

Haitian pastor inspires student volunteer action

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Pastor Leon Dorleans was there. He felt the earthquake in Haiti. He saw the buildings crumble. He watched the people kneel down and cry out for help. Dorleans knows first-hand the destruction that this impoverished nation has been exposed to, and he has made it his personal mission to do something about it.

Friday Sept. 24, in the Fireside Room, Dorleans spoke to students about his organization, Haiti Outreach Ministries (HOM) and how God led him into a life of ministry.

In 1970, Dorleans came to the United States to go to a Bible college in Cincinnati. He was prepared to change the world as a disciple to all nations. But he soon realized that he could not change the world by himself. After graduating from college, Dorleans decided that Haiti needed a Bible college, or church, and in 1985, he went back to start work in Cite Soleil. He recruited students from churches to help and his first group of attendees was approximately 34 people.

After nearly six months, the group had expanded to more than 100 members and Dorleans no longer considered this organization a Bible college, they had to expand to multiple churches.

The area where Dorleans established the churches, Cite Soleil, located in the Port-au-Prince area, is one of extreme poverty. According to Dorleans, if Haiti is the most poverty-stricken country in the world, then Cite Soleil is the most depleted area in the world.

As of now, there are five churches and more than 4,000 members in the Cite Soleil area.

Along with churches, HOM works together with schools to help educate the youth of Cite Soleil. Dorlean's wife started the first school for the church in 1989 with 35 students. It has since expanded to more than 1,400 students. Dorleans estimates that the next time he returns to Cite Soleil, there will be four established schools.

Though he has done much to aid the victims in

Haiti, Dorleans credits his strength and the success of his establishments to God.

"I represent Haiti, but I represent the work of God from L.A to New York, wherever you are," said Dorleans.

A short clip was shown at the presentation about the rebuilding of Cite Soleil featuring a recent college graduate, Steven Bycbe and his team of builders. Within a few short weeks the team of people, originating from places such as Newport Beach and Atlanta, manually rebuilt dozens of homes for victims.

After the presentation, many students felt compelled to help.

Senior Daniel Dugger, along with his club SAGE and Haiti, plan to take a team of 8 to 10 students to Haiti during Spring Break.

"What we do really depends on the passions of the people going," Dugger said. "We could volunteer in classes, assist in teaching or help with getting supplies."

Other students felt that the presentation

was an eye-opening experience.

Senior Tyler Wong is still in shock that such devastation had taken place.

"Just seeing the destruction and hearing his story— it's unbelievable," Wong said.

After his presentation, Dorleans spoke about the opportunities present for Pepperdine students to be changed by a trip to Haiti.

"It will open your eyes and you will be a different person when you come back," Dorleans said. "You will also be a different person in life, thinking, 'Do I have to have all that I do to really live?'"

As assistant field director, Dorleans and his HOM team work with Haiti victims through evangelism, vocational training, healthcare, community projects, music ministry, college scholarship programs, construction, visiting groups and education.

When asked about the most rewarding part of his ministry, Dorleans smiles.

"I love to see the children being transformed," said Dorleans. "My biggest pride and joy is to know that my work is not going to end after I'm gone."

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HAITI OUTREACH MINISTRIES**