

My first trip to Port-au-Prince, Haiti

January 27, 2007

I returned from Haiti last night. During my previous visits to Haiti I stayed around the border of the Dominican Republic, but this time two Haitian pastors and I took a bus directly to Port- au- Prince.

We arrived on Tuesday evening. As we drove through the center of the city my attention turned to the hundreds of people who were in the main park. I then saw what they were all clamoring around. There were two large television screens showing the soccer game between Haiti and Trinidad. We passed by mini grocery stores with 20 to 50 young men spilling out into the street in order to get a view of small television screens. When Haiti scored, the entire city erupted with cheers and the honking of horns.

Streetlight was provided by small torches set up by street vendors. It is a very dusty and dark place. The buildings and homes are made of concrete and most of them are unpainted and stained gray by the pollution.

The home I stayed in was the home of a Haitian pastor named Jean Chervil. He started preaching the gospel when he was 22 years old without a penny in his pocket. Today he has an office in a large church in Port a Prince and is the founder of 46 other churches, planted throughout his ministry. He is a short, chubby man who speaks conversational English and prays with authority. He told me numerous times during my visit that nothing is impossible for God. I slept in his daughter's bedroom. She now lives in Hackensack, New Jersey.

We spent our first day traveling to another province in the south of the country called Jacmel. We walked around the city, greeting old friends, and eating. Around 4 o'clock, one of the Haitian pastors told me that I would be preaching at a revival service in the street in an hour. I immediately went to Pastor Chervil to make sure that some sort of mistake had been made. The night before Chervil told me that I would not be preaching until Thursday. Chervil confirmed that I would indeed be preaching that night, so I better hurry up and take a shower.

We arrived at the service and there were about 200 to 300 people in the street praying. I sang, prayed, and worshiped with them. There was someone speaking in a microphone who was leading the prayers and the singing, but I couldn't figure out where he was. It wasn't until the pastor grabbed my hand and told me that it was time, that I found out where the microphone was. He led me down an alley that was lined with people. In the center of the alley there was a small space with a microphone and a speaker. There was a latrine on one side of me and a shell of a house where people were sitting in the dark.

They presented me and I began to preach with Pastor Chervil translating my English into Creole. About halfway through the sermon, Chervil said that he was tired and he gave the microphone to a new translator who didn't speak English, so I began to preach in

Spanish. As I was preaching, I was looking out through the alley and I could see a woman's eyes filling with tears. The translator did an incredible job delivering the message with passion.

After I finished preaching 6 or 7 people entered through the back of the alley to accept the Lord. Then another Haitian pastor grabbed my hand and told me it was time. We walked out of the alley and the people were flocking toward us. The Haitian pastor told me to start praying for the people. As I finished praying for one person and looked out, I saw that there were about 50 people waiting. Pastor Chervil finally told me that there wasn't enough time to pray for everyone so I should just touch them.

After the service, we went to a small house in Jacmel where the pastor told me the significance of my visit. He said that 24 years and 24 days ago, it was prophesied to him that an American missionary who lives in Santo Domingo would be visiting him in Jacmel. Pastor Chervil also remembered the prophecy. I was 2 years and 2 days old when they began waiting for an American missionary who lives in Santo Domingo. No American or Dominican missionary had visited that village in those 22 years. My visit was no accident.

The needs of the Haitian people will break your heart. There are so many orphaned children and youth. Pastor Chervil established 3 orphanages in the early 90s. Today there is only one orphanage left. The 46 boys in the orphanage live off of cream of wheat, which they are served twice a day. On Sundays they are served meat. The orphanage cannot even afford milk or a soccer ball. The boys don't leave, because on the streets they would be forced to steal to survive and pick through garbage.

The Foundation for Peace will be filling another container with donations very shortly. Please consider sending powdered milk, canned sardines, peanut butter, and vitamins to Dr. Ken Culver's house, so we can help the orphans of Haiti.