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the STOUT'S SERVING HAITI

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Strengthening Believers

Last October, when I heard Pastor Wiljean's vision for hosting a women's conference in Bois de Lance, I felt a passion grow within me. Last month, together with 19 other ladies from five US states, I had the honor of living out my passion to strengthen the women believers in Haiti. The trip has quickly turned into one of Open Door Haiti's great mission highlights as we served, worshiped with and shared with the women that hold so many of the Haitian families together. It was a large initiative involving so many different people, that honored Open Door's women of the church. God helped create an environment that was not just information exchange, but hearts connecting by way of love. The US team, led by three amazing ODH ambassadors, was skillfully prepared. Our team leaders took such care to fulfill the conference vision, but also, shepherded the hearts of the US Team--always making sure we were steady. Goodness and mercy overflowed them, onto us and God was glorified.

I am giddy as I write, recalling sweet God moments... Like when we received word that our cargo with all the conference supplies would not arrive on time. We learned that the theme of our conference "Living in Light of Eternity" was in our midst. "In God's sovereignty, He has a better plan", and we trust Him alone, not our "stuff".

Previous to our arrival Pastor had purchased new bibles for the Haitian Ladies. Creole and French bibles were given as the ladies arrived at the registration table. I witnessed women receiving their bible, for many their first one. Gently taking it from my hand, some even drawing the book up to their lips to kiss the cover, I would weep, God they love you so. Some would open the cover and read as they slowly walked to settle into the school house for the night. Oh! and how our team so delighted in knowing the ladies could read!... Beautiful...



Each day the conference was full. The US ladies were teaching God's Word, sharing practical wisdom on health and hygiene. Our Haitian sisters reading along, taking notes. Marriage was a favorite topic, which turned into a panel of US speakers answering questions from our new friends. Also, Madam Wiljean shared intimately and is a Godly example of caring for our husbands. There was plenty to do in order to serve our friends. Some of us served lunch. Piling high on their plates the main meal of the day and washing dishes in a bucket then drying them with a cut piece of fabric used as a towel.

Each day we sang songs of praise together, we danced and played hilarious games that connected us to each other. We hugged each other and held hands, had wide smiles face to face. We became friends quickly and we realized we are so much alike. I ate lunch in the campus courtyard with my Haitian sisters. Sitting next to me a darling young mother. She had brought her son age two with her to the conference. I shared my meal with this precious boy. Beef, or in creole, "bef". Watching him enjoy this treat simply filled my heart with joy.

Through my dear friend Peterson (and translator), I had the sweet honor to listen to the hearts of my Haitian sisters and pray individually with them. Many of them, their lives wrought with terrible pain and obvious poverty, cried out to me their plea and together we prayed

for deep spiritual lives in Christ. I am struck, with all their need, they ask to live boldly for Christ! There is something so raw and beautiful in my Haitian sisters; their helplessness and their love for Jesus. I was reminded that when I pray, to come helpless to Christ.

Perhaps one of the sweetest days was our last morning together. Pastor asked all of us to rise early that the Holy Spirit told him we were to go into the village streets



evangelizing.

And that we did. We woke very early, and at 4:45 Pastor paired our evangelism teams and out to the Haiti streets we went. Signing... very loud signing, very loud clapping, walking briskly, dodging cows and such on the street, the sun rising. One sister shouting in creole, was proclaiming the gospel. She would walk right up to anyone that was in view of us and tell them Jesus was LORD and that He died for their sin, turn, come, follow Him. I was weeping! I tell you, I do not speak creole, but I understood every word she said. The moment was beautiful. I was reeling

with joy, not wanting it to end. We turned a corner and saw a family in their front yard. A teenage boy was there, I recognized him, he had been a student in the ODH school. I called him by name and he remembered me. We are friends. I hadn't seen him for two years. He had grown so much! He was healthy and doing well. I felt so at home walking in the village streets. I was deeply moved and God was with us. Our Haitian sisters were taking great care over us. They could see there was apprehension in one of the ladies when a few farmers passed with machetes. She grab her hand and pulled her in close. Later my american friend told me she had been a little scared, but that she was surprised the Haitian women understood her being uncomfortable, thus holding her close. So beautiful. Pastor Wiljean, shepherding this flock of women in his church; they know the truth, he speaks it, they are learners, and he is teaching them, they admonish one another in love. One thing I continued to hear from our US team was that the Haitian women are so well suited to host their own conference. They are. They are third world, but first in the Kingdom! Under the same Father there we find one another. Our uniting under Him we spur each other on to good deeds, the church is strengthened. Recently one of the pastors at my church said, "It's important that we go to Haiti, it's important to give, but Christ is in the "going". When we go, we share; share in each others sufferings and joys. There Christ is with us.

Serving together. Kathy

Thank you for all your support and prayers. We can't do this without YOU!

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