

**Aristide seeks release of political prisoners**

**Ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide spoke out on the detention of Roman Catholic priest and former Miami activist Gérard Jean-Juste.**

**Sept. 2, 2005**

**BY JACQUELINE CHARLES**

**Miami Herald**

Former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is calling for the release of all jailed members of his Lavalas Family Party, including former Miami activist the Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste.

"He must be freed. All the political prisoners must be freed," Aristide said in a statement released by members of his Lavalas Family Party via e-mail.

Aristide, living in exile in South Africa following his February 2004 ouster in the face of a rebellion, made no mention of whether Jean-Juste should run for president in Haiti's upcoming Nov. 6 presidential elections. Jean-Juste was recently quoted as saying he would consider a run -- but only with Aristide's blessing.

The founder of Miami's Haitian Refugee Center, Jean-Juste was arrested in Port-au-Prince on July 21 in the investigation of the slaying of a prominent Haitian journalist.

He was the only individual mentioned by name in Aristide's one-page statement. Yvon Neptune, Aristide's former prime minister, is still being held nearly 15 months after he was arrested on charges he orchestrated a massacre of political opponents. Haitian prosecutors have not said publicly what evidence they have against Jean-Juste or Neptune.

Aristide supporters accuse Haiti's interim government of jailing hundreds -- though Aristide says in his statement there are thousands -- of Lavalas members without formal charges.

"[Jean-Juste's] unlawful detention, alongside the unlawful detention of thousands of political prisoners in Haiti, demonstrates a clear determination to exclude Lavalas or the huge majority of Haitian people from participating in free, fair and democratic elections," Aristide said. In order for Haiti to have free, fair and democratic elections -- and not a selection -- Aristide said all Lavalas members who are in jail and in exile must be free to return home, there must be a "national dialogue" in Haiti and an end to repression.

Aristide supporters claim they are the target of much of the violence and killings that have swept Haiti in the past year. Opponents complain that they are being targeted by pro-Aristide armed gangs.

"Father Jean-Juste too has echoed this call for dialogue and peace," Aristide said. "Dialogue leading to peace through the restoration of constitutional order - this is the will of the Haitian people. After 200 years of independence it is clear that from this dialogue will emerge a new Haiti."

## **Alleged attacks by police, gangs investigated in Haiti**

**U.N. Civilian Police and human rights officials are investigating three alleged attacks by police in Haiti, including a massacre in front of spectators at a soccer match.**

**By Joe Mozingo**

**Miami Herald**

**Sept. 1, 2005**

PORT-AU-PRINCE - The police carried assault rifles and wore black masks. The gang they accompanied had brand-new machetes. According to witnesses and U.N. investigators, they stormed into a soccer match during halftime, ordered everyone to lie on the ground and began shooting and hacking people to death in broad daylight as several thousand spectators fled for their lives.

The Aug. 20 attack left at least six dead and has raised fears among U.N. officials trying to stabilize this lawless city that bands of police -- working with gangs and guided by some unknown player in Haitian politics -- are "cleaning up" before November's elections.

"This has been the case in almost every election cycle," said Damien Onses-Cardona, a spokesman for the United Nations' peacekeeping force. "We are very alert because we know the history of this kind of violence in this country."

Haiti's new police chief, Mario Andresol, said this week that several officers were being questioned about the killings and would likely be arrested, according to The Associated Press.

### **MOUNTING CRITICISM**

Historically, Haitian governments have done little to punish human rights abusers in their ranks. And the current U.S.-backed government -- which replaced that of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide when he was ousted last year -- has drawn mounting criticism from international organizations, diplomats, even the U.S. ambassador for failing to stop the summary arrests and worse of Aristide supporters.

In the capital's vast slums, where support for Aristide's Lavalas Family Party is strongest, residents complain that police in black masks regularly execute young men. But since the alleged attacks usually occur at night in places also terrorized by heavily armed gangs -- often pro-Lavalas ones -- it has been difficult to separate fact from fiction.

Now, U.N. Civilian Police and a U.N. human rights team are investigating at least three alleged attacks by police.

On Aug. 10, black-masked police and machete-wielding thugs attacked a gang member named Shaba in the neighborhood of Bel Air, killing him and at least two others and burning their bodies, U.N. officials said. And on Sunday, a similar police-backed mob torched five homes in the Grand Ravine neighborhood, the officials said.

But the attack on the soccer match in Martissant, caught on videotape and broadcast by a local TV station, was the most brazen, providing the biggest piece of evidence yet for allegations of police brutality under the current government.

#### WITNESSES' ACCOUNT

An estimated 5,000 people attended the soccer game, which was sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development to promote peace in the crime-plagued neighborhood. One witness, Fontaine Lenaud, said more than a dozen police trucks filled with anti-riot officers surrounded the stadium around 5:30 p.m., just as the second half was set to begin.

"At first people seemed to be happy," said Thierry Fagart, chief of the Human Rights Section of the U.N. mission in Haiti, who viewed the tape and interviewed witnesses. "And then you hear one gunshot. You see police ordering people to lie down. People were running."

Lenaud, like everyone else, tried frantically to escape.

"People were jumping over walls trying to get out," he said. "With my own eyes I saw six or seven bodies."

Witnesses told Fagart that police distributed machetes to local gang members, who pointed out rivals from a pro-Lavalas gang at the match.

Some were handcuffed and shot in the head by police, witnesses said. Others were hacked to death.

"All the executions were outside the stadium," Fagart said. "Some were hit by machetes and then finished off with a shot to the head."

Fagart estimated that at least nine people died, but added that investigators were unable to confirm this because bodies are often dumped in the hills outside the city.

Andresol, the police chief, told the AP that six people were killed. He said an investigation determined the only people at the scene with guns were the police, "so we know police did the shooting."

He did not say how many officers were involved.

U.N. Civilian Police, in Haiti to train the national police force, are investigating the origin of the machetes to determine who may have orchestrated the attack.

## **Haitians 'killed in police raid'**

**BBC News**

**Sept. 2, 2005**

Haiti has been ravaged by poverty and violence

At least nine people were killed in the presence of police in a raid during a football match in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, a UN probe has found.

The head of the UN mission said the killings were committed last month by a group of people, some of whom were wearing Haitian police uniforms.

He said the incident was unacceptable and that the UN would work with the Haitian police to end such crimes.

Several officers are being questioned about their possible involvement.

'Unacceptable'

The football stadium killings, by machete and firearms, took place in Martissant, a poor area of the city, on 20 August.

Witnesses said the people conducting the raid had been looking for supporters of the ousted President, Jean Bertrand Aristide.

"These planned and targeted murders were committed by a group of people dressed in the clothes of the Haitian police and by civilians in the presence of police officers," Juan Gabriel Valdes, head of the UN mission in Haiti, said.

"This was a horrible and unacceptable incident, from which we must take all the lessons."

Gang warfare

Mr Valdes added that the UN would work with the interim government and the police to "put an end to all acts of lynching and all criminal acts perpetrated by police, by people like police or by common criminals who take justice in their own hands against their opponents".

