

“The IHM Sisters and associates, impelled by the gospel (Luke 4:18-19) stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti, the poorest in the Americas, in their struggle for dignity, life and human rights, both in Haiti and in the United States.”

- Tri-IHM Statement on Haiti



Resources for study, prayer, action and support
for the people of Haiti

Prepared by
IHM Haiti Committee
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Cover art courtesy of Haiti Reborn

www.haitireborn.org

Background on Haiti

From the Fonkoze 2007 “Haiti: Country Report”



The first Black republic, Haiti established independence from France in 1804. Intense political and economic struggle were common in the early years, with 22 changes of government from 1843 to 1915. In 1915, the United States military occupied Haiti and remained for 19 years.

From 1957 until 1986, Haiti was ruled by the Duvalier family. These years were marred by the increasingly brutal nature of first “Papa Doc” and

then his son, “Baby Doc” Duvalier, who ruled through a network of military and paramilitary forces – the infamous “Ton Ton Macoute.” In 1986 the Duvalier era came to an end.

After the dictatorship fell and “Baby Doc” fled to exile in Southern France, Haiti was ruled by a series of provisional governments until 1991. During this period, the country experienced an unprecedented growth in grassroots organization. The rural and urban poor of Haiti – who for the first time were able to gather in groups of more than two or three – began to take charge of their own communities. The “Ti Legliz” (or little church) movement played an important role in the transformation.

In December 1990, a charismatic “Ti Legliz” Roman Catholic priest won the Presidential elections with 67% of the vote, Jean Bertrand Aristide took office in February 1991, but was overthrown that September in a violent coup led by elements of the army and supported by many of the country’s economic elite. President Aristide spent three years in exile in the United States while an unconstitutional military de facto regime governed Haiti. This regime employed paramilitary forces reminiscent of the “Ton Ton Macoutes,” ironically called FRAPH (Front of the Advancement and Progress of Haiti.) In September, 1994, a U.N. multinational force touched down in Haiti to oversee the end of military rule, the return of President Aristide, and the restoration of constitutional government.

In the ensuing years, there were political log jams, Lavalas Party (Aristide’s political party) divisions and numerous struggles instituting the systems of constitutional government, especially the judicial system. Rene Preval (the former Prime Minister under President Aristide) was elected and served as President from 1996 until 2001. Aristide was again elected President in 2000 and inaugurated in 2001. What began as an election dispute from the Senate election runoff calculations grew into Aristide’s forced resignation and middle-of-the-night departure to Africa in 2004. Again, a U.S.-led multilateral interim force arrived in Haiti and remained until the UN Stability Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) arrived in April of 2004.

An interim government was then appointed. Supreme Court Chief Justice Boniface Alexandre assumed the presidency and Gerard Latortue was appointed prime minister with a mandate of organizing elections to choose a new government. Despite significant delays and controversies, a new round of elections – from President to local offices – successfully occurred. Rene Preval was again elected President of Haiti, inaugurated in 2006 and serves to this day.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. Its gross national income per capita is \$450, slightly more than half of the total for Nicaragua, the second poorest country in the Americas¹. Eighty percent of the population lives below the poverty line and 54% lives in abject poverty².

- Over 40% of the population is unable to read or write.³
- A woman in Haiti can expect to live 49 years, down from 54 in 1999.⁴
- Half of children under 5 are malnourished.⁵
- Over 7% of children die at birth.⁶
- For every 100,000 births, 523 women die in Haiti, compared to eight maternal deaths for every 100,000 births in Europe.⁷
- Eighty out of 1,000 Haitian children never see their first birthday.⁸
- Less than 50% of school aged children attend school.⁹

Ongoing political upheaval, the unwillingness of investors to establish a presence in the country and external shocks have combined to hold back growth in Haiti. Since 2004, the economy has started to pick up and the next few years will be key to determining Haiti's economic future.

While Haiti continues to labor with the transition to democracy, dealing with the nagging challenges of insecurity and crime, lack of infrastructure, underdevelopment, environmental devastation and bringing about the right mix of economic policies, the Haitian people remain committed to the process.

