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Sonlight Ministries

Port-de-Paix, Haiti

Fall 2002

Equipping others for service

The methodical transfer of ministry

Sonlight missionary Amber Alexander hopes to work herself out of a job.

She explains in saying, “A passage in Ephesians says that the work of a pastor is to train and equip people for works of service, and I think that’s how we missionaries see ourselves. We’re not in Haiti just to teach people the Bible. We’re not planning on being here in this capacity forever. We have to train Haitians to do ministry themselves, because they will be the most effective ministers to their own people.”

This philosophy is the foundation for Sonlight’s work in Haiti. It is succeeding in the women’s Sunday school class at Sonlight Church. Amber started the class in 1998 to encourage women in the community to study the Bible and participate in church activities. She invited Anadette Preval to co-teach the new class.

“I decided from the beginning that I wanted to have a Haitian work alongside me,” says Amber. “I chose Anadette because she was already a strong Christian who was walking in the Lord.”

The first year, Amber taught three-fourths of the lessons, and Anadette taught only once a month. As each year passed, Anadette taught more often. Now, five years later, she bears most of the teaching responsibility. Anadette teaches three lessons for every one that Amber teaches. In addition, another Haitian woman joined the teacher team this fall. Like Anadette, Mme. Hudson is starting out slowly, only teaching one lesson every five weeks.

The women work together closely, choosing topics and writing lessons plans.

“If I have questions as I’m reading through the Bible,” says Anadette, “I go see Miss Amber and ask her to help me. As a teacher, I want to give the right answers to my class.”



WORKING TOGETHER: Anadette Preval (left) and Amber Alexander (right) prepare lesson plans for their women’s Sunday school class.

According to Amber, Anadette’s teaching ability has grown tremendously over the past five years. She recalls an especially good lesson that Anadette taught about the tower of Babel.

“She really laid it out. She said, ‘We in Haiti have not learned our lesson about the tower of Babel. We’re building our own tower, a tower to Voodoo. Everyday we’re building it up thinking that we can have the same power that God has. Don’t you see how bad conditions are? Our political system is unstable. Our infrastructure is nonexistent. Everyone tries to blame it on the government, but when are people going to realize that it’s because of Voodoo?’”

“People were just staring at her,” Amber remembers. “But then someone said a loud ‘Amen,’ and others joined in saying, ‘Yes, Sister Anadette, we hear you.’”

Anadette feels blessed by her position.

“I feel happy, I feel good about Jesus favoring me by letting me teach Bible lessons to the

women.”

The weekly class has had an impact on the participants as well. Because the women are intent on inviting others to church, their Sunday school class has grown from five women to approximately 30. The class members have also started a women’s prayer meeting every Wednesday at 5 a.m.

“I see a spiritual maturity developing in the women,” Amber explains. “They think, and rightly so, that it is a sin to see an opportunity to serve and not do so. Last year, they formed four teams to help with our children’s Sunday school and worship programs. They want to serve the church.”

So, what does the future hold for this class? Amber’s answer: “I really hope to someday only be a student in the class. I want the women to own it, to take charge of it, to really see it as their mission or ministry to the women in the community.”

FINANCIAL UPDATE

by *Early Smith, Sonlight accountant*

In Matthew Chapter 25, the parable of the talents, Jesus instructs us about using our talents, resources and abilities wisely. In this parable, the servant who multiplied the money left in his care two-fold was commended by his master for being “faithful with a few things,” and he was to “come and share your master’s happiness.”

Sonlight wants to make our supporters aware of a method by which they can be “good and faithful servants” of the master’s blessings.

Sonlight is responsible for all costs associated with the education of its students attending college in the United States. We presently have a student, Christiano Louis, attending the University of Evansville (UE). This university has created a Haiti Scholarship by which Sonlight supporters are able to send funds directly to UE, and they will be awarded to our students from Haiti.

This is significant, because it allows those who work at a company which has a matching gifts program to double or triple their gifts to Sonlight by giving directly to UE. Therefore, we are asking you, our supporters, to check with your employers to see if this valuable means of “multiplying your talents” is available.

Also, if you live in the state of Indiana, you and your spouse are able to take a 50% tax credit (\$250 maximum) for donations to colleges located within the state of Indiana.

Here is one possible scenario: You give \$400 to UE’s Haiti Scholarship. Your company has a possible double match of \$800 if limits allow. Therefore, Sonlight receives credit for \$1200 at UE, and it only requires a \$400 donation. Also, if you live in Indiana, you may be eligible for a \$200 tax credit, so your \$400 donation only costs \$200. Sonlight receives \$1200 in benefits and it only costs you \$200!

