

HAITI

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by Dave Heath

We departed Florida on Saturday morning very early headed to Cap Haitian (CAP), Haiti. When we arrived it had been raining and everything was wet, little did we really know it was going to stay wet for several more days. That means



MUD! We met up with Lucner Pierre and others from CBT and the other half of our group that came from the Gold Hill Church of Christ in North Carolina. We now had a total of 14 on the mission. We received our baggage and went outside to load onto the truck through a sea of people as we headed to the Center for Biblical Training (CBT).



This was my 5th

trip and I knew what to expect however from our group there were 9 that had never been there. This would be their first look at Haiti. They took picture after picture and just watched everything as we went along the way. I was so impressed that the streets had been cleaned and things seemed to be a little better. The others were surprised at how dirty it was. I remember my first trip and seeing the filth and dirt everywhere. It was a good ride to the CBT and when we arrived it was like going from a dirty place to a palace. The CBT is so well kept and beautiful everyone looks forward to returning each day.



So the first thing that had to be done was to load 1 gallon bags with beans and rice. Then sort boxes that were previously sent ahead for distribution to various locations. Then we had a meeting to make sure everyone knew what we were going to doing—the cultural “rights” and “wrongs.” Then we went to our dorm style rooms. In the morning we heard the roosters crowing, starting around 4am. I got up and started making coffee and several joined me in the kitchen located downstairs. We sat and enjoyed each other’s company before heading out.



Each day we travelled to several locations and dropped off food and clothing for many Christians and people in real need. This was the process for each day. Some days were longer than others and some days were wet and some days were dusty. While travelling in the back of the truck you would bounce around due to the roads. The right bump could through you out but fortunately that did not happen. We ended up giving out 80 sacks of rice (80 x 100 = 8,000#) and 43 sacks of beans (43 x 110

= 4,730#) for a total of 12,730#, or 6-1/3 tons. When it was all said and done we delivered a lot of food and clothing to the very needy in orphanages, churches, the prison, the hospital and many along the wayside.

Everywhere we went the children loved to see us. They would surround us and be very happy that we had arrived with the food and clothing. Of course the adults were glad too. Because of the extreme poverty there was just not enough time at each location, we could have stayed at each location for a whole day but then others would not have been fed. The faces tell all when we are present. The joy that is brought because of us being there is overwhelming. The same effect took place everywhere we went, smile after smile.



The scenery up in the mountains was fantastic. The beauty is so overwhelming when you think of the poverty that is surrounding you. One of the days the group went to location by the name of Ranquitte. This was one of the furthest locations from Cap Haitian where Christians gather. There is a large church there and the person responsible for the growth is dying of cancer. The first few days were rainy and muddy. Everywhere we went you absolutely were going to get muddy. It rained on some of the trips and in the back of a truck with no cover meant you were going to get wet. Then later in the week it became hot and sunny. Which meant you would sunburn if you didn't apply suntan lotion.

Over all it was a great time. Along the way we would stop and provide those gallon filled bags to people we would see that seemed to be in great need-- the very old and very young. The trip was so meaningful to me to see that we affected so many people. I did notice that the School of CBT has made many changes in the area. There is less voodoo in the area and I was told more voodoo priests are accepting Christianity as part of their culture. That is a great thing to hear. Perhaps in the long run there will be more voodoo priests becoming Christians and moving away from voodoo. Of course one must

remember that the voodoo priests are the healers for the poor. The medical situation is very bad and if you do not have money you can just lay down and die, you will not be treated. On this trip we funded several operations to remove tumors and we provided for other medical needs. The hospital is not sterile and the beds seem to be used over and over without a sheet change while you are there. The medical staff can only use what they are provided and that is very little.

One of our trips was to the jail where they are served what I would call "mush" for a meal--made in large vats. That day we brought a sandwich for each prisoner and a soda. A few bibles were given to the prisoners. Each cell is supposed to hold a certain amount of prisoners but each cell was grossly over crowded. They are handed a bucket for a toilet and then afterwards they would hand it back to be emptied. There are not enough beds and no privacy whatsoever. This is one place you would not want to be. The strong rule! There



is a smell to each room and if they get a chance for a bath it would have to be with the water hose that is brought into the cell. Maybe they get to go out and bathe but it is a very crude environment nonetheless. The sandwiches were accepted as what appeared to be their first real meal in a very long time. If you are incarcerated then your family can bring things to you but they must leave it at the front and are not allowed in. We were not allowed to take pictures while in the prison.

The effect of this trip on the people who went for the first time will be everlasting as it has been with me. I can never forget that there are Christians that have lives that I am just not used to nor would I ever want to be in that type of situation. Please remember these Christians as you go through life. We have so many benefits just because of our birth country.