higher, and the mango trees hang heavy with green and yellow delicacies. Travel into the country and the pace of life slows to match the maturing of the mangos.

It’s easy to see the results of the 2010 earthquake. A 7.0 quake leaves destruction and scars so grandchildren will remember the pain of that day.

In the city men still wield hammers and chisels against tottering buildings. Every flat place is a colorless collection of blue, white, and grey canvas and plastic shelters that house nearly a million people.

In the country, thousands more live beside their cracked and crushed houses in blue plastic cubes that proclaim the house as a donation from “US AID,” “OXFAM,” “UNICEF,” or one of the other charities that have been active since the quake.

It’s been more than 18 months since the shaking, more than 14 months since Maranatha was asked to build “a few temporary shelters” and to rebuild the broken cement wall around the Adventist compound south of the capital.

“We shipped temporary housing structures to Haiti,” says Maranatha President Don Noble, “and quickly found it necessary to transform them into schools and churches.”

Those buildings are now serving as classrooms for more than 5,000 children, and as church worship centers for 15,000 adults.

“Your classroom buildings have made it possible for us to keep more than 2,500 students in school on our university campus,” says Dr. J.J. Pierre, president of Haiti Adventist University. “Without these buildings ... I do not know what we would have done! You have given us hope.”

We met Pastor Jean Michel several miles south of the city, far off a country road and deep into sugar cane fields. There, beside a broken sign was the Mathieu Adventist church and school.

“Our school had 350 students,” he said, “and nearly 600 church members. But when the earth broke our buildings Maranatha came, built the new church and filled us all with hope.”

“What would you like for us to do now?” I asked him.
start reading in their new treasures. Several times during our visit we heard Haitians describe the earthquake as “God’s punishment for our sinful ways.” They would then describe how they had changed their ways since that fateful Tuesday. “The churches are much more full now,” one Elder said. “God got our attention.”

Then one afternoon as I was interviewing the President of the Adventist Church in Haiti, I asked if the earthquake had been God’s punishment, or God’s blessing. His answer was quick and clear.

“Many of the people in Haiti believe the earthquake was God’s punishment for our sins, and that is possibly true. However, for me and for our church it has been a great blessing. Before the quake we had many members, now we have many more. In fact it seems that our church attendance has nearly doubled. Also, I know the earthquake was a blessing because before the earthquake we had asked many times for Maranatha to come and help us build schools and churches – and you had not been able to come. Then the earthquake destroyed what we had – and now you are here. That’s a great earthquake blessing!”

People who live near the wall we were asked to build around the Adventist hospital, university, press, bakery, and ADRA offices, would agree with the “blessing” assessment. Many have already turned a section of the new wall into their “home,” a plastic lean-to from which they sell their goods, where they laugh with neighbors, and where they feel safe.

One evening over dinner we tallied up the requests we had received from the Church leaders in Haiti: 886 new schools. 360 new churches. All needed “today.”

“Please build us a school,” he replied. “A church without a school is not a church.”

On the morning when we opened and dedicated the first One-Day School in the Menahem community, a church and school in Haiti’s Central Mission, all of the children and teachers were in a tumble-down three-sided shed they had been using as classrooms. As the service began the students lined up and walked across the broken stones from the shed to the new schoolroom, a room that quickly filled with the sounds of happy children!

Pastor Jean Michel, director of youth ministries for Haiti’s Southern Mission, was a guest at the school’s grand opening. As the children laughed and played around and under their new desks I asked him what he is hoping Maranatha can do for the youth in his mission.

“We need at least 350 new school buildings,” he said. “Our churches are growing rapidly, especially since the earthquake, and all the new members bring children, many children. We need schools so each of those children can learn about Jesus in an Adventist school.”

Sabbath afternoon we joined a small church group for a baptism in an irrigation pond beside a sugar cane field. It was a gorgeous day, crystal-clear water, cloud ships sailing overhead, very happy members singing joyfully, and a dozen community children crowding close to see what was happening.

When the baptism was over and the church members were out of the water our team gave each of the new members a French Bible, a gift that brought many happy tears. Holding the Bibles close they listened closely as their pastor guided them to know where to
TOUCHING LIKE JESUS

BY CARRIE PURKEYPILE

Maranatha projects in India are unique. Maybe it is the open hearts of hundreds of thousands of people. Maybe it is the thriving boarding schools filled with smiling, singing children. Maybe it is stark contrast of luxury and poverty all around. Maybe it has something to do with the color, the compassion, the charisma of India.

Of the more than one billion Indian people, only 2.3% are Christian.* The majority of people are Hindu, worshiping literally thousands of gods. Life is a constant effort to please this god or that, hoping for a bit of health or prosperity as a reward. The contrast of a single God, who gives rather than takes, who loves and sacrifices for us, rather than demanding sacrifices of us, is new to many.

Pastor Measapogu Wilson (pictured left) was born and raised in India and continues to work there. He explains that for many of the lower caste Indians, the simple act of going out to pray with them is a huge part of successful ministry. To touch someone of low caste in India is avoided at all cost. These people have been shunned and rejected by their own people, and their own religion for many generations. They are of no value in the Hindu system. To find out that an all-powerful God loves them, and sends people to help, is more than valuable.
“When you touch and pray, that means Jesus is touching them,” says Pastor Wilson. “They feel when you touch and pray, when you mention their name in prayer, and present him before the almighty God, they literally feel that God is with them, and there is some kind of transformation, the melting of the hard heart, opening of the feelings to God so God can bless you. So touch makes the difference. Jesus in His ministry touched the people. He mingled with them. And then he ministered.”

