



RCA Global Mission

2020 Year in Review



Tom Johnson – Pella, Iowa, and Haiti

This year, one of our main goals from this last year was expanding the number of chaplains in Haiti by two—which we did, but not until the COVID-19 situation in Haiti improved significantly. I worked with the Many Hands for Haiti (MH4H) team in Pignon, Haiti, to design the interview process, which resulted in the selection of two very good candidates.

We had also hoped to hold at least six in-person trainings in Haiti in 2020, but that didn't happen because of travel restrictions and uncertainty related to COVID-19.

Blessings of 2020

In March 2020, I learned about a training in Cap-Haïtien for Bible storytelling for oral learners. Since close to 80 percent of the Haitians in MH4H's service area are functionally illiterate, this seemed like an ideal opportunity to obtain new ministry skills. Our Haitian chaplains quickly grasped the concepts and realized that the Bible has long been taught through oral means to people who didn't. The week after the training, some of the chaplains were already using the techniques they learned to teach adult Sunday school in their communities.

After first introducing solar-powered audio Bibles into our Haitian communities, they are growing more popular and are now in high demand, according to our chaplains. Since many Haitians own neither radios nor cellphones, these Bibles are often among the first audio devices in a home and, as a result, are greatly used and appreciated. Additionally, it is common for the owners of the audio Bibles to play them outside so their neighbors can hear them, too.

Our trainings have emphasized the importance of covenants and recognizing that the enemy counterfeits every good thing God does. Therefore, in Haiti, we have to realize that many practitioners of voodoo are in unholy covenants and before Haitians can experience the blessings of being in the new covenant of Christ's blood, they must renounce their



The new chaplains



Tom and the three chaplains were trained in Orality Bible storytelling techniques to minister to non-literate people.



Tom and the chaplains meet representatives from Child Evangelism Fellowship in Haiti to discuss their materials for reaching children for Christ.

former alliances and practices and break-off all agreements with the evil one.

Challenges of 2020

Like most ministries, COVID-19 was the unexpected challenge for 2020. The Haitian government wouldn't allow more than five people to gather between April and July, which shut down most outreach efforts. However, for those who already possessed the audio Bibles, they were able to spend a great deal of time listening to God's Word.

As a result of COVID-19, I was unable to make more than two trips to Haiti this year, as the country was closed to international travel for five months. However, the uncertainty of making a trip to Haiti means that we experimented with other content delivery systems. We found that if I sent training presentations by email, it worked out fine if I then presented them over the phone (since video conferencing isn't an option).

Learnings from 2020

One of the realities we learned at our literacy training this year was the surprising number of Westerners who are, for practical purposes, functionally illiterate, since they do almost no writing and seldom read anything longer than a few paragraphs at a time. For many, their SMS texts on their phones might be the most reading they do on a given day. This has implications for helping North American believers grow in their knowledge of Scripture. While we often encourage people to read the Bible, perhaps we should also help people be IN the Word through audio or video recordings. Everyone who has a cellphone should be able to listen to an audio Bible.

Hopes for 2021

An Islamic mosque and school opened in the Pignon community in 2020, and the Haitian pastors are very concerned because they have so little exposure to Islam. They've asked me to help them understand more of that faith and what they can do to prepare their churches on how to best engage with Muslims.

I'm eligible for a short sabbatical in 2021 and I'm in discussions on what would be some possible uses of this time.

How We Can Pray

Please pray for the subjects of future trainings and for the logistics of going to Haiti as COVID-19 is still affecting travel, and the political situation threatens to flare up again as Haiti faces another presidential election.

Pray for our family, as Aichatou goes in and out of hospitals for mental illness and expresses no interest in rejoining us.

Serving together,

Tom Johnson



The Seedplayer is a "printed" mp3 player that we're testing in Haiti. This wouldn't be the right technology to listen to the entire Bible, but it would be ideal for recorded series on discipleship or Christian marriage.



Tom, Marie, Laurey, Ellie, and Thekla on Christmas Day 2020.