

**Bringing Light to
Northern Haiti**



Haitian Christian Ministries

April Issue - 2020

**Preaching and teaching
the Word of God**

Planting Churches

**Meeting the Physical
Needs of the People**

Covid-19 and Haiti

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COVID-19 seems to be the topic of discussion for so many of us right now; it has changed the way the entire world is doing business and has dramatically changed the daily lives of everyone. Haiti has over 43 confirmed cases of the virus. As we all know, it's only a matter of time before Haiti will be experiencing what most of the rest of the world has already become very familiar with. The difference being the medical care available in Haiti is vastly different than what we here in the US have available to us.

The HCM Board has been, and will continue to be, in almost constant communication with Pastor Bob and the staff in Haiti attempting to best meet the needs of the people we serve in Haiti during this worldwide pandemic. We are committed as a ministry, with the wisdom that the Lord provides and the continued financial support of those who are able, to meet the needs of the community of Pillatre and those surrounding communities that we serve.

A few of the decisions we have made to best help the community are these: increased funds have been sent to Haiti in anticipation of increased costs for food, medication and other necessities. We have committed to paying all HCM employees while they are off work as long as funds continue to be available (All schools and churches are closed. The only staff working right now are our medical clinic staff, key administration staff and security staff.). We were able to ship 220 lbs of medication, antibiotics, vitamins and other over the counter medications to the medical clinic from the US as medication costs have tripled since the first

COVID-19 cases were discovered in Haiti. We have educated our clinic staff via a video conference on the virus and our medical director is continuing to search for the latest information on treatment of patients who become infected and that information is being shared with our clinic medical staff.

As a ministry, we want to be as financially responsible as possible and spend our funds in ways that best help those in Haiti. Therefore, we are asking for as many of our supporters as possible to transition to an email version of our monthly newsletter, allowing us to save the cost of printing and mailing



newsletters. Going electronic will also allow you to receive more frequent updates. We will be updating our HCM Facebook page and sending out emails about what is going on in the ministry. If you presently receive a paper copy of the monthly newsletter and you are able to transition to an e-version, please send us an email at contact@hcm.org.

If you are someone who is blessed to have not lost your source of income, please continue to give to HCM, and if you feel lead, please consider increasing your giving. As a board, we do not have all the answers, but we are meeting almost weekly to discuss and formulate plans for the ministry. Please be in prayer for Haiti, our HCM staff, the HCM Board, and our world as we all are facing uncharted territory in this “new normal”.

If you are a supporter that has lost their job and need to temporarily stop supporting HCM, please let us know and also let us know how we can best pray for you in these trying times.

The following update is from Pastor Bob:

COVID-19: the numbers are very limited in Haiti at this moment, but the fear is tangible, especially due to the structural weaknesses the country has been subject to for years.

As a minister, I bear witness to the fact that people who were already living in suffering, are suffering even more. A large majority of people still need to go out every day to earn their daily bread. The government, now asking this majority to stay home to avoid spreading the virus, exposes them to another challenge, that of finding food. I am pretty sure that some people may not only die from coronavirus, but from hunger. And more tuberculosis cases may also arise as a result afterward.

As with many of you, we in Haiti miss our people and church services. We could offer online services like other churches do, but only a very small percentage of those in our community have access to electricity or the internet and our churches are not online every day.

Here, it's very hard to practice social distancing due to our culture. According to Jeremy Freese, a professor of sociology at Sanford University, “Social distancing makes it sound like people should stop communicating with one another, while instead we should be preserving as much community as we can even while we keep our physical distance from one another.” We don't have many of the tools to stay connected in Haiti that those in the US have,

no FaceTime, no Zoom, no electricity, no running water in homes making the ability to socially distance without social isolation very hard. “We need to do physical distancing to protect everyone's physical wellbeing, but mental wellbeing is obviously also important, and social isolation is not good for mental wellbeing,” he added.

While the northern side of Haiti still does not have any reported cases of the Coronavirus, our people have benefited from visits with families every Sunday morning outside in their yards. We maintain a 6-foot distance as we pray, minister, sing and teach. We encourage them with God's words, teach them how to protect themselves against the virus, pray with them and share what we have.



Our employees have been blessed and are grateful for receiving their monthly salary early to help them provide for their families by going out and purchasing food to be able to stay home and help to combat the spread of the virus. Our community is praying constantly for the HCM supporters. Please, as you pray for us, be praying for these items to be available in our community: sanitary kits (masks, gloves, soap, disinfectant, chlorine, alcohol for cleaning), but also food kits (rice, beans, spaghetti, oil, milk).

We are helping those most in need in our churches through the pastors in each of our churches. As the pastors become aware of a need for food they let me know and we make arrangements for the pastors to receive some food to take to those in need. This way we make sure that there are no large gatherings to distribute food. We are trying to help feed those who have no means to feed their families. As supporters of HCM you have provided the food through your monthly donations. I thank you for that.

