



## Monthly Missions Focus: Haiti



Location: Caribbean, western one-third of the island of Hispaniola, between the Caribbean Sea and the

North Atlantic Ocean, west of the Dominican Republic

Area: 27,750 sq km – slightly smaller than Maryland

Population: 7,656,166 [note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS (July 2004 est.)]

Capital: Port-au-Prince 1,700,000

Peoples: Afro-Caribbean 90%, Mulatto (Eurafrican) 9.9%, Euro-American 0.1%.

Literacy: 48%. Functional literacy may be as low as 20%. Official language French (10% speak it). Common language Haitian Creole. Economy: The poorest state in the Western hemisphere, aggravated by over-population, soil erosion, pollution, drought and famine. Unemployment 50-70%; 75% live in abject poverty. Income/person \$310 (1.2% of USA).

Religion: The Roman Catholic Church's role as the State Church ended in 1987. Christian 95.5%, Spiritist/Voodoo 2.5%, non-Religious/other 1.8%, Baha'i 0.2%

### ⇒Answer to Prayer⇐

🌐 Evangelical Christians have increasingly and openly stood against voodooism and the Satanic dedication of the country in 1791 by the slaves plotting revolt against the French

### ⇒Challenges for Prayer⇐

- 🌐 Haiti needs to be freed from the bondages of its past
- 🌐 Haiti needs godly leaders that put first the good of the nation and the addressing of its massive problems
- 🌐 The Catholic Church is in crisis with its credibility lost and voodooism unchallenged
- 🌐 Leadership training is too limited because of the poverty of the churches
- 🌐 Desperate physical and social needs have attracted a wide range of Christian community development agencies
- 🌐 The less evangelized sections of the population: the wealthy Mulatto elite, the youth, and the refugees

Statistics are compiled from Operation World and CIA – The World Factbook 2004.

## Voodoo adherents in Haiti

An elderly Haitian voodoo priest garbed in a silk robe of brilliant red, yellow and green sat in an elaborately carved wooden chair. The room was dimly lit with a myriad of white candles. About 20 people of all ages danced into a frenzy before him. The dancers sang to invoke communication with the spirit world.

Though without formal doctrine, hierarchy or form, the dancers in this particular voodoo sect believe in a host of spirits which actually come to inhabit the seekers. These people hope the spirits will give them advice, wealth, fertility, healing, and help in practical arenas of their lives. They offer sacrifices, usually of fowl, food or drinks as a means of inviting the presence of various spirits.

In 1860, during the French colonial era, the Catholic faith became Haiti's official religion. In order to gain credibility, voodoo incorporated many Catholic symbols and rituals such as praying to Mary and the saints, baptism, and marriage. Last year, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide legally sanctioned voodoo in Haiti.

Pray that the spirits of voodoo will be crushed and discredited throughout Haiti. Pray that the Holy Spirit will soon lead voodoo adherents to the truth that Jesus heals, delivers, guides, and saves. Pray for God to bring just social change to Haiti through the gospel. (*Global Prayer Digest 2/29/04*)

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Do you want to know what it is like to live in Haiti? I mean really, do they have it THAT bad there?

Picture your house, mentally remove EVERYTHING that uses either electricity or running water. Now, remove all carpeting and stuffed furniture, including the bed. Replace this with straw mat. No floors, no slab, just bare earth and a thatched roof. Take out all the screens in your house. While you're at it, remove the windows and the doors. No grass around the house. Got a good picture? Good. Now picture yourself with no car, or bike, or shoes for that matter. No job, no unemployment or welfare checks. You have no money, no bank accounts, no credit cards, no refrigerator, no ice and no food. You are hungry, and to make matters worse, your children are hungry. On top of that they are sick, full of worms and usually naked. This is the AVERAGE Haitian!! God's people, just like you and me, just born farther south and east. ([www.lovehaiti.com](http://www.lovehaiti.com))