



NEWS FROM HAITI

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Dear Friends,

Again it is December and we are at the end of a year. We want to wish you the Lord's blessing during this Christmas season, and in the New Year ahead of us. We hope and pray that you all experience and share God's love in your daily life. We thank you for your interest in the work in Haiti, and hope that you continue to pray and support the ministry of CRWRC in Haiti.

This year has been busy, especially the second part. During September and October 2007 I (Ad) was on deputation in Canada. I visited churches in British Columbia, Alberta, Michigan and Montreal. Thank you for your hospitality during my visit. I found that CRC churches are involved in many different ministries all around the globe. Please, don't forget the work that CRWRC is doing in Haiti.

In mid October I arrived back in Haiti. The country looked green, and everybody talked about the rain. October is normally the second rainy month after May, but this year it rained daily. My Haitian friends said they couldn't remember an October month with that much rain. And then on the last days of October came Tropical Storm Noel. The soil on the mountains and in the plains were already saturated with water from the daily rains we had the whole month. Therefore when this tropical storm hit it created a disaster. Every river in Haiti flooded: from the North, to the South and in the central parts of the country. Communication is difficult so it took a while before we realized the extent of the damage done.

Three of our partners (SKDE, UEBH, and ECRH) took initiatives to help victims. We learned from former hurricane/disaster situations that it is not effective if our partners try to provide relief to areas where they don't have good contacts. Without the right network in place the assistance could end up with the wrong people. Therefore we encouraged our partners to limit the relief to areas where they have good connections through their churches and/or communities.

SKDE (Christian Center for Integrated Development) decided to work in Cabaret, an area 35 kilometers north of Port-au-Prince (P-au-P), and Petit Goave, which is located 70 kilometer south of P-au-P. In Cabaret the river had flooded long before the tropical storm hit. Houses along the river received water damage and some were completely destroyed. The Haitian Red Cross had distributed tents amongst the victims who couldn't live in their houses. However these families had nothing to live from. SKDE is now helping this group with food, clothes, medicine and tools to repair their houses. SKDE is focusing their assistance on 344 people, mainly in the Cabaret area.



SKDE is helping people whose houses are flooded by tropical storm Noel.

The UEBH, Union of Baptist Churches in Haiti, chose St. Marc for their intervention, a town 90 kilometer north of Port-au-Prince. Around St. Marc the tropical storm flooded the lower rural areas, destroying much of the agriculture production. More than 40 hectares of crops, mainly rice, tomatoes, peppers, and onions were lost. These are very valuable crops, normally grown in the winter season with irrigation.

UEBH is using the Baptist churches in this area to reach the victims both in the church and in the community. They designed a small project to help 90 families by giving them food, and paying school fees for 40 children. Without the income from their crops, families would not be able to pay for their children's school fees. This project also helps the families with seeds in order to replant their fields as soon as possible.

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ECRH (the Haitian CRC) developed a program for two zones which suffered from the tropical storm and where they are strongly represented: Tomasik on the central plateau and Jacmel at the south coast of Haiti. At this moment ECRH is implementing the relief project to help 344 families with food. They are also helping 120 children return to school. The project provides tin roofing material for 25 families to help them repair their homes.



In general we are giving aid in these disaster situations to help families get back on their feet. This assistance is only temporary. And yet it shows in very tangible ways the love and care that Jesus has for them. We pray that these small interventions of relief will bring hope to many families and help them return to a normal life. CRWRC is also committed to long-term development in transforming communities through the work of our partner organizations in Haiti. If you want to know more about these ministries or would like to share some of your blessings this time Christmas season we encourage you to send a gift to CRWRC.

People lost most of their belongings in the flood.

Looking back over this year we can see how we were blessed as an organization, but we were also hurt. In general the security situation in Haiti improved during 2007. However, our partner PWOFOD suffered the great of loss when its coordinator Pastor Odenor St. Cyr, was assassinated in September. The work of our partners in community transformation continues, and we thank the Lord for that. It is a blessing for the people and the children of Haiti. During 2007 we were also encouraged through the visits of several groups from North America who came to help us in different projects.

Our family was also blessed this year. Our children live in 5 different countries now, and are all doing well. Ardjan is still with us in Haiti. He is already in the 11th grade. In June, Mirjam graduated from Concordia University in Montreal, with a major in Elementary Education. Jisca finished her coursework for the International Hotel School in Den Haag (Netherlands) and is now doing her last internship in Cape Town, South Africa. On December 9, Hanneke and Jim's 3rd daughter and our 4th grandchild was born – Rebecca Mader. We thank God for His blessings. We look forward to meeting Rebecca and visiting with every one of our other children and grandchildren this Christmas in Kuwait. It has been more than 4 years, since we were all together, so this will be a great time of celebration for our family.

Please, keep us and Haiti in your prayers:

Pray for the partners who are involved in the relief projects – that they will manage these projects well and will be able to give hope to many families.

Pray for Haiti that during this next year the country will see increased security and a decrease in the poverty.

Again we want to wish you a happy new year.

God bless,

Ad & Coby, and Ardjan de Blaeij