



January 2014

Greetings:

Sunday January 12, was the fourth anniversary of the earthquake that devastated Haiti. The country is slowly rising from the rubble with the construction of roads, ports and major reparation to the airport.

Our Foundation has registered fifty vulnerable children in school, helped them with their First Communion, and continues to monitor their progress. I've done numerous radio shows on child slavery with the assistance of prominent citizens, and received congratulatory calls from every segment of society, including government ministers.

Last month while distributing Christmas toys in a shantytown, I witnessed a woman chastising



her neighbor for having kept a girl in servitude out of school. The neighbor was too ashamed to respond. In that moment I saw the light at the end of the tunnel, and I could not stop smiling.

On Friday, December 20, 2013, I had the privilege of being invited to a government campaign on violence against children at a large public school for girls. When officials told the children, "Don't be afraid to report physical and sexual abuse.... because the law is on your side," I remembered a beating I had received from a Haitian soldier in the 60's. I was perhaps ten years



old, going on errands just before sunset. Crossing the street in front of the Presidential Palace, I noticed people were standing at attention with their hand on their chest and cars coming to a screeching halt. On the palace's grounds was a military band playing the national anthem while the Haitian flag was being lowered. I continued walking, but slowly, watching the ceremony and wondering why everyone stopped. After the folding of the flag, I heard a soldier say, "Hey, you, come back here!" I turned around and approached him, my heart pounding, thinking he was going to reprimand me for being barefoot. But he grabbed my wrist and gave me a lashing that tore the ragged shirt off my back. I was too ashamed to even tell René, my best childhood friend, who would later die from a police beating.

Haiti has come a long way from the 60's on children's rights, but still has far to go. While people have been arrested for cruelty to children, whips are still being sold at outdoor markets. The legacy of colonial slavery is still sewn into Haiti's national fabric. But on December 20th I felt that the threads were slowly unravelling. Perhaps Haitian authorities are beginning to understand that Haiti's most valuable resources are its children.

This could not have happened without your support.

With all my gratitude,

Jean-Robert Cadet