

Hunger News & Hope

... a Seeds of Hope publication

The Earthquake Heard Around the World

by Audrey Cary

As if being the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere wasn't already enough of a struggle for Haiti, being plagued by natural disasters has left the country in a constant state of catching up. The earthquake last January 12 left many Caribbean cities, including the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, in disarray and disbelief.

After the series of earthquakes (ranging in magnitude from 6.5 to 7.3) struck, the sight of toppled buildings and hundreds of victims crumpled all hopes of finding survivors. The first earthquake, occurring 10 miles from Port-au-Prince at 4:53 p.m. that Tuesday, was followed by at least 52 aftershocks (magnitudes of 4.5 or greater) in the coming days.

As thousands of Haitians tried to find shelter, buildings collapsed around them, homes fell to the ground before their eyes and the city became buried in dust, debris and devastation. Causing major damage to notable landmarks like the Presidential Palace, the Port-au-Prince Cathedral and the National Assembly

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Right: Workers begin cleaning up the former site of a school for disabled children in Port-au-Prince. Photo courtesy of Ben & Katie Kilpatrick.

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On the Spot in Haiti

an interview by Katie Minchew

Last year, Ben and Katie Kilpatrick, newlyweds from Dallas, TX, chose to dedicate their next three years to teaching school in Haiti. They began their mission in January. A few days after they arrived in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, the devastating earthquake hit. After the earthquake, Ben and Katie chose to remain in Haiti and continue to aid people in need on the battered streets of Port-au-Prince. Seeds of Hope's Katie Minchew contacted Katie Kilpatrick in February and asked her a few questions about her experiences.

Q: What caused you to decide to go to Haiti?

A: It's a bit of a long story. Since the eighth grade, I've felt a call to overseas missions. After I graduated from high school, and Ben and I started dating seriously, I was confused because Ben was not particularly interested in overseas work. We were married in the fall of 2008, and very shortly after that, Ben was laid off from his job. During his month out of work, he really began to re-evaluate his plans for the future.

Later that spring, we went on a mission trip to Honduras with my

workplace, Buckner International. It was his first overseas mission trip and our first trip together. It changed us in many ways, and it really lit a fire within Ben to spend time serving overseas.

After that, we began looking into mission options. We learned about the Association of Christian Schools International, which accredits over 1,000 schools worldwide and lists all of its schools' job openings online. Quisqueya Christian School in Port-au-Prince was a perfect match—right subjects, right grade levels, two openings, etc.

Q: Tell me about your experiences on the day of the earthquake.

A: Ben and I had just come home from the grocery store after school on Tuesday, January 12. It was our first time to go to the store by ourselves. We were sitting down at the kitchen table, ready to grade papers and work on our lesson plans. I heard a loud noise growing, but at first I thought it was just a big truck. The roads are unpaved here, and often a big tanker truck full of gas or water will drive by, making a huge

roar. I began to feel the shaking but was in denial about what it was. Ben grabbed my hand, yelled, "It's an earthquake!" and pulled me toward our stairwell.

We live in a second-story duplex, so the stairwell leads to the ground floor. We sat on the top step and stared into each other's shocked faces, wide-eyed. I remember seeing the light fixtures swinging around on their chains as if they were lassos. Things were falling over, but our walls did not crack and the ceiling did not fall in. This led us to underestimate the power of the quake.

It felt so long—like it was five minutes. We ran outside with nothing, and I was afraid to go outside our gates, because I thought maybe there would be violence from panicked people. There is a ravine at the end of our street, and people live in houses made of trash along the riverbed. People were streaming out of the ravine, carrying bloody children, covered in blood themselves. I stood there, shocked.

Ben and I decided to go inside and get our essentials. We ran in, grabbed our passports, cash, some first aid, some hand sanitizer and paper towels. We ran next door to our neighbors' house—fellow missionaries. They were okay.

