



Stoltzfus Christian Library

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ANNUAL UPDATE

Dear Library Member,

11/26/2018

It is a privilege to once again be able to write an update letter. Another year has swiftly passed by. A year of good times, and bad times, fun times, and sad times, victories, and yes, even some mistakes. Sometimes I ponder, *wouldn't it be nice if I could retract, go back and undo some of the mistakes and failures of the past year?* I could have been a little kinder, I could have lifted others up more, and thought less of myself, I could have prayed more, I could have been stronger in temptation...

It reminds me of the little poem, "A Creed" by Edgar A. Guest, it goes:

Let me be a little kinder,
Let me be a little blinder
To the faults of those around me,
Let me praise a little more;
Let me be, when I am weary
Just a little bit more cheery,
Let me serve a little better
Those that I am striving for.

Let me be a little braver
When temptation bids me waver,
Let me strive a little harder
To be all that I should be;
Let me be a little meeker
With the brother that is weaker,
Let me think more of my neighbor
And a little less of me.

Let me be a little sweeter,
Make my life a bit completer
By doing what I should do
Every minute of the day;
Let me toil, without complaining,
Not a humble task disdainng,
Let me face the summons calmly
When death beckons me away.

To me it's a sobering thought, *what we have done in the past, will forever be in the past*. We can never go back and undo those things. The exciting thing however, is that God cares about us! God doesn't want us to continue going down a bitter road of disappointment and failure, he wants us to rise up to newness of life and be a new creature in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Although we have failed miserably in the past, if we truly repent and want to live for God, he can help us rise up. We must face life today, and chose to make wise, God-honoring decisions from here on.

Life on the Mission Field

Most of you know that I have been working on the mission field in Haiti for the past several years. I thought that it may be of your interest to have an update of some of the experiences that I've had.

On August 11, 2016 I moved to Titanyen, Haiti and started working for Christian Aid Ministries (CAM); as the director for the Haiti Sponsor a Child School Program (HSAC).

My flight down to Haiti was delayed so I arrived after dark. I well remember driving up the long driveway in Haiti leading to the CAM base, for the first time. The thoughts that were going through my mind were: *What in the world am I getting myself into, is this really where I want to be for at least the next two years of my life?* The following morning dawned bright and sunny, I went out on the front deck, and for the first time I realized how beautiful Haiti is. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and has had a long history of political corruption, unrest, and economical deterioration, (so you can only imagine, that I did have a few preconceived ideas.) The front side of our house faces the Caribbean Sea, and in the back is a small mountain range. I later wandered out to the office where I met the seven Haitian school inspectors that I would be working with. I found out that the Haitian people for the most part are very friendly, and they specialize in telling jokes and laughing.

The language commonly spoken in Haiti, is Haitian Creole, so I immediately had the language barrier to deal with. They do have French as an official language, but it is mostly used by the elite class of people. Haitian Creole is based primarily on eighteenth century French, with influence from many different African languages, as well as English and Spanish. I immediately set to work to learn Creole. It hasn't been easy, but with much perseverance, and by God's grace, I have been able to learn conversational Creole.

Many of the Haitian people are bound by spiritual darkness and superstition. Upon coming to Haiti, I could immediately feel the darkness. Satan's work and power is a lot more open and visible here in Haiti. There are witch doctors, and a large part of the population practice Voodoo. Voodoo is a black religious cult practiced in the Caribbean and the southern US, combining elements of Roman Catholic ritual with traditional African magical and religious rites, and characterized by sorcery and spirit possession. Nevertheless, thankfully there are some true Christians who try to live out the teachings of the Bible. CAM reaches out to people in Haiti through various programs, including the following: teaching for pastors, Bibles and literature, humanitarian aid, medical aid, and the school program.