Those who have been to India can attest, these people need hope. “Everywhere we go in these villages there are huge needs. There’s little orphan kids. There’s grandmas taking care of kids that don’t have any income. Maybe their sons and daughters have left or died or got sick or whatever, but, there’s so much need.” Bruce Fjarli has been volunteering in India with Maranatha for years. He and his family were impacted by the people of India many years ago, and have been prayerfully supporting ministry there ever since.

After successful evangelistic efforts, introducing thousands of people to Christ for the first time, there is a huge need for support, in the form of pastors, Bible workers and churches. The temple is such a focal point of life in Hindu countries, that Christians gathering in homes, without a public meeting place are strongly ridiculed. A church building is a reinforcement of their faith.

With entire villages full of brand new Christians, training the people is so important. Not even basic concepts of Christianity have been a part of their lives. It is truly a new experience. Bible workers are stretched between villages, trying to meet with as many people as possible, but the real training in Christian life takes place for a few lucky children who attend Adventist Christian schools. Maranatha has built many large boarding schools in different parts of India, and the teachers there are training the future leadership of India’s Christian community, as well as giving an incredible gift to each child.

“If there wasn’t Christian education provided for these kids, they would be stuck in the village. They would be stuck doing the same menial tasks their ancestors have done their whole life,” says Bruce. “This gives them the opportunity to learn and grow out of that, or go back to it with an education to share in their villages and educate their families and other people in the village.”

Maranatha volunteer, Robin Marsh (pictured right) feels the gravity of the situation too. “Fjarli academy, and every other school like it, is truly the only hope that these kids have. These kids come from the villages with no hope. They come to that school, and others like it and they have the opportunity not only to have food and clothes that are adequate, but to get a Christian education. They can be successful in this world, but they (also) have the opportunity to be successful eternally.”

Bruce’s wife, Jacki Fjarli notes the difference after children arrive and adjust to their new reality. “They have a purpose in their lives and you can tell it in their eyes.”

The most important detail might be the miracles that Maranatha volunteers see unfolding every day. “In this country, anything you do for Jesus, you can’t fail,” says Robin.

The story of Jesus starts with a simple prayer, a story, sharing from the heart. In India hundreds of thousands are still waiting to hear. Others are moving to the next phase of Christian life. Is God calling you to be a part of this great work? Join us on a Maranatha project in India. Touch as Jesus touched.

*As stated in the Central Intelligence Agency’s World Fact Book.*
In merely six months since their introduction, 95 One-Day School buildings have already revolutionized the lives of students on several continents, with many more to come. The needs are great. With funding, we could put up thousands and thousands of One-Day Classrooms. Some unexpected philanthropists are already stepping up to the plate.

Helping provide schools for those in need has inspired school children and adults in North America. The Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists held a conference-wide fund drive for elementary school children. Each school entered into a contest to see what group would raise the most toward a One-Day School classroom.

Each Minnesota school filled a birdhouse “school” with coins and bills - some again and again! With a conference goal of $5,000, each classroom at each school instituted their own creative ideas. Some held carnivals with games and food, others created special offering envelopes to distribute at church, adorned with hand-drawn illustrations of the One-Day School.

The Kindergarten-Fourth grade students at the Capital City Adventist Christian School held a jump rope fundraiser. The children studied about the One-Day School and perfected the spring in their step for weeks before the event. Armed with a folder of photos and stats about the One-Day School, they gathered pledges from friends and family.

On the big day, 22 children rotated through four different jump-roping stations for up to 120 minutes. The event was a huge success, as laughing children raised nearly $2,000 for the One-Day School. “Students were very excited about

the success of the project, and about helping other kids have a nice place to go to school,” says teacher Sue Larson.

The conference surpassed their goal and by campmeeting had raised more than $7,500 for the One-Day School program. Three participating schools were invited to tour the One-Day Church/School factory in Dodge Center, Minnesota. Garwin McNeilus, who oversees the design and manufacturing of the One-Day projects invited 66 kids from ages 5-13, and a few young at heart, to have a hands-on experience with the components of the important buildings.

“From the littlest tiny kindergartner, to the older kids, they were given gloves and slid the steel down the rollers and stacked it into the crate,” says Connie McCormick, Superintendent of Schools for the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “It was wonderful!
More Than 2,000 Now Complete

**Malawi**
Maranatha has completed more than 600 One-Day Churches in Malawi. Most congregations are making preparations to build brick walls. The Adventist Church in Malawi has already seen congregations growing as a result of the One-Day Church initiative.

**Botswana**
Maranatha crews are building 74 One-Day Churches in Botswana for congregations that previously had no permanent place to worship. Each congregation will complete the One-Day structure with block walls.

**Kenya**
The One-Day Church has made a large impact in Kenya, coordinated by Living Waters International, an ASI partner. A new One-Day Church now serves a growing Adventist congregation in one of Kenya’s maximum security prisons. A total of 111 churches have been built in Kenya.

**Haiti**
Maranatha has completed 140 One-Day structures in Haiti. The buildings are being used as churches, schools and temporary housing. Over 15,000 people meet in the buildings for worship services each Sabbath, and more than 5,000 students attend classes during the week.

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**How You Can Help!**

- One-Day Church Share - $1,500
- One-Day School Share - $5,000

To sponsor a One-Day Church or School, visit maranatha.org or send your donation to:

Maranatha Volunteers International
990 Reserve Drive
Suite 100
Roseville, CA 95678

The One-Day Church initiative is a joint project of ASI and Maranatha Volunteers International.