Outside their gate there was a little boy, crying hysterically, bleeding, alone. We don't speak any Creole yet, but we tried to soothe him and put hand sanitizer on his wounds. He had a deep cut on his head that we spent a lot of time cleaning, but it wasn't for several minutes that we noticed his worst wound. He had a deep cut between his fingers down to the bone. A boy came up and said he was a friend of



Left: Katie Kilpatrick with students at Quisqueya Christian School in Port-au-Prince. Photo courtesy of Ben & Katie Kilpatrick.

this child's family. He said the family had run to the hospital with the boy's sister, and had left this child. We were completely shocked and dazed.

Q: How would you describe the relief efforts going on around you?

A: For the first week at least, the only aid we saw were private Christian groups, who mobilized very quickly. They all flew to the Dominican Republic and drove over the border because no aid was coming through the Port-au-Prince airport.

All the doctors arriving now are with private aid groups. We have over 150 doctors sleeping on our campus each night, and each day they go out to serve at various hospitals.

Our school is functioning as a command center to communicate with area hospitals and deploy doctors to the locations with the greatest needs. We've also coordinated with the US Comfort ship to send the most critical, complicated patients to their floating hospital.

There are Haitian police on the street, but we have not seen much in the way of a military presence. The major problem with aid is distribution, and the major problem with distribution is security.

If a truck drives up full of food and begins passing it out, a riot will quickly form as hungry people push and grab for the limited food. Aid groups, in general, bring in lots of supplies but don't necessarily plan for security.

Q: How are the Haitian people responding, in general?

A: The Haitian people are extremely resilient. They say they are glad to be alive and praise God for their lives being spared. I've heard several people say "We are fine, praise God!" and then admit that yes, their house was destroyed, but they are so grateful to be alive. I heard them singing "Count Your Blessings" in the ravine church on Sunday.

I've found myself complaining that I'm not getting to eat what I like, or having to take cold showers, and then I remember what most Haitians have lost and I'm disgusted with myself. One of our "lunch ladies" lost her en-

tire home and watched her niece die of internal injuries, but she came back to work a day later, ready to serve.

I am inspired and humbled by these people. I often ask myself why God would allow this tragedy in a place that already knows such incredible suffering, where the people have already grieved so much.

Q: When so many people are fleeing, why did you and Ben choose to stay?

A: We are staying because we feel God called us to Haiti to serve. We knew it would not be easy to come here, and it hasn't been. But Haiti needs us more

than ever now. We can't save the world or fix all the problems, but we can teach high-school English and history, and we can love hurting school kids, and we can serve our school's crisis-relief center so the doctors staying here can better help the people. It's uncomfortable for sure—rats, rice and beans every day, disease, being dirty all the time, working from dawn to midnight. But this is where God has called us to be, and there's nowhere I'd rather be.

—Katie Minchew, a native of Frisco, TX, is a professional writing student at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern.

Earthquake

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building, the earthquake also destroyed thousands of houses and shantytown homes. The Haitian government estimates that 30,000 commercial buildings and 250,000 residences were destroyed or severely damaged.

By February 12, the earthquake had affected some 3 million people. Reports from the Haitian government then confirmed that casualties had risen to a shocking 230,000, and were expected to increase. The injured list reached 300,000, the homeless count was around 1.1 million and at least 2 million people were (and are) in need of food assistance.