1. World Bank Annual report 2006

2. CIA World Factbook

3. 2003 Haitian Census

4. World Bank Online; www.worldbank.org

5. UNDP Human Development Report 2004

6. CIA World Factbook

7. Doctors Without Borders 2006

8. USAID 2004

9. 2003 Haitian Census.

Prayer for the People of Haiti

By Pax Christi USA



“The harvest of justice is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.” James 3:18

Out of the depths we cry to You, O God.
We cry to You for our Haitian sisters and brothers.

We thank You for upholding them in their suffering.
Give them continuing strength and comfort.

Give us love and courage to stand with them and work with them as they struggle for justice and freedom.

- Keep us committed to the truth and empower us with Your Spirit of love;
- a love that always sees possibilities for peace founded on justice;
- a love that seeks justice without vengeance and retaliation;
- a love that reaches out to enemies, as Jesus taught us.

O Lespri Sen desaan sou nou; nou gen youn misyon pou Ayiti.

(O Holy Spirit; descend on us; we have a mission for Haiti.)

Amen



Learn More About...

Haiti

An Annotated Bibliography

Web Links

Beyond Borders <http://www.beyondborders.net/index1.htm>

To build greater understanding across the global economic divide, Beyond Borders organizes reflective journeys to Haiti for small groups from churches, colleges, and community organizations. Beyond Borders creates opportunities for authentic dialogue between these visitors and their Haitian hosts.

Haiti Reborn <http://www.quixote.org/hr/>

Haiti Reborn, a project of the Quixote Center, works in the United States on behalf of the Haitian people to build an active grassroots solidarity movement and to advocate for a more just U.S. foreign policy. Haiti Reborn acts as a center of information to combat negative stereotypes, and provides in-depth political, economic and social analysis.

Haiti Action Committee <http://www.haitiaction.net/>

The Haiti Action Committee is a San Francisco Bay Area-based network of activists in the U.S. who have supported the Haitian struggle for democracy since 1991. Members foster extensive contacts with the grassroots movements in Haiti. They also link journalists who seek alternative viewpoints with sources both in Haiti and in the United States.

Haiti Marycare www.haitimarycare.org

Haiti Marycare's efforts are concentrated in the isolated fishing village of Jacquesyl and in Cite Soleil, the poorest of the slums in the capitol, Port-au-Prince. Their work addresses three areas: child and family health, education and community development. Mary Lou Ryder-Larkin, a Marian High School graduate, is the Medical Director of Haiti Marycare.

Haiti: Which Way Forward http://www.ipsnews.net/new_focus/haiti/index.asp

An excellent site for updates on current events in Haiti.

Fonkoze <http://www.fonkoze.org/>

Fonkoze - Haiti's Alternative Bank for the Organized Poor - is the largest micro-finance institution offering a full range of financial services to the rural-based poor in Haiti. Fonkoze is a Haitian Creole acronym for Fondasyon Kole Zepòl, which means, "The Shoulder-to-Shoulder Foundation." Fonkoze's mission is to build the economic foundations for democracy in Haiti. Established in 1994, Fonkoze currently has almost 70,000 depositors, over 28,000 active borrowers (96% of whom are women), and 23 branch offices spread throughout Haiti.

National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR) <http://www.nchr.org/>

Established as the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees in 1982, NCHR aimed to assure that Haitian asylum applicants receive fair hearings in the United States and educate the U.S. public about the political and economic causes of the Haitians' flight from their homeland. In 1995, armed with a new agenda and a new name, NCHR initiated a new programmatic division for helping increase the political effectiveness of the Haitian-American community, in the United States. NCHR has pioneered in national litigation, education and advocacy efforts designed to halt the deportation and secure the legal status of Haitian boat

people. NCHR has also assumed international leadership in organizing support for human rights in Haiti.

Partners in Progress www.PIPHaiti.org

Partners in Progress helps people in Haiti help themselves by promoting and advancing a community model of sustainable rural development through educational outreach and resource networking.

Books

Beverly Bell, "Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance" (NY: Cornell University Press, 2001)

Most people know that Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, but what that means for the Haitian people is usually lost in a morass of statistical data. In this moving book, activist Bell, who is the founder and director of the Center for Economic Justice in Albuquerque, NM, gives faces to the numbers by providing a forum for Haitian women to speak about their lives. Some of the 38 oral histories here come from illiterate farmers and market women. Other informants are well schooled, earning far more than subsistence wages as teachers and writers. Nonetheless, all of Bell's sources are dedicated to the alleviation of poverty and believe that food, housing, and education are entitlements and that gender equity is inseparable from economic justice.

