



Steps of progress in Haiti

By Don Lamb



AGRISTEWARDS

On July 8th through the 16th, Agristewards was a part of another trip to Chambrun, Haiti. I had the blessing of going on a trip with my wife, Jodie, and my youngest daughter, Faith. Jay Shultz and his family organized this trip and the participants were mostly families with children around the same age as Faith. The main project for this trip was to help build a concrete block wall around the campus of Nehemiah Vision Ministries. I can't go there, though, without working on the agriculture project that started in 2011 when Jay and his family lived there. There are many challenges in Haiti, but we are getting better at looking for and appreciating the slow steady progress that is being made.



In some way, I can write the same type of report after each trip. It is always about people. It is always about the relationships that are kindled and stoked, regardless of the work that is accomplished. Sometimes it is more about the people you are helping. Sometimes it is more about the people you are traveling and working with. Usually it is about both. I really enjoyed our team of about 25. The most special part of the trip was the fact that the entire Shultz family, including Anna's fiancé, was on the trip together. This was the first time that they have all been together in Haiti since Jay's accident on June 15, 2011. It was very restorative for them, and in a special kind of way,

each one of us as well. What a great testimony to experience the joy of a family who truly celebrate life together, when the snare of bitterness could be such an easy trap.

On the farm, things are progressing. I so much appreciate Wilde who is the farm manager and Jon-Jon as the main laborer. We made another trip to Double Harvest when we got there. They have always been such a huge supporter of what we are doing. They gave us swiss chard and egg plant that we could plant. We also planted corn; because... well, I'm always gonna plant corn! They started a nice harvest of sweet potatoes while we were there. The other main project we kicked off was the discipline of record-keeping.



It was a good trip for teaching, but I have to admit that there wasn't as much teaching of the Haitians as I would like. The families that were with us all got a taste of "Farming God's Way" and why we do what we do. Some of them really caught on well and honestly could be involved in teaching the concepts in the future. There was also another group from Indianapolis there at the same time. They were from a hunger relief organization, so it was engaging for them to learn how to teach someone to grow food for themselves.

I call farming in Haiti, "extreme farming". It is so hot. The sun bears down hard on that land every day. We have water for irrigation, but it is salty water so you need to use it sparingly. The soil is depleted of nutrients, but they have access to plenty of goat manure. It is just hard. When I mentioned looking for the slow progress, this is what I mean. I have had the blessing of returning there many times now and each time it gets better. It is easy to forget that the farm used to be a patch of scrub trees that someone would make charcoal out of. There is a permanent water tank that is filled with a pump. There is a bunch of "Chapin" drip tape for irrigation. There is even a permanent storage unit there now for tools (thanks to JL Williams).



Our group built a big section of wall. We planted stuff. We made and renewed friendships with Haitians. We enjoyed each other. We studied the book of Nehemiah and thought about how to apply that to our lives. Our kids had a blast with each other and also got to participate in "English camp" teaching Haitian kids. I hope and pray that our continued involvement there is an encouragement to the Haitians as they make improvements in the way they live. Most of all, I hope that they see God's hand in the time that we spent there.



Please pray for the Haitians to grasp on to the importance of keeping good records. They have so much potential. Pray that they will see their own potential through the steps of progress that are being made. Thank you so much for your support. You are an important piece of what God is doing through Agristewards!