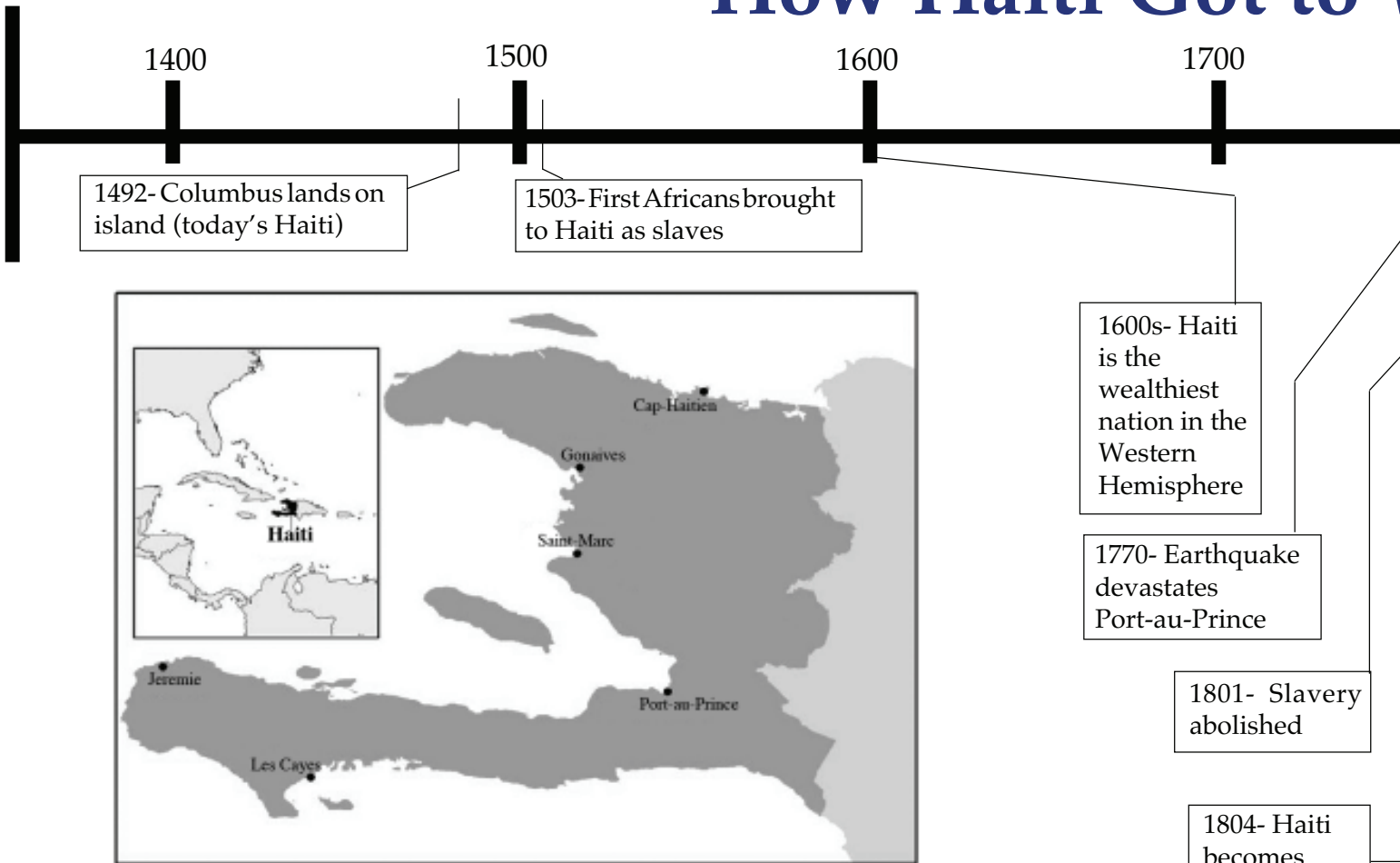
This catastrophic quake quickly became the earthquake heard around the world, as countries and individuals alike began to respond by donating money, sending supplies or organizing search teams. Many countries answered the call for humanitarian aid by dispatching medical and rescue teams, sending medical and sanitation supplies and pledging funds. Aid and rescue efforts were initially hampered because of the damaged communication and transport systems through air, land and sea. Air traffic congestion, leadership confusion and overwhelmed morgues also led to thousands of bodies being buried in mass graves.

The country was already choked by poverty. Before the earthquake, 75 percent of Haiti's 9 million people, according to UN figures, survived on less than \$2 a day. And after the earthquake, Haiti's economy is expected to reduce by 15 percent. According to Inter-American Development Bank vice president Roberto Vellutini, the long road to reconstruction in Haiti will cost between \$5 billion and \$10 billion over the next five years. This doesn't include the funds for the next six months' emergency relief (\$550 million).

