

A Caribbean Adventure

It was a beautiful Caribbean setting: a gated community, private staff, ocean-front property, cruise ships passing by regularly, spacious and rustic surroundings—all the makings of a great college vacation.

If by “Caribbean setting” you mean “Haiti, the poorest nation in the western hemisphere”; if by “gated community” you mean, “razor wire on bare, concrete walls”; if by “ocean-front property” you mean, “sleeping on a rooftop by the sea, occasionally being rained out of our tents”; if by “private staff” you mean, “working alongside cooks from the children’s home to eat red beans and rice for the 5th day in a row”—then you have a good idea about a typical A.C.T. mission trip to Haiti. Yes, the shock of culture, lifestyle and poverty are enough to supply anyone with stories to fill ten newsletters. But these are not the stories we wish to tell:



instead we wish to share a story about a God who invites ordinary men and women into the

adventure of a lifetime, a story about how simple acts of love and sacrifice are paving the road for God’s kingdom to advance in a dark and dying world. Thanks to the regular support and prayers we receive, A.C.T. is able to continue to invite college students into this great adventure. We say to you, “Thank you,” and hope you enjoy the story . . .



Haitian teens look on eagerly as free-throws determine who will advance to the finals. Our annual basketball camp has become an anticipated event in the community of Port de Paix, Haiti.

A Ministry of Compassion

Compassion. This oft mentioned Christian virtue may be a part of our church vocabulary, but do we understand the depths of its meaning? It took a trip to Haiti for God to show us the heart of true compassion.

Compassion. The Hebrews referred to a deep-seated place in the gut, a place where the severest emotions and sympathies rested. This was the seat of true compassion. We see Jesus as the picture of authentic compassion as he ministered to the harassed and helpless people in his world, sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:35-38), as he fed the fainting crowds (Matthew 15:32), as he touched the lonely and unclean lepers (Mark 1:40-42). These actions were the overflow of deep compassion.

Compassion carries with it potential frustrations. As we join people in their suffering, their pains become ours. In Haiti, we experience this on a daily basis. Read here what Rebecca Kennedy writes about her experiences on this trip.



When I first arrived in Haiti, I was overwhelmed by the extent of the poverty there. It was so widespread and so deeply rooted that it seemed like there was no way that anything I did could make a significant difference there. It felt like pouring a single drop of water into a desert. Dave and Luke both reminded me not to underestimate the power of touching just one life, though, because we can never know the difference that might make. During the trip, I

thought a lot about the parable of the mustard seed, where Jesus compares the kingdom of Heaven to a tiny seed that, in time, grows to be a large tree where birds come to dwell. Through that, God reminded me that what I was doing was simply planting seeds. I may not get to see those seeds grow and bear fruit (I think God does that to keep me humble so I'm not tempted to take credit for what He makes grow), but I have to trust that God will send the necessary rain and sun and workers to tend the seeds that we plant.

Although at times I struggled with the poverty and need I saw there, what stands out to me the most about my time in Haiti are all the beautiful moments, all the joy shared, the smiles on the kids faces during the birthday party we threw for them, the pride in their eyes as they received their basketball medals, the laughter as they played duck-duck-goose, the humbling faith of those who had nothing but God.

Perhaps most beautiful of all was the sense of community I discovered there that went beyond simply staying in the same compound. The team that we

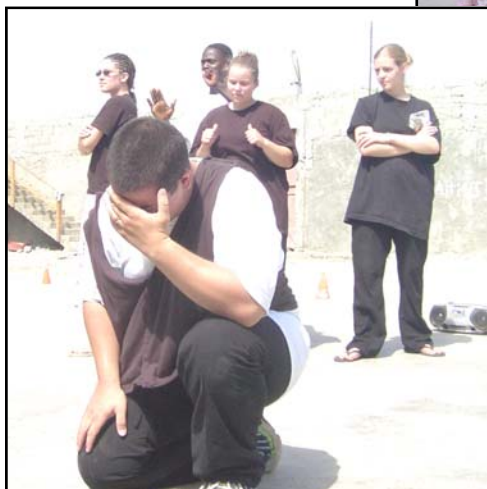


One of the biggest joys of our trip is throwing a huge birthday party for the children's home. We get to lavish gifts on all the kids and make them pizza (a real luxury there). Pictured here, Andy, a pastor at the mission chapel, receives money to buy new tires for their truck at the birthday party. One of the greatest blessings is being able to help the mission to survive with basic needs, knowing that simple gifts go a long way.

brought in this year was smaller than in past years and half the team didn't have any basketball skills to speak of, which forced us to rely more on the Haitians to help us run the basketball camp than we had in past years. Somehow that partnership on the basketball court overflowed into a close community outside of the camp. We played cards together, worshipped together, went into the town together, ate at the same table, even slept side-by-side on the roof at night. The lines between our team and the Haitians really became very blurred in a beautiful way. There was nothing forced about it, simply a genuine affection and respect for one another.



