



# Haiti Mission

Grant #HT-10-10-02-HER

April 13-20, 2010... *Account of Mark Smith, Team Member*

## *Wednesday, April 14 – The village of Jean Jean*

As one can imagine there is devastation everywhere... pancaked concrete homes laying in rubble, and people are hungry. Words are simply inadequate when it comes to explaining what was observed. After loading up the Sri Lankan military trucks with bags of cracked corn, beans, and vegetable oil, our team made the bumpy ride to a village deep in the mountains of southern Haiti, about 15 miles west of Port au Prince. To get to Jean Jean, we forded a swift river with a wide rock bed on either side. As we crossed the river and rode into the village, children and mothers began running and following our vehicles with shouts of joy. Upon arrival at the church in the heart of the village, we were teamed up each with 2 or 3 local Haitian believers, all young, approximately 18-25 years of age. We then delivered food up to each family's homesite up in the mountains. It was exhausting work, but very rewarding as we saw the joy and gratitude in the eyes of those we were able to help. The 20lb. sack of corn, small bag of pinto beans, and in some cases vegetable oil, would be each family's meals for the next few weeks. Jean Jean is a stunningly beautiful scene, made so by the river bed and the surrounding lush green mountains, a stark contrast to the overwhelming level of poverty. Most everyone in and around the village tries to grow their own food, and there are chickens everywhere, pigs, goats, mules, and even some cows. They grow crops on the steep slopes in terraces, but visibly there was nothing ready to be harvested. It seems like the earthquake may have postponed the planting of some crops, and it may have even prevented folks from securing vital seeds. Fact is, the people of Jean Jean desperately needed the food and most of them were very thankful. Overall, this was an amazing day that I'll never be able to fully explain.



# Haiti Mission Trip

April 13-20, 2010

## *Thursday, April 15 – Jean Jean*

The goal of this day was to finish distributing food in Jean Jean. Unfortunately, there is no way to totally “finish”. The people in these mountains live down trails miles long, and there is always someone beyond the family just served. We simply must realize that we cannot get to everyone. It was so much fun today walking the trails with and trying to communicate with my two guys on my “team”, Caleb & Evans. Caleb knows some English so he’s able to help me communicate since my Creole is a little rusty. The Lord granted strength today as this was a more strenuous day. Some of us walked through the swift river about knee high several times to deliver the grain to families separated from the village by another river. Today we also hiked further up into the mountains, seeing first hand the normal living conditions of the people. Typically, a family may have a very small piece of land on the slope of a hill, a wooden hut made of sticks, dirt floor, leaky thatched roof, and if they are lucky, a tarp or tent. It was a great joy today to work with and among the people. Their motives are pure, and they work hard with us to make sure we help as many as possible. Even the ones we were serving were helping us to make sure we knew where their neighbors lived, in order to get them some food as well.

## *Friday, April 16 – Ticousin*

Entering the area called Ticousin near the town of Leogane was a different experience today. The houses are much closer together, the area much more populated, and again, people were hungry. In each of the last two days we gave out 200 50lb. bags of corn each day. Today we gave out 520! That’s 26,000 lbs. of corn in one day! Praise the Lord! Some of our team was able to go to a small beach village further out called Balance, where the people are the poorest. There, my friend TJ had a large following of children, and was happy to be looked at like a rockstar for once. They delivered some much needed food to the people there, and I suspect they gave those there something they needed much more: hope. These people seemed as though they may have felt they had been forgotten as Balance is a fairly isolated village.