Newly-appointed police chief Mario Andresol recently said he had received "reports of police summarily executing suspects".

Some officers, he says, are operating outside the law or using outside elements to go into slums considered too dangerous for police.

Haiti has been riven by gang warfare and political violence, especially in the Port-au-Prince, where supporters and opponents of the exiled Mr Aristide regularly fight bloody battles.

The unrest has disrupted the registration process for elections due in November.

**President Aristide's message of solidarity to Father Jean-Juste**  
**President Jean-Bertrand Aristide**  
**August 31, 2005**  
**Haiti Action Committee**

Pretoria, South Africa – After more than a month in jail, the health of Rev. Fr. Gérard Jean Juste is deteriorating. Once again I join my voice to the voices of many calling for his release. His unlawful detention, alongside the unlawful detention of thousands of political prisoners in Haiti, demonstrates a clear determination to exclude Lavalas, or the huge majority of Haitian people, from participating in free, fair and democratic elections.

Again we must ask: In 1994, who could have expected free, fair and democratic elections in South Africa with Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Oliver Tambo and other leaders and members of the African National Congress in jail, exile or in hiding?

In Haiti, in order to have elections and not a "selection", the following steps must be taken:

1. The thousands of Lavalas who are in jail and in exile must be free to return home.
2. The repression that has already killed over 10,000 people must end immediately.
3. Then, there must be national dialogue.

Fr. Jean Juste too has echoed this call for dialogue and peace. He must be freed.

All the political prisoners must be freed.

Dialogue leading to peace through the restoration of constitutional order - this is the will of the Haitian people. After 200 years of independence it is clear that from this dialogue will emerge a new Haiti.

**Protests, prayers for Haiti democracy**  
**Sept. 3, 2005**  
**Philadelphia Inquirer**

The American Friends Service Committee, House of Grace Catholic Worker, Brandywine Peace Community, and other activist groups are mounting several events next week to draw attention to the turmoil rampant in Haiti since a coup last year ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Next Saturday at 9 a.m., the Friends Meeting House at Fourth and Arch Streets will host a forum on Haiti featuring a panel of activists. The Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, a Catholic priest, activist and possible presidential candidate in Haiti, has been invited to speak at the forum. However, after being incarcerated and then freed in November, he has again been imprisoned in Haiti.

A demonstration at 4 p.m. Friday at City Hall will call for democracy and the freeing of political prisoners in Haiti. A Mass for Haiti will be said at 11 a.m. Sept. 11 at St. Malachy's Church, 11th and Master Streets.

Information: 610-543-8427.

**'Business of Believing'**

Rutgers University's Institute for Executive Leadership and Diversity has teamed with the National Black United Fund and South Jersey's Christian Chamber of Commerce in an initiative to help urban churches and faith groups work with small businesses to help revive struggling cities such as Camden.

The effort, called "The Business of Believing," will be unveiled 11 a.m. Wednesday at a luncheon and panel talk featuring Bishop T.D. Jakes of Dallas, the charismatic pastor and author. A forum will follow at 6:30 p.m.

Information: 732-748-8743 or [www.diversity.rutgers.edu](http://www.diversity.rutgers.edu).

**Back-to-school prayers**

This is the time of year when many churches hold back-to-school services to bless schoolchildren in their congregations. Mount Airy Church of God in Christ is expanding that custom to encompass any families in the East Oak Lane, West Oak Lane, and Ogontz areas of the city.

The church's pastor, Bishop Ernest Morris, president of Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity, is leading a special service at 5 p.m. tomorrow that will include anointing prayers for the students' safety and protection. The church is at 6401 Ogontz Ave. Information: 215-276-2960.

**Kanye West is my hero**  
**ZNet**  
**By Justin Felux**  
**Sept. 3, 2005**

"I hate the way they portray us in the media. You see a black family and they say we are looting, you see a white family and they say they are looking for food. And, you know, its been five days because most of the people ARE black ... We already realize a lot of the people that could help are at war right now, fighting another way. And now they've given them permission to go down and shoot us. George Bush doesn't care about black people."

- Kanye West, speaking to a nationally televised audience on NBC

"We've never seen anything like this before." I have heard this phrase repeated several times by newscasters describing the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. However, as I watched the footage of all those black bodies desperately trudging through dirty flood waters, I realized that I actually had seen something exactly like this before. It was one year ago, when Hurricane Jeanne slammed against the coasts of Haiti, a country which like New Orleans is both poor and black. The floods and mud slides ended up killing thousands of Haitians. The media gave scant attention to the matter for a few days; just long enough to get some sexy footage of houses being destroyed and valleys filled with floodwater. Enough to boost ratings for a while. Shortly after that, they packed up their equipment and got out of there faster than you can say "racist indifference."

The United States rendered so little aid as to be insignificant, and before long the entire incident had faded from the minds of most Americans. There were few cries of outrage over the fact that this country couldn't care less about the deaths of thousands of black people, but devotes countless hours of TV time to the latest Missing Pretty White Girl (I believe at the time it was Dru Sjodin, not Natalie Holloway). But people dying in Haiti is one thing. Americans have always found it easy to dismiss the deaths of those from other countries, especially when those countries are full of dark-skinned people. But who would think our government would allow something equally devastating to happen to people on our own soil -- to people who are full-fledged American citizens (in theory, anyway)?

Enter Kanye West. The future of hip hop. An artist who more than compensates for his less-than-stellar skills as an emcee with his razor-sharp wit and passion for justice and equality, not to mention his bravado. It's hard to imagine any rapper since Tupac Shakur having the guts to get brolic with the Commander-in-Chief on national TV. He will undoubtedly be savaged by detractors on the right and the left for "politicizing" a fundraiser to aid the victims of the flooding. However, I have little doubt that Kanye was saying exactly what most of the black residents of New Orleans are thinking right at this moment. As Kanye said on his last album, "Racism's still alive, they've just been concealin' it," but it's in times of crisis such as this one that America begins to show its true colors, and "black" isn't one of them.

The truth is, Kanye West didn't "politicize" a damn thing. George W. Bush did. The hurricane became a political issue the second Bush decided there were more important priorities than shoring up the preventive measures in New Orleans; such as giving tax cuts to billionaires and launching an evil, imperialist war against the people of Iraq. Hurricane Ivan made it abundantly clear that New Orleans

was unprepared to deal with such a catastrophe if one were to occur. If only Bush could be half the statesman Fidel Castro is. The Cuban government managed to evacuate over a million people, and didn't lose a single life to Hurricane Ivan.