To a nation that previously fought to stay afloat, this seems like an insurmountable financial obstacle. But in early February, hope shook hands with Haiti in the form of a gift from the US that forgave every cent of Haiti's debt to that country. The US Treasury also ensured Haiti that its recovery and reconstruction would be financed not by loans but with grants. Other major players in the international financial system (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States) followed pursuit in forgiving Haiti of their \$890 million debt.

—Audrey Cary, a native of Henderson, TX, is a professional writing student at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern. Sources: US Geological Survey (www.usgs.gov), Global Voices Online (globalvoicesonline.org), New York Times (www.nytimes.com).

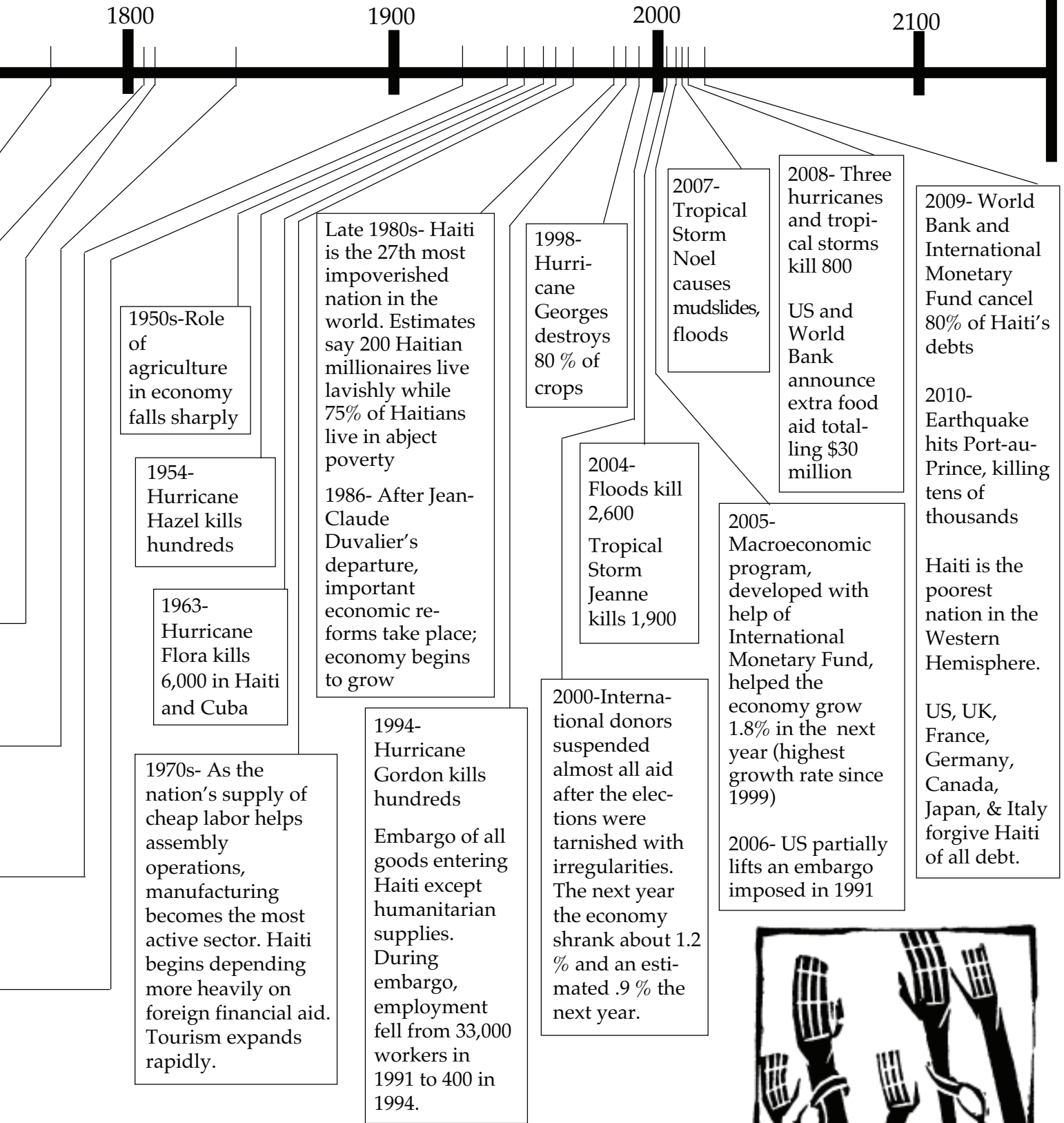
How Haiti Got to V



A Brief Chronology of Key Events

- 1492: Christopher Columbus lands and names the island Hispaniola
- 1496: Spanish establishment in western hemisphere
- 1697: Spain cedes western part of Hispaniola to France, and this becomes Haiti
- 1801: Former slave Toussaint Louverture leads rebellion and abolishes slavery
- 1804: Haiti is independent; Jean-Jacques Dessalines declares himself emperor
- 1806: Dessalines assassinated; Haiti divided- black-controlled north, mulatto-ruled south
- 1818-43: Pierre Boyer unifies Haiti but excludes blacks from power
- 1956: Francois Duvalier seizes power in military coup, is elected president a year later
- 1964: Duvalier declares himself president-for-life, establishes a dictatorship
- 1971: Duvalier dies; his son Jean-Claude declares himself president-for-life
- 1986: Jean-Claude flees Haiti. Replaced by Lieutenant-General Henri Namphy
- 1988: Leslie Manigat becomes president but is ousted in a coup
- 1990: Jean-Bertrand Aristide becomes president but is ousted in a coup a year later
- 1994: US who oversees transition to civilian government; Aristide returns.
- 1995: Rene Preval elected to replace Aristide as president, is sworn in a year later.
- 1999: Preval declares that parliament's term has expired and begins ruling by decree
- 2000: Aristide elected president for a second term
