News
EarthBeat

Jeslaine Adolf displays seedlings in a community nursery in southern Haiti. (Paul Jeffrey)

by Paul Jeffrey

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September 25, 2020

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Editor's note: *This Season of Creation, join award-winning photographer Paul Jeffrey for "Lens on Creation" as he examines the world through the lens of his camera and his faith. Sign up here to receive Jeffrey's reflections in your inbox every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from Aug. 31 to Oct. 4.*

Jeslaine Adolf holds seedlings in a community nursery in Despagne, an isolated village in southern Haiti where a church agency works with residents to improve their quality of life.

Haiti was once covered with magnificent forests. Under Spanish and French colonial control, however, the trees were cut down for export to Europe or to make way for huge sugar plantations. Today, many of the remaining trees are being felled to produce charcoal that's shipped to Port-au-Prince and other cities for use as cooking fuel. As a result, both the people in deforested rural areas and those who breathe the smoke from their cooking fires suffer in a country that has become a poster child for how environmental destruction leads to poverty and poor governance.

What would a time of jubilee healing of the planet look like in Haiti? It would mean rainfall that didn't wash topsoil down treeless hillsides and into the sea. It would mean farm fields with year-round irrigation. It would mean children like Jeslaine growing up in a country where everyone could sit under their own tree, in peace and unafraid.

Jeslaine has a lot of trees to plant. How can we help her?

For reflection and action:

How can we heal the Earth in our own neighborhoods and regions? Do we need to do some tree-planting in our own backyard? How can we support abundant life in other parts of the world that have suffered from deforestation?

[Paul Jeffrey is a founder of Life on Earth Pictures and lives in Oregon. You can follow him on Instagram.]

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