In fact, I'd say Kanye was far too generous. Bush, as well as some of the other players in this affair, don't simply "not care about" black people. They have been proactive oppressors of African Americans for years. As Texas governor, Bush never met a death certificate he didn't like. As a result, he is personally responsible for the executions of numerous black men. Mississippi's governor Haley Barbour warned that all "looters" would be dealt with "ruthlessly." This is a man who has been linked to the Council of Conservative Citizens, a group started from the White Citizen's Councils of the civil rights era. These were groups committed to the preservation of Jim Crow and had intimate connections and overlapping membership with the Ku Klux Klan. And the New Orleans Police Department doesn't need a "shoot to kill" order from the governor to go about attacking black folks. New Orleans consistently ranks among the top cities in the number of citizen complaints of police brutality. Just last month, a black man named Raymond Robair died after the police brought him to the hospital. Witnesses observed the cops brutally beating him, leaving him with four broken ribs and a ruptured spleen.

But don't expect the mainstream media to tell you anything negative about the New Orleans Police Department. Their time will likely be devoted to unsubstantiated stories that play into popular white fears about blacks -- stories about wild, black savages engaging in theft, murder, rape, and even cannibalism. White folks will eat it up like candy, and the ratings will soar accordingly. In a time when we are being bombarded by so many images and statements which seem designed to bring out the worst in us, it's very refreshing to see someone like Kanye West step up and call a spade a spade. Let's make sure he still has a career to go back to after the dust settles. First and foremost we should donate money to the relief efforts, but it would also be a good idea cop Kanye's new album, *Late Registration*. It's a classic.

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**New commander leads Haiti force**  
**BBC News**  
**Sept. 1, 2005**

The UN's new Haiti commander faces a tough assignment

A new commander has taken over the UN's peacekeeping force in Haiti amid continued violence and unrest.

General Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar replaces fellow Brazilian General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro at the head of the 7,600-strong contingent.

The force has been struggling to quell violence in Haiti since President Jean Bertrand Aristide was deposed in 2004.

The unrest has disrupted the registration process for elections due in November.

The poll may have to be postponed because Haiti will not be ready in time, a report by the Brussels-based think tank International Crisis Group said last month.

Bloody battles

Haiti has been riven by gang warfare and political violence, especially in the capital Port-au-Prince, where supporters and opponents of the exiled Mr Aristide regularly fight bloody battles.

Gen Ribeiro was criticised for failing to quell the bloodshed, though he denies this is why he decided to step down early.

The UN has stepped up efforts to root out gang members, arresting nine suspects on Tuesday this week.

But in some cases the UN has become embroiled in bloody battles.

Witnesses say at least nine civilians were killed in crossfire when UN troops raided a shanty-town looking for gangsters in July.

The UN's head of peacekeeping has appealed for elite troops for the Haiti mission, to conduct such difficult and dangerous missions.

## **Coast Guard intercepts boat loaded with Haitians**

**A boat full of Haitian migrants with a woman who is about nine months' pregnant was intercepted by the Coast Guard.**

**BY WANDA J. DeMARZO**

**Miami Herald**

**Sept. 2, 2005**

The U.S. Coast Guard intercepted a boatload of Haitian migrants Thursday morning, little over a week after they snared another boat of Haitian migrants loaded with \$450,000 worth of hashish oil, authorities said.

The Coast Guard would not say where Thursday's migrant boat was stopped, and The Herald was unable to reach the U.S. Border Patrol, which has responsibility for returning them to Haiti.

The boat, carrying 21 migrants, was spotted before 11 a.m., by the Coast Guard Cutter Gannet, based in Fort Lauderdale.

### **PREGNANT MIGRANT**

As guardsmen transferred the migrants to the Gannet, a woman who is about nine months pregnant began complaining of pain. She was taken to the Fort Lauderdale Coast Guard Station, according to 7th District Petty Officer Dana Warr. Hollywood Fire Rescue rushed the woman to Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood. Her condition was not available Thursday.

If she delivers birth before being returned to Haiti, then by law, she will be allowed to stay in the U.S. with her child. However, it was not known yesterday how close she was to having her baby.

The other migrants will most likely be repatriated, said Zack Mann, senior special agent and spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Mann noted that the other boat that was stopped, on Aug. 24, was carrying more than just people.

### **HASHISH SMUGGLER**

The U.S. Customs officers intercepted the 23-foot boat just after midnight, about 9 miles off the coast of Haulover Beach in North Dade. Marine enforcement officers boarded the boat and found \$8,920 in U.S. currency and 90 pounds of hashish oil worth more than \$450,000.

Officers arrested Jose Rios, 32, believed to be the captain of the boat, at the scene.

They later discovered that the boat had been reported stolen from a local boat rental agency the day before.

All 13 migrants were turned over to the Coast Guard for repatriation. The narcotics, currency and Rios, whose last known address was in Fort Lauderdale, were turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Miami Office of Investigations. Rios has been charged with alien and drug smuggling.

Mann said it is very unusual to find Hashish contraband with migrants trying to enter the country by boat.

"It's very unusual. Most of it goes to Canada, but we do see it from time to time -- more often in cargo shipments out of Jamaica," he said.

**The UN in Haiti: Part of the problem, not the solution  
by the Haiti Information Project  
August 30, 2005**

Port-au-Prince, Haiti- When doing a news search of Haiti today, you will find two very different articles about soccer in Haiti.

An Associated Press dispatch headlined "Soldiers use soccer to win over Haitians" by Alfred de Montesquiou tells how U.N.-deployed Brazilian troops are playing soccer with residents in Bel Air to counteract fierce popular resistance to the Feb. 29, 2004 coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the ensuing foreign military occupation of Haiti.

Another article entitled "Massacre of football fans raises state terror fears," written by independent journalist Reed Lindsay, tells how a machete-wielding paramilitary death-squad and Haitian National Police (PNH), under the nose of U.N. forces, attacked spectators on Aug. 20 at a soccer match sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), killing at least eight. The discrepancy between these two news accounts goes to the very heart of the question: what is the U.N.'s role in Haiti?

Who's really in charge?

As reports continue to surface about the human rights hell that Haiti has become, any independent observer must ask how many massacres the Haitian police will commit under the tutelage of U.N. forces before the U.N. is held accountable? Are U.N. forces in charge of the PNH, as their mandate states, or do we simply accept their excuse of being unable to stem police violence against Aristide's supporters.

Why would you reward the perpetrators?

As HIP has reported, the Haitian police have gunned down unarmed Lavalas demonstrators on several occasions over the past year and even planted weapons on their victims' corpses. The police chief during these operations was Léon Charles, anointed by the US, accepted by the U.N. and forced upon the Haitian people. If anyone is responsible, Charles is.

So where is Charles today? He is the de facto government's Chief of Security and Arms Procurement at the Haitian Embassy in Washington D.C. with an annual salary of \$150,000. Charles was given this plum position despite allegations that he ran a scam to collect the salaries of phantom PNH employees to line his own pockets. He is also being rewarded for overseeing the massacre of Lavalas supporters during peaceful demonstrations.

And who pays Charles' salary in Washington? U.S., Canadian and European taxpayers, who provide their governments with "international donor money" collected under U.N. auspices to build "democracy" in Haiti. The U.N. would rather have Charles parked in a well-paid job in Washington than hold him accountable for killings, where he might reveal U.N. complicity.