UE has asked me to coordinate all support. So, if you’re interested in this program, please contact me at 812-401-6531, agapefda@aol.com, or Sonlight Ministries, P.O. Box 8031, Evansville, IN 47716. I will be happy to provide more information and answer your questions.

Welcoming our new staff members



Left: Roger and Candi Durbin with their daughter, Brooke. Top Center: Tom Wimpelberg. Bottom Center: Eric Marshall. Right: Ben and Becky West.

“Good-bye, and thank you!!”

A Message from Norma Alexander

When six adults and two children packed their bags and belongings in May and said good-bye, a piece of my heart seemed to be attached to them. They left amidst many tears and much love. They left behind much knowledge, wisdom and care. They touched lives that no one else would have. They cared about unloved people. They left a combined sixteen years of influence in Haiti.

Scott came to Haiti in 1993 during a teacher shortage. Lindsay came to Haiti in 1998 to visit. She came to live in Haiti in 1999. She and Scott became friends, and in August 2001, they joined forces to become Mr. and Mrs. Scott Alexander. I was happy indeed. They left Haiti to minister in the city of Elgin, Ill. Those people are indeed blessed by God! Thank you Scott for nine years of your life that you gave so generously to God by working in Port-de-Paix, Haiti. Third-grade will never be the same! To Lindsay, who came here to live and love with all her heart: I miss you and love you.

To Eldon and Kathey Cook: you made an indelible mark that will not be erased. Eldon, your teaching of Hebrews to the high school Bible class was like etching God’s word on lots of young hearts. Kathey, first-graders need so much love, besides learning to read, write and do arithmetic. You are loved. Thank you. Oh yes, and Carina,

your lovely smile and disposition are missed. Little Gabe, Mummy has no one to nap with now. Gabe turned three in July and is sorely missed in preschool. The lady at the corner from whom he “bought” marinade misses him, too.

Andy Mellang, flag raising is just not the same as when you played your clarinet so faithfully every morning at pledge. Seventh-grade (eighth-grade this year) doesn’t go up the stairs quite as straight as last year. Thank you for teaching. Clarissa Miller, you were a great teacher who managed a whole room full of fourth-graders and did a wonderful job of teaching at the same time. Andy and Clarissa moved back to Fort Wayne, Ind., and they too joined forces in July and became Mr. and Mrs. Andy Mellang. Congratulations and best wishes from your “Haitian friends”!

Sandy Roberts left Sonlight and fifth-grade, but she will still be working in Haiti. Thank you Sandy for service rendered.

I can empathize with Egypt’s pharaoh when the Israelites left. I’m sure he was thinking, “WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?” But please know that we did not take chase of those leaving for other ministries.

God has put together another team who is tugging on my heartstrings. Already I LOVE the new teachers. Isn’t God good?!

ADJUSTING TO LIFE IN HAITI

BY CANDI DURBIN, FIRST-YEAR MISSIONARY

Getting settled into a new home in a different culture is pretty amazing. Everyday you learn something new. For our family, this has been quite an adventure. My husband Roger and I, along with our 12-year-old daughter Brooke, came to Sonlight last February on a short-term trip. After much prayer, we decided to come back to work here for two years. So we packed and shipped, stored or sold all of our belongings.

It was strange to leave our home in East Sparta, Ohio. We were sad to leave our friends and family. Toughest of all was saying goodbye to our grown daughters and our one- and two-year-old grandsons. We wonder if they will recognize us when we return. On the other hand, we were very excited to begin our

new ministry in Haiti.

We arrived in Haiti in August. Almost instantly we felt a kinship with the rest of the staff. With old and new staff members combined, it already feels like a big family just a few months into the semester.

It's surprising how quickly we've adjusted to the small inconveniences. Sometimes there is no water or power when you need them. There isn't a phone. There's slow e-mail and slower regular mail. But instead of being annoyed when those things don't work, we just really appreciate them when they do.

For me, the biggest surprise has been that the things I expected to be difficult seem easy, and what I thought would be easy is a challenge. I really anticipated that, of the three

"I know that God has entrusted them to me, and so I will try harder everyday to be everything that they need in a teacher."

of us, I would be the one who would most easily adapt to our new home and circumstances. I felt that teaching would be six hours a day of pure fun. Brooke would probably

have a tough time getting into the swing, and Roger would have the hardest time of all. After all, he has to go out into the community and get supplies without speaking the language. How frustrating it must

be to not have all the right tools and supplies to fix everything. Boy was I wrong!

