


Lake Union HERALD

NOVEMBER 2006



Forgiveness

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Hope for Haiti

ANDREWS STUDENTS FORM MINISTRY FOR ORPHANS

BY DIANE THURBER

A 2003 mission trip changed the lives of Brian Ladiny and Jean Florvilus forever. Visiting Haiti, they “could not believe the desolation of human life.” Children are perishing in a country that Jean says has been consumed with the influences of evil practices and superstitions for many years.

In Haiti, children who are unable to find someone to help them live a miserable existence. “Five- or six-year-old children walk down the street holding a plate and begging for food just to survive,” Jean said. There is no one to care for them. One in four children die before age five because food is scarce and diseases run rampant among children.

Returning to the States after the mission trip, Brian and Jean fasted and prayed for an answer to the plight of the Haitian children they had encountered. Jean says a few months later God sent some wonderful people who shared their burden for orphans and destitute children worldwide. Soon, their ministry, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, was formed with a seven-member board of directors.

Enrolled in Andrews University, Brian and Jean have very large education expenses; however, at the end of each semester they scraped together what little money they had left and sent it to Haiti for a small feeding program. They started with five children in Bombardopolis, which Jean says is “the most desolate part of Haiti.” Brian and Jean shared their vision with friends and classmates, and soon they also contributed to the feeding program. Professors also joined in. By the end of 2004, their program had increased to feed 213 once daily.

In 2005, the ministry was officially named “Orphans International Helpline.” Currently, the ministry is the sole



Three children wait for food in a poverty-stricken area of northwest Haiti where there isn't any hope.



A recent trip to Haiti inspired Brian Ladiny (left) and Jean Florvilus (right) to form Orphans International Helpline.

support for 60 Haitian children in an orphanage. They are fed three meals daily. In addition, 275 community children are fed one meal daily and are offered free education and other services.

How do Brian and Jean operate their ministry while full-time students and student workers on campus? It is a challenge to manage all their responsibilities, but involvement with the ministry makes their religious education at Andrews more practical. Jean said, “Everything we learned from our classes we put in practice, and we never fail any class.” Brian says, “We believe that it is a perfect time to do such ministry while in school.”

Orphans International Helpline hopes to become a member of Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries; however, they seek a sponsor to partner with them, since the little they have is sent to Haiti for the ongoing feeding

and education program.

Brian and Jean want to “plant a seed of hope in the hearts of each child around the world so [they] can pass it on to the next generation.” It is also their desire to reach orphans for Jesus Christ. They invite you to help provide hope for Haiti. Their vision is broad and the ministry's needs are abundant. Visit www.oionline.org, e-mail info@oionline.org, or call 1-800-704-7611 to learn more.

Diane Thurber is the *Lake Union Herald* managing editor.