The Bush "fix" is in

Another case of hypocrisy was recently provided by outgoing US Ambassador James B. Foley. He lamented the recent release of Louis Jodel Chamblain - convicted murderer and vice-president of the CIA-funded paramilitary death-squad, the Front for Advancement and Progress in Haiti (FRAPH). Foley failed to mention that his government continues to harbor the FRAPH leader Emmanuel "Toto" Constant somewhere in the New York metropolitan area. Since 1996, Constant has had political asylum in the U.S. If Foley really wants justice in Haiti, he should start by demanding that "Toto" Constant be deported to Haiti to be judged and jailed. Alligator tears are plentiful in Haiti today at the U.S. embassy and the U.N. mission. Sound bites replace reality as Lavalas supporters are slaughtered or made political prisoners.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration has entered its own candidate in the U.N.-run Haitian presidential elections scheduled for November. Texas-based businessman Dumarsais "Dumas" Siméus will have his campaign run by Rob Allyn, a Republican political consultant and hit-man for Bush's 2004 re-election campaign. Allyn falsely announced that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez had lost the referendum for his recall last year and was the architect of President Vicente Fox's 2000 election victory in Mexico.

### The Real Questions

How many massacres, like the one U.N. forces carried out on July 6 in Cité Soleil, must be committed before we acknowledge that their role in Haiti is far from altruistic? How many more political prisoners need to rot away in Haitian jails, as the U.N. continues to support and bolster the U.S.-installed regime of de facto Prime Minister Gérard Latortue? How many times has the U.N. called for investigations into human rights violations by the Haitian police only to have it lead nowhere as the slaughter of innocent Haitians continues? When will we admit that the U.N. mission itself is fundamentally corrupt?

The U.N. is responsible for creating the very environment that has given rise to the police state in Haiti. Some human rights organizations believe that the U.N. can play a positive role, if pressured to do so. They think that only the U.N. stands between the naked repression of the Haitian police and the majority of the population that continues to demand Aristide's return. But this thinking is naive and dangerous.

It is dangerous because it ultimately views the poor majority as powerless and serves the interests of those who wish to further take power and voice away from Haiti's poor. This is precisely the role being played by the U.N., whose fundamental goal is to legitimize last year's coup with sham elections this fall. The U.S.-installed Latortue regime would not stay in power for more than a week without the guns of the U.N. protecting it in the Presidential Palace. And the sham elections would not be possible either.

Objectively, the U.N. has proven time and again that it is enforcing Washington's coup agenda and is ultimately responsible for the human rights nightmare in Haiti today.

**From: Michael J. Kavanagh**  
**Subject: An Election Without Lavalas Is Not an Election**  
**Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2005, at 3:37 AM PT**  
**Slate Magazine**

Aristide: Evoking enmity and adoration

Gerard Latortue, the interim prime minister of Haiti, has a well-known fondness for tackling a problem by creating a commission. This bureaucratic proclivity would be almost funny if the country he led weren't flirting with civil war. With political violence spiraling out of control after former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's ouster, Prime Minister Latortue responded by creating a commission for national reconciliation. The commission's profile is so high that it took me almost two days of driving around Port-au-Prince until I could find anyone who had heard of it.

When I asked at the Presidential Palace if I could speak to Monsignor François Gaillot, the man who was supposed to be head of the commission, the woman at the main desk began to introduce me as François Gaillot to anyone she thought could help me. And when I finally found someone who knew Gaillot, I learned that he was on a one-month vacation and that the commission's name was actually the Preparatory Commission for a National Dialogue. To which I would add the adjective "secret." It's a shame, because if there's a place in need of reconciliation, dialogue, and healing, it's Haiti.

The international community believes new elections are the first step to reconciling and rebuilding Haiti. Haitians aren't so sure. Since 1990, Haiti has held three presidential elections. The first, in 1990, elected Aristide and ended in a coup within a year. The second, in 1995, elected a man, René Préval, who many considered a puppet of Aristide's. The third election, in 2000, which the opposition boycotted, again ended in Aristide's overthrow and then the current violence. In all cases, outside forces—particularly the United States—have played an outsized role. In sum, Haitians don't trust that democracy is the panacea that the international community insists it is.

Aware of the suspicion, the United States, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council insist they're doing everything they can to make registration, campaigning, and voting as open and fair as possible—thousands of observers will be flying into Haiti for the elections; the new registration cards are high-tech and difficult to falsify; the United Nations is even registering prisoners to vote, just in case they're released without being charged with a crime (more on this in tomorrow's dispatch). You hear the same word over and over from U.S. and U.N. officials in Haiti: "transparency."

But the real key to making these elections legitimate might be summed up in another word: Lavalas. Fanmi Lavalas is the party of former President Aristide and the only political party with significant grassroots support. The party is threatening to boycott the elections, which they've most recently termed "a masquerade." The truth is, the elections will be a masquerade if Lavalas doesn't participate.

Although Aristide is reviled by many, he's still the most popular politician in Haiti. The former priest remains the touchstone for all Haitian politics—political parties are divided into pro- and anti-Aristide camps. Instead of power being institutionalized, it's personalized. And, in the way that it is always difficult to define a negative, it's hard to see what unites the anti-Aristide camp besides their mutual

hatred for the former president. Right now, if Lavalas were to run, the elections would shape up to be Lavalas versus about a few dozen other candidates.

There is a Haitian cliché—"Tout moun vlé prézidan"—every Haitian wants to be president. And for good reason. Haiti is what the political scientists call a "predatory" or a "gatekeeper" state, where the path to power is a zero-sum game. Either you're inside the gate, and you've got everything, or you're a predator, locked outside with nothing. Haiti's leaders have never been good at sharing; Aristide was no different. When the opposition has little to lose (as is the case in impoverished Haiti), and the party in power has everything to lose, it's no surprise that violence becomes an option.

The hope was that, with a U.N. mission in place and an interim government charged with reconciling Haiti's warring factions and preparing it for new elections, a new mentality might develop. But there are few signs that the Latortue government has made the reconciliation of the Haitian people a priority.

Since the interim government took over, they've placed themselves squarely in the anti-Lavalas camp. Many Lavalas supporters are in prison, some have allegedly been murdered by police, and the party has no significant representation in the transitional government. To make matters worse, several powerful groups—including Haiti's "Council of Sages," a U.S.-backed advisory panel that appointed the interim government—have even recommended that Lavalas not be allowed to run in the elections at all. The international community (sagely) ignored that advice and continues to push for Lavalas participation.

It's hard to fully appreciate how much Aristide's enemies hate him. Aristide was often intransigent and uncompromising, and his gangs of armed thugs, the *chimères*, were often violent, repressive, and accused of trafficking drugs. Rather than the "cleansing flood" that Aristide's Lavalas movement promised, the former priest offered more of the same: corruption, violence, and cronyism. His inability to work with the opposition or the international community (which, to be fair, is also greatly to blame for the stalemate) proved devastating to the very poor that formed the backbone of Lavalas. As criticism of his government increased, so did repression. Aristide was not kind to his enemies.