Drama presentations help us visualize the gospel message. We were blessed to have Guerry, one of the boys from the children's home, play the role of Jesus in the drama.



That sense of community really changed the way I viewed the role of missionaries. I went into the trip with the naïve view that missions were all about doing, about going and serving the people by doing things for them (and proclaiming the gospel, of course). So I was discouraged at first because there didn't seem to be much that I could do while I was there. One thing the trip taught me, though, was that the doing isn't as important as the loving, that building relationships is really the heart of missions because that's how you reach the people in a way that changes lives. That revelation is something that I brought back to Toledo with me. It changes the way I reach out to people, even here on campus, because it changes my focus from doing to building relationships. It really placed a desire in my heart to go out and get to know people, to discover who they are and somehow touch their hearts, and in that, to bear witness to Christ's love.

Jesus' first response to the compassion that welled up in His heart for the weary crowds was to instruct His disciples to pray: "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). He then sent His disciples out on their first short-term mission project and there on their trip they would learn just how faithful the Lord of the harvest is to provide for all their needs and equip them to serve.

Jessica Fager, a recent graduate of BGSU and former intern of the ministry, writes about her trip:

Since the beginning of my internship at ACT, in the spring of '07, I had been looking forward to going on my first trip to Haiti. Dave Warner has a way of telling stories about Haiti that makes you REALLY excited. Little did I know that God and Dave were setting me up. I went on the trip with a lot of reservation about my ability to coach in the basketball camp but finally came to the conclusion that I just had to do my best and trust that God would make something good come from it. As I prayed in preparation for the trip, I really wanted to leave all of my fears and preconceived notions about the trip, with God. I had no idea as to the magnitude of what He had in store, but I knew it was going to be good.



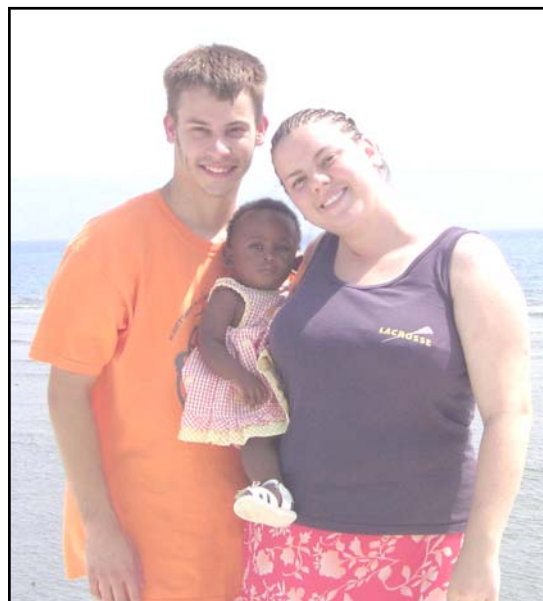
Not only did God address all of my concerns, but He worked in ways beyond what I could have ever thought. During the entire trip God gave me such a tangible sense of peace that I couldn't help but notice. Daily, He built my confidence as I worked with the boys in the camp. I had the privilege of coaching with a young man named Gepson, who translated for me. His heart and love for God, combined with his skill in basketball was so helpful and encouraging to me. In addition, I was able to make a real connection

with a lot of the kids living at the children's home. Although at times our language was a barrier, we found ways to communicate through playfulness, laughter, smiles hugs and even resting together. Getting to know and love the children revealed the heart of God to me in such a powerful way. Their reckless abandon to love and to serve one another without a second thought is how God intends for all of us to be. I have learned that to love one another is to love God Himself.



Tournament Day is exciting for everybody. The basketball camp provides an opportunity to invite your men who don't go to church to hear about Jesus.

As we prepared to return home, I really felt a desire to return to Haiti and possibly do an internship at the mission. God had captured my heart for the people in Haiti and so I began to pray that He would make it very clear as to whether I should do the internship. The day after arriving home, I went into the Bob Evans where I work and my pastor happened to be sitting at the counter. He immediately asked about the trip and so I began to share with him all that had happened. I told him that I felt a strong desire to go back and do an internship and that I was praying about it. Without hesitation he informed me that if I decided to go that the church would pay for my internship for the entire year! God had answered my prayer the day after I got back! I was filled with such joy and excitement for His answer but mostly for His clear direction. Before this trip I underestimated God yet He has done exceedingly above all I could ask or imagine!



Mark and Kim Kintner, alumni of A.C.T., met Rose, a girl they hope to adopt, for the first time while on the trip.

Mark your calendars now:

October 20, 2007

The 35th Annual A.C.T. Meeting

Watch for your invitation in the mail!

Help us celebrate the legacy of A.C.T.!

Send us ***\$35 for our 35th*** and help continue the legacy for a new generation of college students!



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from the 2007 Haiti Mission Team.**

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