Available from the Congregational Library.

Eugenia Charles et al. (Eds.), *Let Haiti Live: Unjust U.S. Policies Toward Its Oldest Neighbor* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision Inc., 2004).

This book is a collection of insightful and well documented essays from 23 contributors. The essays present facts, contexts and perspectives (beyond the report media) to understand the people of Haiti and ideas on how to participate in the environmental, political and social transformations that are needed. ***Available from the Congregational Library.***

Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (New York: Random House, 1994)

At the age of twelve, Sophie Caco is sent from her impoverished village of Croix-des-Rosets, Haiti to New York, to be reunited with a mother she barely remembers. There she discovers a legacy of shame that can be healed only when she returns to Haiti – to the women who first reared her. What ensues is a passionate journey through a landscape charged with the supernatural and scarred by political violence, in a novel that bears witness to the traditions, suffering, and wisdom of the Haitian people. Discussion questions for use with this book are available at <http://www.manitowoc.lib.wi.us/readers/guides/breatheyesmemory.htm>.

Edwidge Danticat, *Farming of Bones* (New York: Penguin, 1998)

At one time the people of Haiti and the Dominican Republic accepted and nurtured their interdependency. Trujillo's racist regime marked the end of this peaceful coexistence with the deplorable Massacre of 1937. This massacre is remembered by Amabelle, a Haitian woman who lived through this period as a young girl. Orphaned when her parents are swept away by a swollen river, she is cared for by the Haitian community across the river in the Dominican Republic. Eventually she falls in love with Sebastien, a worker in the cane fields; their lives are forever entangled during events of 1937. Amabelle flees, becoming companion and nursemaid for the wife of a member of Trujillo's inner circle. For the rest of her life, Amabelle searches for Sebastien, never completely able to accept his death. This is an emotionally charged story and a powerful historical account that helps readers understand the radical division that exists between two countries on a single island. Discussion questions for use with this book are available at

http://readinggroupguides.com/guides_F/farming_of_bones1.asp.

Edwidge Danticat, *Krik? Krak!* (New York: Random House, 1996)

Examining the lives of ordinary Haitians, particularly those struggling to survive under the brutal Duvalier regime, Danticat illuminates the distance between people's desires and the stifling reality of their lives. A profound mix of Catholicism and voodoo spirituality informs the tales, bestowing a mythic importance on people described in the opening story, "Children of the Sea," as those "in this world whose names don't matter to anyone but themselves." The stories inform and enrich one another, as the female characters reveal a common ancestry and ties to the fictional Ville Rose. In addition to the power of Danticat's themes, the book is enhanced by an element of suspense. Spare, elegant and moving, these stories cohere into a superb collection.

Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti: Second Edition* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2003).

This book offers a close examination of the exploitation of the Haitian poor. The author goes beyond a narrative history of events to analyze the ideological backdrop to U.S. policy in Haiti. The book is divided into two sections. The first section offers an interpretive history of Haiti by examining the large scale economic and political forces that have led the country into crisis time and time again. The second part of the book highlights the voices and experiences of Haiti's poor through the stories of three young Haitians.

Available from the Congregational Library.

Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (New York: Random House, 2004).

Mountains Beyond Mountains takes the reader from Harvard to Haiti, Peru, Cuba and Russia as Dr. Paul Farmer changes minds and practices through his dedication to the philosophy that "the only real nation is humanity" - a philosophy that is embodied in the small public charity he founded, Partners In Health. He enlists the help of the Gates Foundation, George Soros, the U.N.'s World Health Organization, and others in his quest to cure the world. At the heart of this book is the example of a life based on hope and on an understanding of the truth of the Haitian proverb, "Beyond mountains there are mountains." As you solve one problem, another problem presents itself, and so you go on and try to solve that one too. Discussion questions for use with this book are available at

<<http://www.macalester.edu/macreads/mountains/discussion.html>> ***Available from the Congregational Library.***

Kathie Klarreich, *Madame Dread: A Tale of Love, Vodou and Civil Strife in Haiti* (New York: Nation Books, 2005).