But looking back on the last 18 months of Haiti's history, the international community might never forgive itself for not immediately moving to bring Lavalas back into the fold. The enmity of Aristide's opponents is matched only by the adoration of Aristide by the poor. "Titid," as he is fondly called, is the only one who speaks to them, the largest bloc of Haitian voters.

Under intense pressure from the international community, moderate Lavalas factions registered the party for the elections. The response from Lavalas hard-liners was fierce: "We forcefully denounce and condemn the behavior [of those moderate Lavalas members] who have neither the authority nor the mandate to make the decision to register the party for the elections," several Lavalas leaders wrote.

For a time, it looked like Fanmi Lavalas might split into factions. But last week, former Lavalas Sen. Gerald Gilles, who was among the moderates who registered the party, announced that Lavalas will run under one condition: if Father Gérard Jean-Juste is the candidate. Jean-Juste is a priest in the mold of Aristide—beloved by the poor but considered a demagogue by the elite. It was a surprising announcement from the moderate Gilles, who allegedly has close ties to U.S. officials in Haiti. Since February of 2004, Jean-Juste's main goal has been the return of Aristide.

If Jean-Juste runs, it will be clear that Fanmi Lavalas—hard-liners and moderates alike—do not have reconciliation on their minds. But neither does the interim government: For the last month, under dubious charges and without proof, Father Jean-Juste has been in prison.

Tomorrow: Haiti's prisons.

**The Growing Horror In Haiti**  
**By Karen Nakamura**  
**Coastal Post Online, Marin County, CA**  
**September 2005**

Since Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forcefully removed from office in February 2004, the delicate balance between life and death in Haiti has slipped into the negative. Never a peaceful place under any circumstances, (except for the few years of relative calm during Aristide's administration), the hemisphere's poorest country has been under a state of siege.

On July 21 of this year, things got so bad a well-known Catholic priest was pulled from the pulpit and arrested for the murder of the parishioner over who's funeral he was officiating. At the time of the murder Father Gerard Jean-Juste was in the US where he spoke numerous times on Pacifica Radio's Democracy Now and Flashpoint programs. As of this writing, Father Jean-Juste is still jailed and reported to be in bad health.

What is unusual about this unsavory affair is that the United Nations, France and the United States were involved in the overthrow of the democratically elected Aristide government and helped put a gang of known terrorists and assassins in power. These governments are currently facilitating the gunning down of members of Aristide's Lavalas Party simply for asking for their voice in a democracy. What brought this about tragic turn of events?

One of the accusations against Aristide was a failure to lift his country out of poverty. Rarely mentioned is that the Bush administration froze development assistance to Haiti when it came into office. Jeffrey Sachs stated in the Los Angeles Times in March of 2004, that this squeezed "Haiti's economy dry. US officials surely knew that the aid embargo would mean a crisis in the balance of payments, a rise in inflation, and a collapse of living standards, all of which fed the rebellion." He went on to point out that "some of the players in the current round are familiar from the previous Bush administration... Key is US Assistant Secretary of State Roger Noriega - a longtime Aristide-basher - widely thought to have been central to the departure of Aristide."

It has been generally accepted that US denied military protection to Aristide, except to escort him to exile. There are also strong indications that the US supplied weapons and gave back door training to the rebels through the neighboring Dominican Republic. One indication is that the rebels departed from there and appeared in Haiti with sophisticated equipment and new uniforms.

At the same time, according to Sachs, "the US abandoned the call of European and Caribbean leaders for a political compromise that Aristide had already accepted. Most important, did the US bankroll a coup in Haiti, a scenario that, based on the evidence, seems likely? Only someone ignorant of American history and of the administrations of the elder and younger George Bushes would dismiss these questions."

Sachs goes on, "The US has repeatedly sponsored coups and uprisings in Haiti and in neighboring Caribbean countries. The most recent previous episode in Haiti came in 1991, during the first Bush administration, when thugs on the CIA payroll were among the leaders of paramilitary groups that toppled Aristide after his 1990 election."

Those who played a part in the democratizing of Haiti are presently being hunted down and murdered by former members of the very national army Aristide disbanded because of their corruption and terrorist tactics. And the American taxpayer is footing the bill.

The July funeral was for Jacques Roche, a prominent Haitian journalist aligned with the present government. According to Bill Quigley, an eyewitness and the priest's co-counsel, "Jacques Roche's coffin was in the chapel next to the sacristy... At 10 o'clock the bishop and about seven priests robed in

white with purple stoles or sashes paraded out of the sacristy of the church to the chapelÉ to say blessings over the coffin of Jacques RocheÉ Fr. Jean-Juste went to the funeral expressly to pay his respects to the family and express his open remorse and opposition to any killing of anyone, no matter their political affiliation."

The death, however, was made into a cause by those opposed to Aristides' Lavalas party. Jacques Roche was a supporter of The Group of 184, who overthrew President Aristide. This faction claimed that because Roche's body was found in a poor neighborhood it meant the Lavalas party, which is still strongly supported among the poor, executed him. The congregation was notable for the wealth of its parishioners.

For several days before the funeral, Fr. Jean-Juste was publicly accused of "'a plot against the security of the state, smuggling money and guns into the country, and of being behind all the kidnappings.'" Quigley goes on, "People knew Fr. Jean-Juste was coming to the funeral because that was printed on the front page of a conservative paper the day before."

"When Fr. Jean-Juste walked out, people started yelling at him in the chapel. They called him 'assassin' and 'criminal' and yelled out to 'arrest and kill the rat.'" He was then surrounded and spit on and "15-20 or more young men not dressed at all for the funeral came into the sacristy. At that point the security forces melted away."

After Fr. Jean-Juste was viciously beaten about the head and punched in the eye by these men, a few UNCIVPOL tried to help but were overwhelmed. The priest, Quigley and a woman who protected them hid in a bathroom until being rescued by a reinforcement of UN troops from Jordan.

Quigley goes on to explain that he and Fr. Jean-Juste were arrested and held for the next seven or eight hours while the UN forces and the Haitian forces negotiated about what to do. "We were told informally that the UN wanted to escort Fr. Jean-Juste back to his parish but the Haitian government was insisting that he be arrested. The attackers were allowed to go free and not arrested, but they wanted to arrest the victim!"

Interesting to note is that this incident was shut out of the mainstream media, which at the time was buzzing about the Bush Administration's attack on Public Broadcast System (PBS) radio. That incident harkened back to the defeated coup attempt on Pacifica radio, which extensively covered both Aristide's removal and Fr. Jean-Juste's arrest.

As Jeffery Sachs relayed in the L.A. Times, when members of the Congressional Black Caucus "demanded an investigation into the US role in Aristide's overthrow, the first Bush administration laughed them off, just as the present administration has done when facing new queries from Caucus members. Indeed, those questioning the administration about Haiti are being smeared as naive and unpatriotic."

