

HOPE rising

CHILDREN'S HOME • LEOGANE, HAITI

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God calls the Lunsfords to Hope Rising

Andi, Morgan, and I are truly humbled that God would choose to use us in the amazing work He is doing in Haiti. God doesn't ask us to understand His call, He only asks us to be obedient, and He has made it clear to us that this is our journey. For me, I never dreamed I would ever be doing mission work. Andi and I have been married for 17 years and have lived most of our married lives in White Hall, Arkansas. We have three wonderful children, Alex, Austin, and Morgan and we have lately been blessed with a son-in-law, Brent. Alex and Brent currently live in Jonesboro, Arkansas and Austin has recently joined the US Army. I'm blessed to have a wife that has a loving relationship with God and a heart for missions. She has stood by me when I didn't deserve it and has displayed grace, patience, and love for me. I say this because it is part of my journey. Most of my life I have just gone with the flow spiritually. I felt I was a good husband and father, but I knew that I was not being the spiritual leader of our home. My relationship with God was not where it should have been, and I knew that to be right with my family I needed to be right with God. Unfortunately, I am hard-headed and this has taken longer than it should have. God has finally shown me that He has ordained husbands and fathers to be the spiritual, servant leaders of their homes. We are to model our lives after Christ (Matthew 20:26-28). In 2015, Alex, Brent, Andi and I made our first trip to Haiti. God began to speak to us about Haiti being part of His plan for us then, but I had issues with surrender. I was studying the crucifixion and how Peter *followed at a distance*. I realized that often we follow God at a distance because we are worried about the cost, we are consumed with our comfort zones. But God wants ALL of us, He wants complete surrender. Through close prayer partners, Sunday School lessons, and our Pastor's sermons, God began to make it clear to us what He wanted us to do. We are so excited and amazed to see what God will continue to do in Haiti. Wherever we are, we want to bring glory and honor to the name of our glorious Savior.

Ben Lunsford



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2017 Hope Teams

January 11 - 17: Wesley United Methodist Church, Short Gap, WV
January 16: Lunsfords arrive in Haiti
January 12 - 19: Independence Baptist Association, Batesville, AR
February 18: Lakepointe Church, Rockwall, TX
February 28 - March 6: Stuart Smithson, Great Hills Baptist Church, Austin, TX
March 6 - 12: Eastside Baptist Church, Mountain Home, AR
March 12 - 18: Lakepointe Church, Rockwall, TX
March 18 - 23: Dallas Avenue Baptist Church, Justin Leonard, Mena, AR
March 27 - 31: FBC Lavaca Children's Ministry Team, Lavaca, AR
April 1 - 8: Mobilizing Students, John Ball, Fayetteville, GA

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A Hope Rising Christmas

After a lengthy flight delay causing us to miss our Atlanta connection, we had to spend an extra night in the states. We made it back... but our 7 bags of luggage didn't! You have to realize this was Christmas Eve, so "Plan B" was implemented. We celebrated a wonderful Christmas Day with our children and church family. Our luggage finally arrived and we had our Christmas Party for the children on the 26th. The joy on their faces was priceless. Thanks to our child sponsors for making sure this was a very special day. You can go to the HRCH Facebook page to view the videos.

- The Smithsons



A Word from Allison.... Restoring Hope for Haiti

*"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'".
Matthew 25:40*

What was your first reaction to the recent tragedy concerning Hurricane Matthew in Haiti? Fear...Concern...Shock? How about your *second* reaction to tragedy on TV? Sadness...Turning away? When images of death and destruction flash across the TV, I find my own self-centeredness blocking the picture. We live in a society that has brought close the deaths of those far away, while the TV screen shields us from the pain behind the images.

One of the most telling reactions to Haiti's devastation came while listening to NPR in my car. A reporter was trying describing the scene before his eyes. This veteran journalist was watching a little girl whose lips were shivering from the trauma. Every other moment he would stop, take a deep breath and steady himself before going on; however, the sight before him was too much, and his voice broke as he cut the interview short. People wrote and called in their responses, some berating the reporter for not maintaining a professional distance and impartial tone. I've never reported a tragedy firsthand, but I was appalled at those demanding an "impartial tone" from a man staring at a hurting child. Journalism certainly deserves to be called out for sensationalized reporting at, but only because that distorts the true picture. At its best, journalism pieces together truth we otherwise miss. In this case, it was easier to miss the truth than hear something so heartbreaking. It's easier to debate Haiti's "misfortune" than to face thousands of hurting faces.

Jesus' own example encourages us to weep with those who weep, even though we know something better is on the other side (John 11:35). Part of redemption comes from acknowledging that "all creation groans" until Christ's return (Romans 8:22). And isn't part of denying ourselves looking to our brothers and sisters in need? The faces of Haiti show us who and where we could be but for God's mysterious grace. That's a grace that should humble us deeply and shake us out of our distraction.

I don't know how God is calling you to respond to Haiti's list of many tragedies. Maybe it's through giving, through praying, through sponsoring a child. I do know the mandate of "doing for the least of these" means I'm not allowed to insulate myself against human suffering. In 2017, I urge you to join me in praying, supporting and weeping for our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Let's be ready to rejoice with them at the promise of resurrection.

Grace and Peace, Allison