The author arrived in Haiti as a naïve twenty-something in the late 1980s. Despite the spiraling political violence, Klarreich became enthralled by the island to the extent that she started to grow dreads, attend Voodoo masses and started to file reports for the Christian Science Monitor and its attendant radio station. Klarreich saw civil violence, mass slaughter, coups, and U.S. intervention all up-close, and on a daily basis as a reporter. Often risking life and limb, accused of being a CIA agent by her enemies, she lost a man she loved due to an assassin's bullet—but she established credentials, contacts and developed an unsparing eye that led major news organizations to regard her as nonpareil throughout the turbulent decade. This compelling memoir interweaves shattering political events with an intensely personal narrative.

Youme Landowne, *Selavi, That is Life: A Haitian Story of Hope* (El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2004).

The book opens with Selavi's provocative words: "People with guns could take a family, burn a house and disappear, leaving a small child alone in the world." Through the story of one Haitian orphan, this stirring picture book puts a human face on news images and tells of young people caught up in the terror of war. A teacher's guide for use with this book is available at <<http://www.cincopuntos.com/pdf/selavi.pdf>> ***Available from the Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office***

Jennie Marcelle Smith, *When the Hands are Many: Community Organization and Social Change in Rural Haiti*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

When the Hands Are Many illustrates the philosophies, styles and structures typical of social organization in rural Haiti. The author integrates these organizations' strengths into a new vision for social change and asks what must happen in Haiti and elsewhere to facilitate positive transformation in the world today.

Randall Robinson, *An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, From Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2007).

A searing overview of Haitian history and the reasons behind Haiti's persistent poverty and isolation is followed by a riveting account of the 2004 coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Robinson marshals strong evidence to support his belief that the Bush administration engineered Aristide's removal, and he has firsthand knowledge of the debacle. Robinson's dramatic account makes it clear that many questions remain unanswered.

Periodicals/Newsletters

The Haiti Report <http://www.konpay.org/pmwiki.php/Main/HaitiReports>

To receive the Haiti Report via e-mail contact Melinda Miles at melinda@haitikonpay.org.

Nouvel Fonkoze newsletter <http://www.fonkoze.org/publications/newsletters.htm>

Beyond Borders newsletter <http://www.beyondborders.net/BB-Mail/2004-12/intro.htm>

Audio Visual/Interactive Resources

The Road to Fondwa

This documentary gives an intimate look at this community that is working to break the cycle of poverty in Haiti. **Available from the Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office**

Circles of Change. DVD and VHS. Prod. Beyond Borders, 2004

<http://www.beyondborders.net/je-assoc/CirclesofChange.htm>

"Circles of Change" presents the story of a grassroots movement that is transforming notions and practices in education and leadership in Haiti and beyond. Through [Open Space](#) and [Touchstones Discussions](#) (Reflection Circles), the seeds of change are being planted among a new generation of Haitian leaders. (20 minutes, Haitian Creole with English subtitles)

Available from the Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office

Haiti: The Struggle for Water. Frontline/World Fellows Web Exclusive, 2004

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/fellows/haiti/indexa.html>

This multimedia slide show by PBS' "Frontline" explores the water crisis in Haiti.

Haiti: The Eroding Nation. Florida Sun-Sentinel Web Exclusive, 2003

http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/sfl-haitistorygallery_0_4625716.storygallery

Haiti is facing the most severe environmental catastrophe in the Western Hemisphere and, perhaps, the world. South Florida Sun-Sentinel staff writer Tim Collie and staff photographer Mike Stocker spent time with Haitians, Haitian exiles, environmentalists, political leaders and experts in international affairs to understand the growing crisis in Haiti and its regional and international implications. The result of their work is this excellent interactive web feature

Suggested Actions

1. Call for Haiti Debt Cancellation

Over half of the loans Haiti continues to pay were granted to corrupt and brutal dictators like Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier. The Haitian people continue to pay interest on these loans of a clearly odious nature. This is money that could be used to invest in health care or education in a country where almost a quarter of children under five are chronically malnourished and only 35 percent of students are able to complete primary school.

