



## Top Stories

### Clinton residents attend pastor's seminar in Haiti

Print Page

By **Jamie Burns**

For [www.clintonchronicle.com](http://www.clintonchronicle.com)

Published: Monday, January 3, 2011 12:19 PM EST

In early 2010, an earthquake struck Haiti, destroying thousands of homes and resulting in countless deaths and injuries. Nearly a year later, some Haitians are ready to give back to those who helped them overcome the disaster.

"Something I found pretty amazing is that it's the goal of Mission Possible (a Christian ministry founded to introduce Christianity to Haitians) to send out a Haitian missionary, perhaps to one of the Francophone countries in Africa," said Danny Smith of Clinton, who recently attended a pastor's seminar in Haiti. "For people who have practically nothing, it's neat to see them concerned with spreading the gospel to those who need to hear it in other parts of the world."



OLYMPUS DIGITAL CAMERA

Haitian pastor Herve Pierre, who worked with Rev. Herb Codington of Bethany Presbyterian Church in Clinton to organize the event, said it was time for the country to give back, according to Smith.

"About this, Pastor Herve said 'For a long time, Haiti has only received things from other countries. It's time to send out,'" he said.

While attending the pastor's seminar, during which classes were taught on biblical roots, biblical mapping, archaeology and global church, Smith said he witnessed the eagerness of Haitians to learn more about Christianity and to give back to other countries.

"The small room was packed and overflowed out of the side entrance each night," he said. "Many were learning about maps, especially biblical maps, for the first time. They also learned about and were inspired by stories about the suffering and lack of religious freedom in countries such as North Korea."

Smith, a Thornwell employee, said the reason he was initially interested in the trip to Haiti was to check on a school in La Hatte, an area of Haiti affected by the earthquake, which is supported by Thornwell.

"I had gone to Haiti in 2002 with a youth group on a short-term mission trip, and I talked to Herb and told him I'd like to go down there and get involved in anyway I could if it was possible," he said. "But Thornwell has been involved and supports the school in La Hatte, so my interest was to go see that and report to back to them on its condition."

Due to political unrest, Smith said he was unable to enter the area of Haiti where the school is located, but he said the trip wound up serving another purpose.

"Part of the reason we were there, and one of the things I was hoping to get out of going, is to get the word out," he said.

Smith, who has seen the aftermath of the earthquake firsthand, said the trip also provided a glimpse of hope for some Haitians where it did not exist before.

"The main difference I saw between Haiti in 2002 and the current situation, besides the hillsides completely covered in tents full of displaced earthquake survivors, is that a lot of optimism is gone," he said. "When I was there in 2002, I was struck by people's sense of hope, despite struggling daily for even the most basic needs. A year after the earthquake, as they see little to no permanent improvement, I'm afraid frustration is starting to take over."

After speaking with Haitians during his most recent visit, Smith said he hopes to be able to spread the word about the Haitians' needs, and help others to understand that Haitians also want to give back.

"They are so used to taking things, and they want to help others too," he said.

Smith said he spoke with other local people, such as Dick Sweetenburg of Clinton First Presbyterian Church, who support Mission Possible and other missions in Haiti hope to get more Clinton residents involved once political unrest subsides.

Copyright © 2011 - The Clinton Chronicle

[\[x\] Close Window](#)