The still jailed Fr. Jean-Juste had this to say to his attorney as he and Quigley parted.

"This is all a part of the death sentence called down upon me on the radio in Miami. The searches at the airport, the visits to the police stations, the mandate to appear before a criminal judge yesterday, and now this. It is all part of the effort to silence my voice for democracy. Now you see what we are up against in Haiti... If they treat me like this, think how they treat the poor people."

**For free and fair elections in Haiti**  
**Wednesday, August 31, 2005**  
**Jamaica Observer**

We agree with the principle enunciated by Prime Minister Patterson that all political forces should be allowed to participate in the coming elections in Haiti and that the conduct of those polls should be an important benchmark of whether Haiti should be allowed to retake its seat in the Caribbean Community (Caricom).

However, we would be forgiven, we believe, if we express grave reservations about the political process in Haiti and ask Mr Patterson, and his host this week, Mr Ricardo Lagos, the Chilean president, for further and better particulars on two points:

- . how this issue of participation should be defined; and
- . clarity on what they would consider to be an environment of security in the lead up to the general election.

We believe that these issues are relevant in the context of the declaration issued by Prime Minister Patterson and President Lagos in Santiago on Monday about the prospects for the Haitian elections, including the statement that lack of security was a "crucial obstacle" to the holding of a credible poll.

Indeed, Mr Patterson told reporters that the right of all parties to participate in the elections should, by definition, include Lavalas Family, the movement of the ousted president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The fact, by all accounts, is that Lavalas remains the most popular political force in Haitian politics, and Mr Aristide, a year-and-a-half after the coup d'etat against him, remains the party's most potent symbol.

The fact, though, is that Mr Aristide is prevented by the interim administration in Port-au-Prince, and the troika that installed it, from returning to Haiti.

That, perhaps, would be understandable in the context of the Haitian political situation and an attempt to create an atmosphere of stability, without the presence of some of the country's most divisive political personalities. Despite Mr Aristide's still substantial popularity, it could very credibly be argued that he would fall within this group.

However, several key members of Lavalas, including former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, remain in jail in Haiti, or in hiding, removing from the party its best known leaders and also undermining Lavalas' capacity to organise.

At the same time, several of the right-wing death squad leaders of the 1990s, who were also part of the recent coup d'etat against Mr Aristide, have not only been cleared of old murder convictions - in what critics say have been sham hearings - but allowed to roam the country freely. They have threatened violence against opponents. Unfortunately, most, if not all, of the official attention on violence in Haiti has been focused on Lavalas.

From this distance, it seems that the cards are being stacked against Lavalas, no doubt with the intention of proving the point against Mr Aristide. We believe that credible elections are important to Haiti. For this to happen, they have to be free and fair.

**FILM:  
Haiti Teeters on the Brink  
Katherine Stapp  
Inter Press Service News Agency  
August 31, 2005**

NEW YORK, Aug 31 (IPS) - The world may be focused on Iraq's Oct. 15 elections, but an equally critical vote will soon take place in the first country in the Americas after the United States to declare its independence.

On Nov. 13, Haiti will hold its first national polls since President Jean-Baptiste Aristide was forced from office on Feb. 29, 2004. A new documentary by Wozo Productions and New York's Two Tone Productions, called "Unfinished Country", which premieres on the U.S. public television series Wide Angle Sep. 6, examines Haiti's uphill struggle to create democracy from decades of violence and neglect.

In its 200 years of independence, Haiti has had 44 leaders, the filmmakers note, and just seven have served out their terms.

Jane Regan, a former IPS correspondent from Haiti and producer of the documentary, told IPS that the goal was to find four or five people who would, together, "offer a partial picture of the kaleidoscope of Haitian society".

"We only made it part way because there is no peasant or person representing what Haitians call the 'country outside the country' -- the rural world," she added.

We meet Butteur Métayer, who believed Aristide was behind the gruesome murder of his brother, Cuban Métayer. In 2004, Butteur took over Cuban's gang and took to the streets. He was joined by Guy Philippe, a Haitian Army officer exiled by Aristide in 1997 for attempting a coup.

A key figure in the civil strife that led to Aristide's departure and exile in Africa, Philippe is now running for president under the banner of a new party called the National Front.

We also meet Patrick Fequière, a prominent Haitian businessman and head of operations for the Provisional Electoral Council, charged with getting 424 polling stations up and running in the next three months, chosen because of his "incorruptible reputation".

"Even with a brand-new computer system provided by the U.N., registering four and a half million voters, half of whom have no identification of any kind, will be a challenge," says Fequière, a bearish and disarmingly plainspoken man.

"I'm like a pit bull, okay. And I'm gonna keep biting their asses until they do what they have to do and do it right," says in the film.

And we meet Serge Cantave, a member of the insular Haitian upper class, who runs a tree-planting project on Haiti's decimated hilltops. Unrestricted logging has left the land 97 percent treeless, while neighbouring countries are still almost half forest, the narration notes.

"From the U.S. -- they were referring our Haitian elite as M.R.E.s: 'Most Repugnant Elite.' At first, I was really hurt by my feelings because I'm a proud Haitian and... But when you really get, get in really deep in what M.R.E means... Looking at the Haitian elite, it is so true," Cantave says.

Daniel Morel, a co-producer of the film, told IPS, "I think that it is the first time in decades that at least some younger members of the elite are starting to think about more than their pockets. I think they finally understand the danger that is threatening their country."

But with escalating violence in the capital -- as many as 30 people were reportedly killed at a football match earlier this month as police stood by -- the fate of the elections remains in doubt.

"I don't think any of the candidates -- and there are something like 50 candidates for president -- are generating enthusiasm," Regan said.

"People in general don't trust anyone, they don't trust the little they know about so-called 'democracy' since there have been coups and violence and failed or crooked elections and lies and betrayals, and they don't trust politicians, the U.N. or the U.S. -- and the U.S. and U.N. are the ones really pushing the elections."

While some of those interviewed are determined to participate -- one elderly man says he came to the registration site "as a citizen to do my duty" -- others are angry and full of despair.

"They're talking about elections," says Elizna Nicolas, a former Lavalas organiser and resident of the garbage-strewn La Saline slum. "But 80 percent of the people live in places like this. Can we vote in these conditions? No way."

Nicolas shares a dark one-room shack with her seven children. They all sleep in a single bed -- the oldest three on top and the little ones with their mother on the floor beneath. She used to earn a decent living as a street vendor until, she says, the ex-rebels stole the truck with all her goods.

"I'm not going to do an elections card. I'm not doing anything," she says, as her young son -- who has not been in school since Aristide's ouster -- untangles copper wire to sell. "Because we struggled so much to bring democracy. And this democracy has only made things worse."

Nicolas, and thousands of others, refuse to accept that Aristide is gone, insisting that he must finish his term before fresh elections are called. They have vowed to boycott the polls, and could be a decisive factor in the success or failure of the November elections.

"It is important to understand that by the time Aristide left, the real groundswell of support for Aristide had dried up," Regan said.