CAM currently supports 52 schools here in Haiti. Each school has an average of about 165 students, so that is a total of about 8,600 students. I love getting out and visiting the schools. There is nothing like seeing children who are enthused, and so excited to learn! Often it makes me wonder what the future is for the more than 8,600 students who attend a CAM sponsored school here in Haiti. Thankfully for them, at least they have the opportunity to attend school and learn how to read and write. Since coming here, I've come to understand that there is so much that us as Americans take for granted. Simple things like being taught proper hygiene, basic first aid, and what we would call a basic education, go a long way. There are a lot of people here in Haiti, especially the older generation, who don't even know how to write or sign their own name. If they are asked to sign their name, they will draw an x, or dip their finger in ink and stamp their finger print on the form. CAMs support through the school program provides, a subsidized teacher pay, books and materials, food for the students, and accountability through regular school inspections. Missions and organizations operate or fund some of the best schools in Haiti. The National schools seriously lack funding and corruption abounds. Most of the teachers in the National schools are not paid, or the pay is very irregular. Sometimes they will literally teach a year or more with no pay. They just live with the hope that times will get better, and somewhere down the road they will be paid. This is often the reason why there are schools who operate full skill protests and manifestations. The teachers don't get paid and go on strike, the students come to school, there are no teachers, books, or materials. Then things erupt! Often, they go out and block a main road. Recently there was a local National school that was responsible for blocking Route National #9, which is a main road close to Port au Prince. During the protest, the police responded to the scene, and in the ensuing tangle, there were a few of the students that were shot by the police. There are probably countless schools in Haiti where each classroom only has a set, or maybe a couple sets of books for the whole classroom full of students, and the teacher literally writes out the whole book on the blackboard. I have seen things like that with my own eyes. Each day that they have school, the teacher gets up and writes out the whole lesson on the blackboard as the students follow along making notes inside their notebooks. That is, if they are lucky enough to have notebooks and pencils. Often the chalk, notebooks, pencils, and crayons don't reach for all the students to have their own, so they have to break them in half and share them with their fellow students. Thankfully the CAM supported schools are better off due to the faithful support of a lot of different sponsors from the United States and Canada. Accountability in the school program is vital; most of the work that we do involves inspection and reports. We also work closely with the schools in teacher training and in trying to improve the quality of the education that the students receive.

No, life on the mission field hasn't been a bed of roses, it is often a struggle to know how to properly respond to situations etc. that come our way. Often there are so many pressing needs, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But I have found that God is always right there, waiting for me to cast my cares on him. There have been times where we felt that our lives were in extreme danger, like when the local gang was making all kinds of threats, and the times when the vehicle that I was driving got struck by rocks from angry protesters, but through it all, God has granted us safety from being physically hurt, and it is HE who has brought us through. Seeing the sparkle in children's eyes as they learn how to read and write, watching the teachers as they do their work, and seeing the radiating joy on the faces of people as they recommit their life, and accept Jesus as their Savior, has been well worth it! I have learned that every day is a blessing from God, and a brand-new opportunity.

Changes are often something that I resist. Isn't it nice to get in a rut and do things the same as you always did them? Often change has a certain amount of pain that comes along with it, at least for a while, until you are able to find a new normal. For the time being, I am planning to terminate from the work here in Haiti, on March 22, 2019. No doubt it will be extremely hard for me to leave all the good friends that I have made here in Haiti, but I feel that it is the right thing to do. God has work for me in other places for now. Please keep me in your prayers as I seek God's will and plan for my life.

The Library

One of the hardest things for me to leave behind when going to Haiti, was the library. I had spent a lot of time and effort in helping to start the library, and it was still a very new project when I felt God calling me to a term of service on the mission field. Thankfully by God's grace, through your support, and the help of family and friends it was able to continue functioning. The library has long outgrown the small room where it is. This spring after I return, we are planning to do some remodeling and expand the library into part of the shop area. Please pray for us as we plan to do this. It looks like a big project, especially as we operate on a small budget, and are in need of funds in order to be able to do this. If you feel led to help us out in this way, you can note it on the reply card that is included with the letter.

Once again, we want to thank you for your support! It is greatly appreciated! Whether it was volunteering your time to help in the library, borrowing books, donating books, giving donations, or simply praying for us. Whatever it may have been, Thank you very much! May God bless you richly, without your support we could not continue to operate a Christian Library for the local community.

We know that the world is changing rapidly, many so called Christians and churches are compromising and going against the Bible and the commandments of Jesus Christ. Satan is out to destroy us. He doesn't care by what fashion or measure it can be done. He has been the great deceiver from the beginning. Now is the time more than ever to stand up for what is right, and to be rooted and grounded on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. By God's grace we will continue to offer books and materials that are Biblically sound. We are very concerned about what we offer in the library. That is why you cannot find books in our library that are written by many of the liberal contemporary Christian authors and philosophers of our day.

May God bless you as you continue to serve him!

