

Celebrate Jesus of Haiti

February 2017

Dear Friends,

Passion: strong and barely controllable emotion. That is how we would describe the four teams who joined us in Haiti during our extended winter trip. Each person displayed an intense desire to help the Haitian people as they demonstrated the love of God in their hearts.

The medical and dental team from New Orleans made their third visit, working tirelessly from morning to evening to offer expert care to anyone who showed up. We had received a call from them as they planned their trip, asking “what is the heart of the trip? What is your greatest need?” We reluctantly told them that the people were hungry. Hurricane Matthew devastated the winter crops in Haiti. Much of the food for La Gonave is purchased in Port au Prince, where the prices had soared after the hurricane. The team brought resources to help meet that need. We first headed to the town of Zetwa where Pastor Joaquim’s father lives. He had organized the neediest of townspeople to come for food. He had a list of names. The team stayed on the bed of the pickup truck measuring and dispensing rice, beans, and oil. The people brought clean bottles to receive the oil. The team had brought bags and each family received 3 malmutes (15 #) of rice, 1.5 malmutes of beans, and some maggies (bouillon cubes). This would be enough to feed an average family for one week. They came in all humility with respect and gratitude. Our friend Derrick entertained the children a short distance from the truck so the parents could wait undistracted in the line. When it was over, Pastor Joaquim and Sonja began a chant in Kryol of “Hallelujah!” and “Thank You Jesus!” The people joined in, taking up the parts with some shouting “Hallelujah!” and some shouting “Thank You, Jesus!” It was a joyous time for all of us. Passion.

Pastor announced at Celebrate Jesus Sunday services that a food distribution would be made for the members of the church and a limited distribution to others from Anse a Galet at 1:00 p.m. We seated the members on the right side of the church and served them first. They were orderly, respectful, and grateful. Then we distributed food for others who had come for as long as there were supplies. There was a notable difference in the demeanor of the recipients and it was evident that the word of God is bearing fruit at Celebrate Jesus and we are thankful. Two Haitians and one American were baptized that afternoon and we rejoice over each new life in Christ.

Before they left, the New Orleans medical team blessed the staff of the Celebrate Jesus ministry with a wonderful dinner at the main campus. Tables were covered and decorated with flowers. Those who scrubbed their clothes by hand and prepared their meals were now the honored guests. The team demonstrated the servanthood of Christ by waiting on them and treating them with great respect. Receiving their service as a labor of love inspires our staff to treat each other with that same humility in obedience to Christ’s own example and directive. To lead you must first serve. Treat others as better than yourselves. We loved the atmosphere in the room.

Next came two dear friends from our home church. Mike and Tom worked alongside Jerry and his Haitian team to put the roof on and paint the last of the ten new houses in Campus 2, which we call The Dwelling Place. When the property was given to us it included two small older houses. The men repaired both old houses. Two of our long-term employees will be allowed to live there as

long as they continue their faithful service to the ministry. The community well sits on the edge of Campus 2. Jerry built a house around it to keep the animals out, and the men put a roof on it. A secure fence and gate was completed to keep the Dwelling Place homes secure from intruders and from stray goats and cows. The completion of the fence will allow the families to plant coconut and banana trees. We challenged them to be good stewards of what God has blessed them with for the time they live there. This community serves as evidence to others in Anse A Galet of the goodness of God toward those who seek Him.



Dr. Paz and two other dentists came next for a week of dental care. Everyone who comes is treated, and they come from all over La Gonave and even from the main island. They worked out an assembly line. One dentist pulled teeth, one filled teeth, and one cleaned them. It was a smooth operation and hundreds waited patiently to receive free dental care. The atmosphere was filled with the presence of God. It reminded us of a line from an old hymn, "There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place."

February marks the 3rd anniversary of the opening of the free children's clinic. Dr. Zacky and his team have treated 17,000 new patients. It is such a blessing for these poor families to receive care for their sick children. Now many take the ferry over from the main island carrying their little ones for treatment at our clinic. God is merciful.



Our winter trip came to an end and the two of us waited in the Port au Prince airport for our flight to Miami. A Korean pastor introduced himself to us and described his mission trip on the main island. When he asked us where we were ministering, Jerry told him about Celebrate Jesus of Haiti on La Gonave. He seemed shocked. He had heard of La Gonave, the place where the "least of these" are forced to live. "That is the poorest most desolate place in Haiti! Why would you have your mission there?" he asked. Jerry responded, "That is why we are there." Passion met silence.

We love and appreciate you,

Jerry and Sonja Dickherber