His remaining backers were mostly associated with the political or bureaucratic power structure -- politicians and paid street organisers -- and some have now openly split and say they want to participate in the elections, she explained.

"Others, the poorer and more desperate ones, still seem to think Aristide will come back and they will once again get the hand-outs or 'zombie' checks or other advantages they had," she told IPS. "That is why they are desperate and that is why some of their neighbours will support them and participate in demonstrations."

One of the most powerful scenes is one of a women's group that has assembled after renewed violence in the capital.

"The U.N. says they're trying to help," a young woman says. "No. To me, the U.N. are tourists. They came here to get tan. They buy mangoes. They drink coconut juice all day long. They go to the beach. They smoke. They eat bread. That's it."

Regan told IPS: "There's a proverb in Haiti: 'Fanm se poto mitan.' It means: 'Women are the centerpost.' That's because women are crucial to the economy -- both rural and urban -- as well as to the family and to education."

"But women are as excluded as they are in every other part of society. There are some foreign women playing roles in the U.S. and OAS (Organisation of American States). As for Haitian women, there are a couple of prominent Haitian women: the mayor of the capital is a woman, and three or four relatively prominent political parties have women at their heads or as the 'number two'."

"There has been progress over the past 10 years, and they are also behind the scenes, in the offices or homes of fields supporting the politicians and diplomats and peacekeepers. Actually, some Haitian police and U.N. peacekeepers are women. But, as in the U.S., it is mostly a man's affair," she said. (END/2005)

**Orphans International Worldwide Sets Up Fund to Help Flood Victims**  
**Emediawire**  
**Sept. 1, 1005**

Scholarships are now available for New Orleans professionals to assist children who have been orphaned by the 2004 tsunami, hurricanes and other floods.

New York (PRWEB) September 1, 2005 -- Orphans International (OI) Worldwide founder Jim Luce announced today the establishment of a fund to cover transport, room, board and stipend to New Orleans flood victim professionals who wish to volunteer for the next year assisting flood orphans in both Banda Aceh, Indonesia, and Gonaives, Haiti.

"I wish we were large enough to help New Orleans directly," states Luce. "We can however afford to offer a one-year opportunity to allow New Orleans refugee professionals a chance to reach out to those orphaned by the tsunami and hurricane floods of last year," Luce adds. Scholarships will be available to New Orleans professionals in various fields who wish to work with children who also lost everything to nature.

"We believe that by providing scholarships to flood victim professionals who have lost their homes and jobs, we will give them the opportunity to gain a special experience -- and a year's reprieve in re-building their lives while they help re-build the lives of children who have been through a similar tragedy," Luce says.

Those New Orleans professionals who wish to volunteer for one year in either Banda Aceh, Indonesia, or Gonaives, Haiti, should send their 500-word essay on their desire to help, along with their resume, to [info\(AT\)oiww.org](mailto:info(AT)oiww.org). Corporate and individual donors who wish to support this effort may write the same address for additional information; all contributions are tax-deductible.

Orphans International America has received bi-partisan support from leaders such as former president Bill Clinton, Mayor Mike Bloomberg, Sen. Chuck Schumer, and Sen. Hillary Clinton, as well as many New York City-based public officials. Orphans International is a non-partisan, interfaith organization incorporated in New York in 2002. Last month in Indonesia, the Acehenese Ministry of Social Affairs recognized Orphans International's work with tsunami orphans along with UNICEF and Save the Children.

OI's mission is "Raising Global Citizens" and their children remain in their native countries to become educated to their fullest potential and then help move their countries forward; they do not place children for adoption in America. Projects are running in both Sumatera and Sulawesi in Indonesia, and opening this month in Haiti. Projects in formation include Romania, Togo, the Philippines, Peru, Ghana, and Guyana. Future plans include working with AIDS orphans in both China and India. Each OI campus is working towards full programming for the orphaned children and the village community with classes in English, computer science, and a strong emphasis on the arts.

More detailed information is available on OI's website, [oiww.org](http://oiww.org). The organization's monthly e-newsletter is available on-line and is best known for being up-beat and informative. Tax-deductible contributions to the OI Scholarship Fund for New Orleans may be sent to "Orphans International,"

earmarked "New Orleans," at 540 Main Street, Suite 418, N.Y., N.Y. 100044. Again, OI does not assist with adoption.

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## **Grocery to link peaceful PoMo, war-torn Haiti**

**COLLEEN FLANAGAN/the tri-city news**

**Ross and Mary Robbins are re-opening the old Pleasantside grocery store in Port Moody as a 'store without prices' to aid their relief efforts in Haiti.**

**By Sarah Young**

**The Tri-City News, British Columbia, Canada**

**Sep 03 2005**

The old Pleasantside Grocery in Port Moody is a far cry from the civil unrest and violence plaguing Haiti but, with some help from the community, Ross and Mary Robbins hope they can use it to bring hope to the troubled nation.

The missionary couple purchased the old Pleasantside store a year ago and have been slowly restoring the historical landmark. It's coming together as an office and fundraising centre for their Light of the World Ministries, an inter-denominational registered charity that provides food, clothing, building and medical supplies to remote areas of Haiti.

Ross founded Light of the World in Toronto in 1975 and since the couple moved to Coquitlam three years ago, they've been establishing themselves in the local fundraising community. It hasn't been easy, with Ross undergoing heart surgery that resulted in a serious infection and several plans for office space falling through at the eleventh hour.

But, then, life in Haiti isn't easy either, says Ross. On one trip he and his wife vividly remember, a soldier pointed an automatic machine gun at Ross's head.

"It was right at my temple, I could feel it on me," Ross said. "And then he started yelling at somebody across the street. He was waving his hands around, with his finger on the trigger and the gun still pointed at me."

Ross immediately did what he has been doing since he hung up his business executive hat years ago: He put his life in God's hands.

"I don't want to sound too spiritual but we really pray and ask for protection," Robbins said. "It's a very difficult country and a lot of people who work there give up because it's just too hard. It takes years to get over the heartbreak."

The Robbins are raising funds by offering antiques, books and other used items for reasonable donations in their "store without prices."

"I'm embarrassed to say we've practically emptied our house," said Mary. "But we're getting the church in on it and people are bringing things in."

There's also a small selection of Haitian wood carvings available, though Ross and Mary have found it can be difficult getting them out of the country. Corrupt customs officials are one of the Robbins' biggest challenges but, again, Ross has found the power of prayer most effective. He recently managed to bring in a priceless generator because he happened to pass through customs during a 30-minute strike.

The Robbins are planning to return to Haiti early next year with a load of medical supplies, clothing and toys. They're looking for volunteers to help set up a website and they're happy to receive donations of good quality items.

The Ioco Road store is open Saturdays from 1 to 6 p.m. and Sundays from 2 to 6 p.m.