Sincerely,
Samuel Stoltzfus,
For Stoltzfus Christian Library

P. S. We are again enclosing a contribution reply card and envelope for those of you who want to help with keeping the library in operation. Please place a checkmark on the appropriate box stating what you want your donation to help for, and please specify whether or not you would like to receive a tax-deductible receipt. If you are considering a year-end tax-deductible donation, it must be postmarked in 2018. Stoltzfus Christian Library is funded by your donation. Thank you, and may God bless you!

FEATURE FOR THE LIBRARY

We now have a computer system that uses barcodes to check out your books and materials. It is best to bring your library card with the barcode on it in order to check out. If you still haven't gotten your new card, or if you need a replacement, please let us know, we will be happy to help you out with that.

You will be able to continue renewing your books when you are at the library, but for your convenience, we now have a call-in voice mail line for the library, to renew your books. If you want to use this new option, call phone # **(717) 874-0517** you only need to give your name and phone number when renewing books. Note that we will renew your books for two weeks at a time, and allow a maximum of two renewals. You will not be allowed to have your library books for more than six weeks until they have to be returned. We will start charging overdue fees on books that you have for more than six weeks even if you have been renewing them. If you want to speak to someone in person call the regular library phone # (717) 672-1587

NOTICE:

It is our desire as a Christian library to provide quality books and information that are Biblically sound. We do screen our books, however, with the overwhelming amount of books available it is not possible for us to read every one. If you find something that is questionable please bring it to our attention and we will be happy to investigate.

Also, there are some books that are available, that are good, and are written by Christian authors, but are intended to be read by older teenagers or adults. It is still the responsibility of parents to know what your children are reading.

Please tell us how we can improve, if you like this library tell others, but if you don't, let us know. If you have a great book suggestion, or ways that we can improve etc. simply write it on a piece of paper and drop it in the donation box.

We do accept and appreciate book donations, but please donate only books that are of good quality and can be read for many years to come. Please leave your name and telephone number in case for some reason, we can contact you if they do not meet our standard. If they do not meet our standard, and no name and phone number is left, we will donate them to a local thrift store or dispose of them as we see fit. Thank You! Your continued support is what helps make this library possible!

MISSION STATEMENT

It is our desire to provide good quality, Biblically sound information, and literature. That God would use the information that we provide to his Honor and Glory. That many souls would be drawn to God, and come to salvation through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Books and materials that are borrowed from the library will be due to be returned on or within two weeks of the day that they were borrowed, unless otherwise marked on the books/materials. We accept renewals by email and voice mail, call # (717) 874-0517. Also, you can continue renewing books/materials in person at the library. Each renewal will add two weeks of time to your books/materials. You cannot renew books/materials for more than two times, or have books/materials for more than six weeks total at one time. It is up to the cardholder to keep track of the due date. Thank You, for your cooperation and support. If reasonable, Stoltzfus Christian Library has the right to revoke the validity of your library card at any time, without prior notice.

LATE FEES

Late fees for books/materials are 20¢ per day with a maximum fee of \$5.00 per item.

\$1 per day for all sets of CD's with a maximum of \$5 per item. If it is a single CD it qualifies for the 20¢ per day books/materials fee.

OVERDUE NOTICES

First Notice at 2 Weeks

The first overdue notice will be sent to the most recent address listed in the library records for the patron account when the item is 2 weeks overdue. The notice will include a list of overdue books/materials.

Failure to return the items listed in this notice within 10 days of the date of this notice will result in a suspension of a cardholder's Stoltzfus Christian Library borrowing privileges until the account is cleared.

Failure to return these items within 4 weeks after the original due date will result in a charge to the cardholder's account for the replacement cost of the materials.

Second Notice: Bill for replacement at 4 weeks

The second notice is sent when the item is 4 weeks overdue. This is a bill for the replacement of the books. If the billed items are found, you need only pay the late fees.

LOST AND DAMAGED ITEMS

Lost item charges equal the price of the item. It is your responsibility to contact the library to arrange for the payment of late fees. Feel free to contact us with any questions you may have about your account.

ENFORCEMENT OF LATE FEES

Library patrons of the parents of the juvenile library patron are expected to return library materials promptly and to pay any late fees incurred.

If an item is more than 14 days overdue, borrowing privileges are suspended until the materials are returned and the late fees are paid. Late fees must be paid and overdue materials returned before suspended borrowing privileges are restored.