

Bataille Trail January 2011

In January of 2011, a trip was planned for Haiti in the hopes that we could bring the people some much-needed provisions. The group included people from Colorado and Tennessee and the trip took us to two remote locations, one high in the Matheux mountains and the other beyond to the Couline river basin below. Matheux is the location for Fond Baptist Church and Couline is where Bataille Church is located, two of the seven churches/schools Marcel oversees and Hope for Haiti supports. We traveled to both these locations about 13 months earlier with a smaller team.

Bataille, the river basin, had not seen any visitors prior to our visit some months ago but now they have had three teams come. This time a forest ranger familiar with trail building came to teach some techniques to help build a wider, safer trail that might accommodate a motorcycle or 4 wheeler that could help with supplies and transportation.

While we were teaching them trail building skills, we got the opportunity to see the people's care of a cow which was donated to this church/school area. Seeing this, the group from the US brought a challenge before the people of Bataille. The few hours the team had with these precious saints, they were able to complete about 150 yards of trail, so the challenge was, when the trail is completed to the mountain top, a daunting task, four more cows would be donated or three cows and a bull. Then another person joined in and added a 5th animal.

As of January 13th, 2011, Marcel, the Pastor who oversees these churches, received a call from the pastor at Bataille, who climbed the mountain to find someone with a phone, and a cell tower in range, and said they need additional tools. We hand carried in 8 mattock (a type of pick/axe) but they now have around 25 people helping to forge ahead with the trail. With a selfless passion, the people have already finished a third of the trail in a matter of weeks! This is beyond anything that could be imagined. These previously forgotten ones, who have nothing, give everything!

The people of Bataille, who are poorer than any in the states, displayed a level of hospitality to the team above and beyond anything we could have expected. They brought their mats so our team would not sleep on the ground, decorated their church to welcome us, welcomed us in worship, cooked our meals, carried our packs, water and food, brought us eggs wrapped in cabbage leaves, and prepared chickens that we might have a bite of meat with our rice. If one could be loved into the Kingdom, they surely set the example.

Even more humbling were two women who volunteered to accompany the team in order to help with the cooking during our travels. One woman traveled to the mountain top church, Fond Baptist, and the other to Bataille. Words hardly tell of the trip to these locations, it's an experience. It's a bone jarring 3 + hour ride in the back of a truck to get to Fond Baptist, about 28km's, and then, for those going on to Bataille, it's all by foot along a terribly steep trail to the river basin below. This trail claimed the life of the previous pastor at Bataille, leaving 7 children and wife behind (Two of the children now live at an orphanage and one with Marcel). The trail hike takes about 2 1/2 hours going down and leaves aching muscles and shaking legs. This said, the two women from Bois Neuf came to bless us and the one that went to Bataille needed a walking stick to make the trek, one step at a time.

Day two of this journey, the team below climbed back up the mountain to join up with the rest at Fond Baptist. Marcel prepared for that Friday night and brought a small generator, projector, laptop and small sound system to show the Jesus Film. The people cheered as the story was told, praising God. It was a cold night (in the 60's) but the warmth of His story held all to the finish. Eggs that they brought were cooked that Saturday morning to nourish our bodies but, more than anything, our souls

had been nourished by the fellowship of His saints during those days. They sent us off with vegetables to take to the other churches/schools under Marcel's care, extending the blessings even further. No power, no running water at Fond Baptist or Bataille, but hearts of gold, praise God.

Leaving the mountain top and river basin churches takes us to another church in the desert just north of St Marc, called Colmini. Prior to our leaving for Haiti, it seemed the Lord had in mind goats! A few years ago a team purchased some goats and was able to deliver them. We had not planned on making this a "goat" trip but the Lord had other plans. As the days drew closer and closer to our departure, we received donations for about 12 goats, and then it just continued to go up. By departure time, it was up to about 18, and then as our team came together in Miami, it had gone up to around 23. Further discussion brought it to 27 and then, before we left Haiti, we had the means to purchase 32 goats!

Market days are different in the communities all across Haiti. So on Monday, Marcel took us to a location east of St Marc to market. We arrived early and were able to observe the process of bartering and purchasing 11 goats and one chicken. The local people said "we bought the market" that day, but it was only the goats we were focused on. These were delivered to Colmini, the church in the desert north of St Marc, during school time. Each was passed out to a child to take home. These children belong to the poorest of the poor in Haiti. They were encouraged to multiply these blessings and care for them the best they can. Oh yes, one of the previous goats has had 6 kids to date!