## **Haitian priest visits Ashland patrons**

**By BRAD FRANKLIN**

**Pere (Father) Roderick Mital is but 32 years old. Yet he seems wise beyond his years.**

**Hanover Herald-Progress**

**Sept. 3, 2005**

The Haitian leader of Our Lady of Perpetual Health in Dubisson, Haiti recently visited the Ashland area. His parish has a twin sister, if you will, in St. Anne's Catholic Church.

While in the United States for a few days, Mital was determined to meet with members of St. Anne's as well as reporting on the progress of Our Lady of Perpetual Health.

The twin churches have had a strong relationship for three years now, and the future looks bright.

For Pere Mital, optimism abounds. When you come from a country where the illiteracy rate is somewhere around 70 percent and there is extremely limited education, it may be a bit easier to hold your head up high when you trust in the future.

The Pere's parish is in a small town of about 5,000 Haitians.

"There are really no houses outside, because they're all in the side of the mountain," Mital said.

His limited English comes from a six-week course he took the last time he was in the United States.

As part of the relationship between churches, a delegation from St. Anne's visited Dubisson in May.

For Mital, whose mother currently lives in Boston, trips to the United States are becoming something of the norm.

"I have visited a few times and I come back as often as I am invited," he said with a smile.

Our Lady of Perpetual Health has a small membership but includes about 100 kids who come for school.

"When we started, there was no rectory, no school, no clean water even," Pere Mital said.

"But now, we have a new rectory and the school is coming," he added.

The local church's efforts, including the trip Stu Reid and Hilda Schmid took there just over three months ago, have given the parish in Haiti a chance.

With Dubisson located nearly three hours away from the cities, (by Haitian road conditions which are far worse than those of American roadways) the parish doesn't experience the volume of dangerous crime that seems to be a staple of the country. But with safety comes lack of what those in the United States would consider common anemities.

Children in Haiti attend school in grades K-3, after which if they're interested in continuing with their education, they must walk seven miles one way to another school.

"We really are hoping to have our school building finished by the time school starts in September," Mitial said.

Still, everything the Haitian churchgoers build they must make.

"It's not like here where if you want to build something you simply call a lumber yard. Here, you order it. There, you build it," Reid said.

Reid, former chairman of the St. Anne's Haiti committee, said Americans can't understand just what everyday life is like in Haiti.

"We stayed with Pere in a small, small house with a tin roof where if it was 92 degrees outside, it was 112 degrees inside. No bathroom indoors, no electricity, no water," Reid said.

Since then, the rectory has been finished, with solar panels on the roof for electricity, inside bathrooms, and water.

"It is very, very good," Pere Mitial said of the rectory.

"Our biggest efforts right now are to help them build their school and get some form of transportation," Reid added.

"The best way to help the people is to educate them," he said.

The local church, through bake sales, donations in church, and raffles of quilts made from the shirts off their backs, among other fundraising events, helped to send over money for food as well as school supplies.

"It's mostly for food, the rectory, and the school," Reid said of the fundraising.

"We also sent over four bags of toys for Christmas as well as school supplies because some of the children just had slates to write on," he added.

As far as Mitial is concerned, the partnership between his parish and St. Anne's is headed in the right direction.

"It is like the saying, 'If we keep hands together, we can go a long way.' I believe in this sentence," he said.

"I hope we can continue because the beginning is so good," Mitial said.

**Haitian-born HIV activist visits Ja**  
**published: Thursday | September 1, 2005**  
**Trudy Simpson, Staff Reporter**  
**Jamaica Gleaner**

JEAN SAUREL Beaujour has lived with HIV for 14 years. For him, HIV has now become a friend. It has given the 44-year-old Haitian-born social activist the strength to spread important messages to Haitians, especially those living with HIV. Messages such as protect yourself, love yourself, have courage, you have rights and should fight for them.

"Yes, we have the virus but we are still citizens," he says.

These are messages he has been preaching since 1999, when he started the Association for National Solidarity (French acronym-ASON) in Haiti, which accounts for most of the Caribbean's AIDS cases.

### SPIRALLING HIV INFECTION

The organisation was born in response to spiralling HIV infection rates and high levels of discrimination in Haiti, a country of over eight million people, and which is plagued by a host of problems including poverty, political unrest and inadequate health care.

Through ASON, Beaujour and other champions have been raising AIDS awareness. They have been fighting for the human rights of the estimated 400,000 HIV-infected persons living in Haiti, where voodoo priests out-number properly-trained doctors (8,500 to 1,800), where health clinics are located very far from communities, and where many Haitians are either unaware of HIV or still clinging to the belief that AIDS is caused by someone wishing them ill.

According to Beaujour, ASON has grown in number - from 16 persons to 2000. It has also touched hearts, raised HIV awareness and has changed some people's behaviour by using testimonies from HIV positive persons - a very powerful tool in a poor country. It has also been working with other agencies and the Haitian media to reduce the spread of HIV, highlight and prevent discrimination and provide support for infected persons.

### SOME TRIUMPHS

Now, despite the unrest in some sections of Haiti, things are getting better for persons living with HIV. The triumphs include:

- More persons are disclosing their status and giving testimonies publicly to encourage less discrimination.
- A prevalence rate that has become stable (It dropped from six to five per cent and remains there)
- 3,000 Haitians are accessing HIV-fighting medication (although this is a drop in the bucket compared to the 150,000 who need medication) and

- More voodoo priests have been convinced to refer infected persons to health centres

"Now we have trained several leaders because we have broken the cycle of fear of discrimination in society and in telling your family. Before, we were slaves. Now we are free," says Beaujour, who was in Jamaica for a week of meetings with local HIV positive persons, courtesy of the PANOS Institute Caribbean.

**Chavez could be kidnapped**  
**August 31, 2005**  
**Rutland Herald, VT**

The suggestion of an assassination by the Rev. Pat Robertson is basically called ridiculous by the Pentagon. But the other suggestion by Robertson, kidnapping Chavez, is not beyond the range of the Pentagon.

Jean Bertrand Aristide was the democratically elected president of Haiti as recently as a year ago. He had helped oust the former government made up of killers and war criminals. He would seem to be the type of president we would support. Unfortunately for him, despite demands from the United States, he refused to privatize some of Haiti's industries and natural resources, thereby rebuffing the International Monetary Fund. Of course, when forced to choose between democracy and capitalism, Bush/Cheney's White House will choose capitalism every time. In a CIA-supported and trained revolution, Aristide, in his own words when speaking with the radio program "Democracy Now," was forcibly kidnapped and placed on a U.S. plane leaving the country. As usual, when the CIA needs insiders for a job, who do they choose? The killers and war criminals that were in the former government. Despite massive protests by Haitian citizens, the press has virtually ignored this crime. In fact, many of these war criminals are now police officers in the new government. The United States OAS ambassador has stated that they would not prosecute these criminals for their human rights violations because it's not a top priority right now.

Chavez should be careful in the next few years of Bush's term. If he continues to pose a threat to U.S. oil interests, assassination may be out of the picture, but he may find himself the victim of a "popular" coup, most likely funded and backed by the U.S. CIA.

JARED Della ROCCA

Bennington