These loans divert over \$57 million per year from a country where half the people struggle to survive on \$1 a day or less. While the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank have allowed Haiti to enter their debt cancellation programs they hold Haiti under the onerous framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. In the meantime Haiti will pay \$110 million to \$140 million more in debt service to these institutions.

1. Find out who your Representative is by entering your zip code at www.house.gov (upper left corner).
 2. Pick up the phone and call the Capitol Switchboard: **202-224-3121**.
 3. Ask to be connected to your Representative's office. The receptionist will answer. Introduce yourself as a constituent.
 4. Say some version of the following: "I am calling to urge Representative _____ to co-sponsor the Haiti debt cancellation resolution (H Res 241), if she/he has not already done so. This bill would provide immediate debt cancellation for Haiti. By canceling the debt immediately we can support Haiti in the improvement of health care, education, sanitation and other essential services and infrastructure.
I urge Representative _____ to co-sponsor this important legislation. To co-sponsor, your staff should contact **Kathleen Sengstock in Rep. Maxine Waters' office at 202-225-2201.**"
 5. (You can stop there, or add an additional sentence about why this issue is important to you).
 6. Then thank the receptionist and say goodbye.
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2. Stand in Solidarity with Haitian Apparel Workers

Since May of 2007, there has been an ongoing crisis in CD Apparel, an assembly factory located in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. This factory was producing clothing for Hanes until suddenly Hanes withdrew all of its contracts and forced its closure. According to the Haitian factory owner, Frantz Pilorge, it seems that this came about because of a plot against him by two other big Haitian factory owners, Apaid and Richard Coles who also have contracts with Hanes. That's their concern. But on the other hand, more than 500 workers have been laid off as a result of this. Although these workers have been paid their "legal" severance, this was only worth a pittance, particularly since wages in Haiti are so low. In these circumstances, the workers should be duly compensated; they should be paid a real severance, the same way that Hanes treats workers in other countries in a similar situation.

Go to <http://www.batayouvriye.org/English/Dossiers1/cdapparel.html> for more information and to send letters to Hanes and CD Apparel.

3. Host a “Creole Pig Party” at School, Church or with Friends

A Pig Party raises money for the Creole pig repopulation program.” With the games and activities in this Pig Party Packet (<http://grassrootsonline.org/what-you-can-do/host-event/pig-party>) you will learn about Haiti's Creole pig and its important role in peasant life. You'll discuss how international pressure was used to nearly exterminate this important resource. And you'll talk about how to support efforts now under way to bring back the Creole pig.

4. Sign a Petition Calling for the Safe Return of Haitian Human Rights Activist Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine

Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine, the internationally respected Haitian human rights activist has been missing in Haiti since the evening of August 12. Lovinsky was kidnapped after meeting with a U.S. human rights delegation. He is a member of Fanmi Lavalas (The political party of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide) and a founding member of September 30th Foundation.

Amnesty International fears that Pierre-Antoine may have been abducted by individuals connected with the former military because of his continued activism in denouncing past human rights violations during the 1991-1994 military government and in gathering signatures to amend the Constitution in order to eliminate all provisions for the existence of a Haitian army.

Pierre-Antoine's abduction was reportedly made to look like a kidnapping for ransom. His family was contacted by his alleged abductors on August 14 and asked to pay a ransom. However there has been no further contact from the abductors.

Help keep the pressure on the Haitian Government, the U.S. and the UN occupying forces to work for the safe return of Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine.
<http://www.petitiononline.com/august/petition.html>



Make a Contribution

Beyond Borders

P.O. Box 2132
Norristown, PA 19404
www.beyondborders.net

Fonkoze

50 F Street, NW, Suite 810
Washington, DC 20001
www.fonkoze.org

Grassroots International Creole Pig Repopulation Program

179 Boylston Street
4th floor
Boston, MA 02130
www.grassrootsonline.org/what-we-do/partnerships/where-we-work/haiti

Haiti Marycare

55 King Street
Danbury, CT 06811
www.haitimarycare.org

KOFAVIV (for Haitian Women Rape Survivors)

c/o Haiti Reborn
PO Box 5206
Hyattsville, MD 20782
<http://haiti.quixote.org/node/201>

Partners in Progress

329 N. Fairfield Street
Ligonier PA 15658
www.piphaiti.org