Brooke is doing great, and Roger seems like he's lived in Haiti for years. I am the one who is having the toughest time. Last year I had five multi-handicapped high school students in my class. Now, my twenty-five active third-graders are taking some adjustment. But they are so beautiful and so excited to learn. I know that God has entrusted them to me, and so I will try harder everyday to be everything that they need in a teacher. Every time I hear them sing or see them smile, I remember why I am here. I thank God for the opportunity he has given to our family.

I for one feel totally blessed to serve at Sonlight!

FIVE ELECTED TO SONLIGHT'S BOARD

At Sonlight Ministries' annual board meeting, held on August 18, five new members were selected for Sonlight's Board of Directors. They are: Dr. Greg Brown, a school principal from Evansville, Ind.; Dr. Dave Huber, an Evansville dentist; Randall K. Craig, an Evansville attorney; Brad Weaver, a music minister from Coral Gables, Fla.; and Carmen Alexander, director of Sonlight Academy in Port-de-Paix, Haiti.

These newcomers join existing board members Scott Alexander, Deb Orr, Ward Patterson, Farley Smith and Board President Roger Alexander.

Created in 1989, Sonlight's Board has the challenge of setting policies for ministry operations and fostering financial resources. The members also provide accountability, wisdom and leadership for Sonlight's staff.

"I was glad to be asked to serve," says Randall K. Craig. "My wife, Becky, and I have always had a keen interest in Sonlight Ministries and have supported the organization financially for several years."

Dr. Greg Brown sees his role as supporting the staff at Sonlight Academy. He says, "I hope to be able to visit Haiti regularly for teacher observations and inservice. This will also allow me to serve as a state-side source for curriculum and other educational materials."

"We are thrilled to welcome these new members and are grateful that they are willing to devote their time and talents to assist our ministry in Haiti," says Scott Alexander, board member for nine years. "We also want to thank our friends Marlon Jordan and Red Huber for their many years of service to God, Sonlight Ministries and the Haitian people."

CALENDAR	CALENDAR	CALENDAR
November 18	Combat de Vertieres (Haitian Holiday)	
November 28 - 29	Thanksgiving Break	
December 12	Sonlight Christmas Program	
December 14 - January 5	Christmas Break	
March 3 - 7	Mardi Gras Break	
April 18 - 25	Easter Break	
May 1	Labor Day	
May 25	Graduation Ceremony	
May 29	Last Day of Classes	
June 2	Teachers return to the U.S.	

God's Plan

by Carmen Alexander, Director of Sonlight Academy

When I first heard that my four college-bound students had been denied U.S. student visas, my devastation was matched only by their own. The denial was based on their families not having sufficient financial stability to cause them to want to return to Haiti after finishing college.

Now, weeks later, I can see a different plan, God's plan, unfolding more perfectly. The three girls – Youvika Pierre, Marie Ange Mezidor and Marie Lourdes Monpreville – are living in Port-de-Paix and working at Sonlight Academy. Youvika is teaching two high school French classes and working in the business office. Marie Ange is co-teaching my fourth-grade class. Marie Lourdes is working as a tutor; she is planning lessons and working with small groups of students who need additional help.

We have produced Christian workers for this nation – a thought that gives us, as missionaries, a huge sense of accomplishment, and gives them, as young, impressionable adults, a chance to serve with their own people in their own country. I couldn't be more thrilled with both their work ethics and with the Christian examples they

are to our younger students. I am so proud of them!

I still haven't given up hope of them studying in the U.S. next fall. But, I realize now that God is using this "setback" as a means for them to give back to Haiti and Sonlight.

Kenny Pierre is in the process of reapplying for a student visa to begin attending the University of Evansville in January 2003. The Consul General has agreed to review his case. Kenny plans to study computer science.

Two of our graduates did receive U.S. student visas and are currently attending college. Christiano Louis is studying business at the University of Evansville. He is playing intramural basketball and is involved with the church and campus ministry. He loves college! Mafungu Nzunga, our transplant from the Congo, is working towards a journalism degree at Judson College in Elgin, Ill. We are excited for Christiano and Mafungu, our college freshmen.

Please pray for our young graduates. May they always walk in assurance of God's grace.

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