- 2001: Coup attempt: 30 armed men try to seize the National Palace
- 2004: Uprising against Aristide, who is forced into exile. Interim government takes over.
- 2006: Rene Preval is elected president. Democratically-elected government takes office.
- 2008: Unrest erupts as Haitians riot against high food prices
- 2008: Michele Pierre-Louis succeeds Jacques-Edouard Alexis as prime minister
- 2009: Jean-Max Bellerive becomes prime minister

Where It Is Today



Compiled by Audrey Cary. Sources: British Broadcasting Corporation, The US Library of Congress, The Root, and the CIA World Factbook.



What You Can Do for Haiti

compiled by Audrey Cary

On January 12, the poverty-wracked, disaster-ridden country of Haiti was rocked by an earthquake that eventually left some 217,000 people dead, 300,000 injured and 511,000 in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. Images flowed into our living rooms and laptops for weeks, as aftershocks added to the damage.

This happened in our hemisphere—in our backyard. As North Americans of faith and compassion, we have talked about it, worried about it and shaken our heads in disbelief, but what can we actually do to help?

Pray.

A God-centered choice, donation, event, mission trip—all should start with the seed of prayer. Maybe you'll be led to give, go or even adopt an orphaned Haitian child. By continually lifting up those left destitute and devastated after the earthquake, we'll be working towards fulfilling the request of Pastor Zenas Pierre with World Hunger Relief Haiti: "Pray, pray, pray please!"

Give.

Because of high shipping costs and a dire need for financial funding instead, clothing and shoes are not the best option as donations currently. You can check with your local Salvation Army or Goodwill to see if they're taking clothing donations for Haiti, but consider other forms of donations as well:

1. Supply Kits:

Although you can put together your own kits, you could also send funds for kits to be assembled and sent to Haiti through Church World Service (www.churchworldservice

.org). These supply kits range from school kits and baby-care kits to hygiene kits and emergency clean-up buckets. Since these kits are sent all year long, continual support is essential.

