

Haiti 2013 Mission Trip

Update 1



Carlos, our fearless leader!



Driving up a dry river bed to the mountain village of Lastik



The church service in Lastik



Driving back down the mountain from the church in Lastik

The Haiti Team 2013



From left to right, back row- Keith Crain, Gil Brown, Mike Kurtz, Aaron Busfield, Justin Stevenson, Clint Schwartz; middle row- Cullen Stanger, Stephanie Stanger, Lori Crain, Julia Dalton, Tarynn Busfield, Frank Duong, Jason Pfladderer; front row- Steven Truex, Kelli Haines, Mark Haines, Justin DeVreese, Adam Clark, Jeff Rice

Sunday-1/20/2013


This year's Haiti mission trip has proven to be quite challenging already, and it's only Sunday night! God has been good to us, so we will give Him thanks. There are 19 of us on the trip this year, half of which have never been on a mission trip before. We met at the church on Friday afternoon, packed our team food and left by 3:30pm. The drive through Chicago wasn't much of a problem and we arrived with plenty of time (we thought) to get checked in and through security. Our first hint that this trip was going to have its challenges came when Aaron Busfield (his first mission trip) called me as I was on the way back from parking our van in the budget lot. He informed me that he wasn't going to be able to go on the trip. The ticket agents had rejected his passport since it had gone through the wash and was wrinkled, tattered and had some of the cover peeling off. We then found out that they rejected Adam Clark's passport for the same reason. We began to work with the ticket agents to see what could be done to get them through and they told us (but didn't tell us) that if the back page was glued back on and the pages were "ironed" they might be able to accept their passports. The rest of the team had checked through already, but Kelli Haines just "happened" to have a flat iron in her



Aaron and Lori riding in
the back of a truck down
the mountain

carry-on (who carries a flat iron in their carry-on?), there was hope! Adam and Aaron sprinted across the street to a hotel to buy some glue and I hustled to the men's room to plug in the iron to warm it up. After 45 minutes, 1 bottle of super glue, several glued fingers, two iron burns, and much manly team bonding over a ladies flat iron in the restroom, we finally flattened and glued the passports together good enough to pass inspection. They were through! We made it to the terminal just in time to hear that our flight had been delayed... We were eventually switched to another terminal and boarded a different plane only to find out about an hour later that this plane had mechanical problems and we would have to get off. Then, they cancelled our flight. We spent the next hour getting rebooked on different flights the next day and also getting vouchers for a hotel. Rebooking 18 people at the same time isn't an easy thing to do, but we finally arrived at our hotel around 1am Indiana time.

The next morning we flew to St Louis, then on to Miami arriving around 4pm. Because of the new flights, we missed the last flight to Haiti and had to once again spend the night. The team was very patient through the multiple delays and schedule changes, which helped me quite a bit as their leader. We stayed at a very nice hotel (paid for by American Airlines), but the only restaurant available was the French restaurant at the hotel. We had a nice dinner and went to bed with directions to meet in the lobby at 4:45am the next morning as our flight was at 7:20am. Everything went smooth for the rest of the trip and we arrived in Haiti by 9:30am and met up with our Love-a-Child guide, Carlos. Some of the team started to feel ill (most likely from the "nice" French restaurant the night before) and started to show signs of food poisoning. We arrived at the Love-a-Child compound and quickly ate lunch so that we could get dressed for church. We had been originally scheduled to lead the morning church service at a mountain church in the small town of Lastik, but since we missed our Saturday flight we thought we weren't going to be able to go. BUT, Bobby from Love-a-Child arranged for an afternoon service so that we could still visit the church. The drive up to the church was amazing! We traveled up a dry, rock-filled riverbed through some of the most breathtaking mountain views that I had ever seen. Many of the children along the route would yell out "blanche" (which means white in Creol) as we drove by, then they would wave wanting us to return the wave. It was very special to see the pure innocence of the children up in the mountains. We arrived at the church around 2:30pm in the afternoon to a packed house; the people had waited all morning for us to come! We had a wonderful service with lots of singing and dancing and encouragement through the word of God. Our team sang a song and I taught on being a light to the world. We even were able to hand out vegetable seeds as gifts to all of the church members. The drive back down the mountain was even more beautiful as we were able to look out over the valley as the sun was setting, quite a view to behold.



We arrived back at the compound, had dinner (consisting of rice, beans, chicken and a salad) and then showered before our nightly team debrief. During the team debrief, many of the team members shared the good that has come out of the previous days' delays. The team is closer to each other than I've seen most teams this early in the trip and God is already stretching us to draw closer to Him. We also missed a huge traffic jam that occurred in Haiti on Saturday where they literally had to close the only road between the airport and Love-a-Child. If we had arrived on Saturday (like we were originally scheduled to do), we most likely would have either sat in traffic for hours or would have had to spend the night in Port-au-Prince, neither of which would have been a good option. One of our key verses so far this week is Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." God really does know what He is doing and I'm privileged to be working toward His purpose.

Tomorrow we are participating in a couple of food distributions in the morning and then we get to start construction in the afternoon, I can't wait! Please be praying for our team members who aren't feeling well; Keith, Lori, Aaron, Tarynn, Mark, Kelli & Mike. Thank-you for all your prayers, they are working!

Clint Schwartz