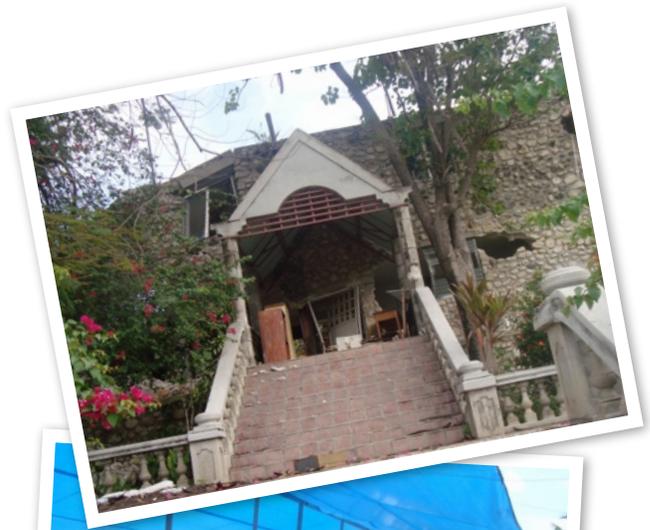


*Saturday, April 17 – Christianville,  
Petit Gouve, & Jacmel*

This morning we were able to tour the property of Christianville before traveling to a couple of other towns. We were able to witness the results of countless hours, tears, and dollars put in by previous believers, who spent all their energies in developing a place where children would receive an education and physical nutrition, where families would receive medical care, and where efforts have been made to teach self-sustainable living through gardening and livestock development. The earthquake hit Christianville very hard, and many buildings have been damaged beyond repair. It was hard to see this, and I know that it will take years for this ministry to fully recover.

We then travelled to Petit Gouve where our team members, Wayne & Christine Herget, were able to reconnect with close friends from years past. It was an awesome sight to see them embrace with life-long friends not seen in decades.

From Petit Gouve we traveled south across the southern peninsula of Haiti to the town of Jacmel. In Jacmel we visited a small beach, and while we were admiring the scenery a group of people walked down and onto the beach. They began to sing, and it was apparent that they were preparing for baptisms. We were able to witness four baptisms, and it was an awesome experience to see. ***And at that moment I was reminded that God is moving in Haiti and that lives are being changed. I understood that He is meeting the needs of Haiti not just temporarily but eternally, and He is using all kinds of people with all kinds of backgrounds to accomplish His will.*** From the beach we walked up to the home of one of the Hergets' friends. Her name is Tina, and years ago she moved to Haiti and presently runs a primary school of approximately 1000 students. Since the earthquake she has had to set up a makeshift orphanage and currently cares for approximately 15 children in her home. There we met these amazing children, who have lost much, but whose faces now show love because of the care they are receiving. Upon entering the house, I began to climb the stairs to the balcony porch on the second floor. Going up the stairs, I heard a child screaming from a 2nd floor bathroom, and it became evident that this was a child that did not want to take a bath. Apparently, this is a universal problem. While visiting with children on the balcony, this precious little boy emerged from his bath, and I learned his name was Jonathon. Immediately we had a connection, and holding him was something I'll never forget. After that, it was a cold drink of limeade and then back over the mountains to Christianville!



### *Sunday, April 18 – Ticousin Church*

Our team had the pleasure of worshipping with over 500 Haitians at the church in Ticousin. It was an unforgettable service, and the opportunity to participate in communion with fellow brothers and sisters made it so special. Wayne brought an awesome message about persevering through hard times - a timely word. We then were able to travel out to a new church plant, started by one of the pastors we had partnered with for the week. Christoff is the pastor of this new church in Balance, and since we came after the service was over, we were told that there had been 150 folks in service that day. How they were able to fit into that tiny, tarp covered open air structure, I will never know. ***But, again, I was reaffirmed that our Lord is big, He is moving, and He's using people to do His work worldwide.***



### *Monday, April 19 – Ticousin*

Hump day. The mission today: to finish food distribution... 440 50lb. bags, plus beans and oil. As we had all week, as we went to homes and gave the food, we made sure that people knew that this was a blessing from God, in the name of Jesus. As I had been all week, I was astounded by the gratitude in the eyes and motions of those receiving the food. In a country where voodoo is prevalent, they are realizing who is meeting their needs, and it's a beautiful thing. They are realizing that there are literally thousands of fellow Haitians who love Jesus and are willing to be the hands and feet of Christ to their fellow countrymen, and that if they choose to follow Him, they will not be alone, and will have a community of Christ in which to be a part.



### *Hope for Haiti*

In all, we gave out somewhere around 34 tons of food & 99 tents, all in the name of Christ. And even more, I believe we gave out HOPE, letting the people of Jean Jean and Ticousin know that they are not forgotten. There is a God, his name is Jesus, He cares for them deeply, and His family among them, the church, cares for them as well.