The Mennonite Central Committee is asking for donations to help send 10,000 heavy comforters, 20,000 relief kits and 10,000 flat sheets to Haiti as bedding and mosquito netting. Go to <https://donate.mcc.org/project/cash-kits> to send a donation that will allow for items to be purchased locally, making possible an immediate and culturally suitable response.

2. Blood:

Calling all Type O-blood types! American Red Cross is aiding Haitians with both blood products and blood, and although there is no great need for general donors yet, the need for eligible Type O-negative blood (the universal donor) is urgent. Call 1-800-RED CROSS or go to www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation to make an appointment.

3. Money (Remember, donations are tax deductible):

Text it: Sending a text message with the word HAITI to 52000 will make a \$10 donation (which will be added onto your credit card or cell-phone bill) to the Salvation Army.

Send the word LOVE to the number 25383 to donate \$10 to Haiti through United Church of Christ efforts.

Send it: Texas Baptist Men (<http://texasbaptistmen.org/dnn/>) is sending water-purification systems, priced at \$30 each, to Haiti. Having already spent \$150,000 solely on faith, TBM needs our donations. Donate online by clicking on the Donation section or send a check to: Texas Baptist Men; 5351 Catron Drive; Dallas, TX 75227.

Send a donation to Habitat for Humanity (www.habitat.org) and help provide temporary shelter for those left homeless.

Donate to the International Committee of the Red Cross (www.ICRC.org) to help support the search and reconnecting of families separated by the disaster.

Click it: It's really as simple as a few clicks. Help transport medical supplies to Port-au-Prince from northern Haiti and help empower Haitian citizens to respond to their own compatriots in need through World Hunger Relief Haiti. Just go to www.worldhungerrelief.org/haiti/help.html, click

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Haitian schoolgirls before the earthquake.

Photo by Scott Taylor.



Reading about Haiti

by Katie Minchew

An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, From Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President by Randall Robinson

In this book, Randall Robinson tells an inside story of the 8 million peasants of Haiti and the rise of President Jean-Bertrande Aristide, once expected to be the country's savior. Robinson stresses the ugliness of Haiti's centuries of slavery, the revolt that followed and the extreme poverty of the poor who make up the majority of the country.

He also decries the extreme divide between "the very rich whites, mulattoes and opportunist black rulers" on one side, and the "wretchedly deprived 'peasants' on the other." With these descriptions, he tugs on the heartstrings of his readers.

Robinson's book takes the reader through Haiti's journey from their foundation in 1492 to the revolution against the French, and then to the alleged kidnapping of President Aristide.

Using his emotional ties to Haiti, Robinson paints a picture of President Aristide as Haiti's only hope for "coming, at long last, into ownership of their own country." A good portion of the book is dedicated to disparaging views of the United States—especially the Bush administration.

Though creatively and compellingly written, *An Unbroken Agony* is obviously one-sided. However, it is a very interesting and enlightening read, especially if one is interested in the dramatic side of Haiti's history.

Haiti, History, and the Gods by Joan Dayan

Joan Dayan's passion for Haitian culture and people, and their remarkable history, shines through as you read her exemplary book, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*. In this lengthy, detailed book, Dayan covers every Haitian ruler and every ritualistic tradition. She uncovers every mystery and rumor told about the country.

She is not biased—the only side Dayan takes is the side of history. She writes, "I am interested in how stories get told, what gets remembered, and which details matter. This book does not aim at conclusiveness."

Dayan tells the same story three ways through ritual, fiction and history—each reinforcing the other, each through a different lens. Through each lens we are able to experience Dayan's devotion to the country. She writes in the attitude of the famous quote of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who first proclaimed independence for Haiti in 1804:

If there remains among you a lukewarm heart, let him retire, and tremble to pronounce the oath that must unite us. Let us swear to the whole world, to posterity, to ourselves, to renounce France forever and to die rather than live under its domination; to fight to the last breath

for the independence of our country.

