

Haiti Cheri



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Mary Louise

By: Paul Thomas

My friend Paul Thomas gives us this glimpse into the life of Mary Louise, a young woman he met on his recent visit to New Missions in Haiti. As with so many Haitian people, Mary Louise has much to teach us if our hearts are open. - Dan Merrefield

On Sunday, the first full afternoon of my visit, some of us took a walk to a nearby village with Bertoni, a translator for New Missions. I rounded up my camera and some candy suckers and headed out with Scott, one of the full time missionaries. We walked to Bord Mer LaSalle and there we met Mary Louise and her many children. As I walked into this village and went to the first hut, Mary Louise was shaking her head. It was as if she didn't want nor care what I had to say. I started to hand out suckers and people started gathering all around me. I asked one old man if he was a Christian. He said that he was and that He loved God. I asked if his family knew God, and he said yes. Mary apparently had enough of me and started pointing to her kids, her house and a crab and started ranting and raving. She said, "How dare you come in here and tell me about God? I have prayed to God and He hasn't helped me at all. I am still starving, I still live in this shack, I still have all of these kids to feed and they are staving!" Bertoni told me, "this is her saying this, not me!!" I asked Bertoni to help me because he might be able to

relate to her situation better and she would listen to him. He just translated to her what I was saying to him! So there I was in the middle of the desert with no water. What to do? I started asking God to help me. I think He was providing me with a reality check of the obstacles of sharing your faith and God's love and that a "cookie cutter message" like you might use in the USA isn't necessarily applicable here.

I told Mary Louise that I knew she couldn't trust me because in one week I get to go back to the United States and she and her family would still be here. I told her that I didn't understand why some of us are born in one place and some in other with worse circumstances, but that God does love her and her family and I was sent to tell

her of His love. She said that God has forgotten her. I told her that the Bible has two promises for her. God will never leave her nor forsake her and that He also says that one day the last will be the first and her reward will be great in heaven. She showed me a small crab that was the family meal. It wouldn't have been enough to feed my daughter Samantha. She wasn't listening to what I said. I asked if that was dinner. She said "no, that was their only food for the day!" She was still shaking her head and Bertoni asked if I was ready to go. I

didn't want to leave. Bertoni asked me again if I was ready to leave. I told him I didn't want to leave like this. I felt in my heart that I wasn't finished here yet. But we walked off and I asked if there was a place to buy them food. In a hut probably 50 feet away people had rice and beans they would sell me. It was amazing to me how the villagers don't look out for one another. I was able to get one kilo of rice and some beans for \$6. Bertoni called for Mary Louise. You should have seen her reaction when she was told what was happening. I thought she was going to hug me. I had Bertoni tell her that the food was not from me but from God. She said that she was sure now that God sent me to her. We prayed for her and she kept saying, "Merci beaucoup."

During my entire week in Haiti, this was the only time that I was reacted to like that, which made me see things in a different light. Mary Louise was actually my first encounter with village evangelism and I felt that God had sent me to her first to "get my heart right" and not think that I was going to be the great white hope delivering the good news of Christ. Rather, I was going to be a servant and must first feel their pain and develop painful passion for these people. I grew to love them and hurt for them. I think that is the important part of the story. God showed me her first to develop that passion in me. To knock me down a peg. To bring me to my knees and pray for His help in understanding and helping this woman. To teach me not to depend on myself or my biblical knowledge.

"How dare you come in here and tell me about God? I have prayed to God and He hasn't helped me at all. I am still starving, I still live in this shack, I still have all of these kids to feed and they are staving!"

New Hope Trip to Dolval

A return trip to Dolval is planned for December 27, 2002 through January 5, 2003. Last year a team went to Dolval to help with a crusade, to paint the church and to install a generator. This article gives the Who, What, Where, When, and Why information about this year's trip. Please call Dan Merrefield at 770-479-9608 if you would like more information or if you would be interested in assisting in any way.

Who:

This trip is organized by friends of **Mitspa Haitian**

Baptist Church of Roswell, GA and is open to any one who has a passion to respond to the Great Commission and help the lost and hurting. A servant's heart and open mindedness are a must, as accommodations may not be up to American expectations.



What:

We pray that this trip will be a seed for a greater long-

term work God will do in this part of Haiti. On this trip we will focus on evangelism, preaching of the Gospel, construction projects, meeting health and medical needs, and establishing long term local contacts for future development work.

When:

Dec. 27, 2002 through Jan. 5, 2003

Where:

We will travel to Haiti's northern coast, and work in the city of Cap-Haitien and in the village of Dolval. Dolval is an isolated village located about two and a half hours away from Cap-Haitien, near the border with the Dominican Republic.



Why Haiti:

- Haiti is the most "food insecure" land in the Western Hemisphere, and the second most insecure in the world.
- The majority of the population does not have access to safe drinking water, medical care or sufficient food.
- A Haitian's life expectancy at birth is 54 years.
- The mortality rate for Haitian children under five years of age is 13 times greater than that for children in the US.
- The income per capita is estimated at \$370, although this figure disguises tremendous variations in income distribution. In fact, per capita income of more than 80 % of the population is estimated at less than \$150.
- Few social assistance programs exist, and the lack of employment opportunities remains one of the most critical problems facing the economy, along with soil erosion, overpopulation, and political instability.
- Haiti is a place of enormous spiritual warfare, with a pressing need for the Gospel to be communicated.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothed you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Matthew 25: 35-40

Why Dolval:

- Despite the poverty and difficult conditions, Dolval is a village with a solid core of Christian believers and leadership.
- We seek to equip and encourage these believers to reach out to other parts of Haiti and minister to their own.



- As with most of the country, Dolval is an extremely economically depressed area. Unlike many other parts of the country, this area has potential for substantial economic improvement.

- We may not be able to change the

entire country, but a small number of people can have a substantial positive effect on this village.

- Long term involvement in Dolval will reap substantial physical and spiritual benefits to the area and to the country as a whole.



Rev. Oris Guillaume and Rev. Saintil A. Guillaume in Haiti

Please remember to pray for:

Peace in Haiti

Mitspa Baptist Church building fund

New Hope trip to Dolval - Dec, 2002

Mitspa Baptist Church return trip to

Cap-Haitien - July 2003