While diving into the rich Haitian culture of alongside the author, the reader is introduced to scholarly journals, personal memoirs, studies and letters as evidence for each word Dayan writes. Your eyes are opened to a Haiti with which you have never yet been acquainted.

Because the book is so rich in detail, the reader can easily get lost in all of the names, dates and locations, so make sure you have your "thinking cap" on when you pick up *Haiti, History, and the Gods*.

—Katie Minchew is a professional writing student at Baylor University.

What You Can Do, continued

the given link on the page, and iGive will automatically donate \$2 to Haiti.

Sponsor a child: You can save one child's life for less than one dollar a day through the Baptist Haiti Mission (www.bhm.org/bhm/index.php).

Go.

Right now may not be the optimal time to pack your bags and head to Haiti because of the difficulty level of getting into the country, but Haiti will undoubtedly need help for many years to come. Find out if your church, your denomination or even a local or national mission organization is planning a trip in the future and is looking for members to join them.

Talk.

Tell your friends what they can do. Spread the word about possible sources for donation and brainstorm together for new ideas on how you can help Haiti.

Endure.

This devastating disaster demands massive amounts of time, energy and financial support for Haiti. Rebuilding the Capital, treating the hundreds of wounded people and instilling hope back into the nation will take long-term commitment and devotion to the country.

Inevitably, as news of the country makes fewer appearances in the news, the good will and charity towards Haiti will also decline, leaving them still in need of restoration and reconstruction. Through prayer, compassion, donations and keeping Haiti a topic in our thoughts and our conversations, we can be a part of the long-term process of change and renovation that Haiti so desperately needs.

—Audrey Cary, a native of Henderson, TX, is a professional writing student at Baylor University.

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Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group intends to seek out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

quotes, poems, & pithy sayings

Forgive Us Our Debts

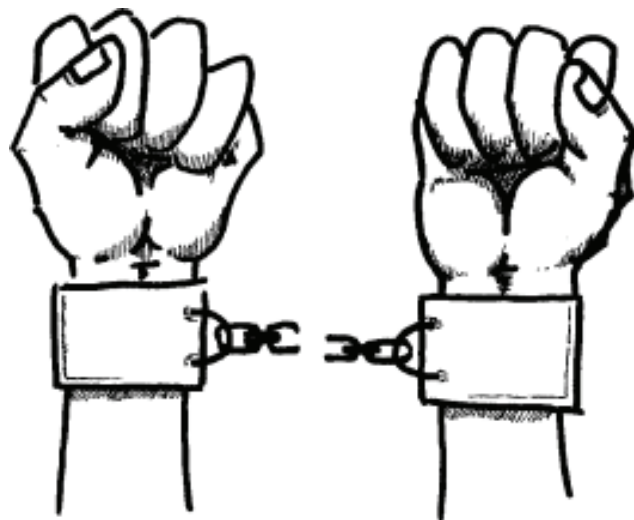
Shortly after the January earthquake in Haiti, US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geitner announced that Haiti's debt to international financial institutions in this country would be forgiven.

Then, the following day, finance ministers for the G7, or Group of Seven, nations (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the US) announced their countries' decision to do the same. To my knowledge, never has the urgent petition of "forgive us our debts" been so dramatically answered.

Moreover, the debt cancellation will have a much longer effect. As one worried doctor there recently said, "We're so afraid that once it gets unsexy [to provide aid], Haiti will be forgotten." The boundaries of *We Are the World* tend to snap back into their contracted shape once the major media's sweet tooth develops another craving.

Like prisoners here in the US, Haiti seems to remain just out of sight, except in times of earthquakes of tsunami magnitude. Which may account for the wisdom of one of their proverbs: "What the eye doesn't see, doesn't move the heart."

—Ken Sehested, co-pastor of Circle of Mercy Congregation in Asheville, NC. He is the author of *In the Land of the Living: Prayers Personal and Public*, and editor of an upcoming online journal, *prayer&politik*. For more information on global action for debt cancellation, visit jubileusa.org.



art by Robert Van Darden

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