

Mike Frazier ventures to Haiti for mission trip

Written by Molly Brandt

Mike Frazier has been doing physical labor his whole life, but this time the scene was quite different. From Jan. 12-19, Frazier served a mission trip in Leogane, Haiti.

With 24 people of all ages and from all different backgrounds, the mission group Mission E4, based in Hubbardston, Mass., traveled to the Third World country of Haiti where the organization has a staff member and program in-country.

Mission E4 in Haiti focuses on bettering the country as well as helping to boost the local economy. To help with this effort, they employ local Haitians and buy all material locally. In Leogane, the organization runs a school, church, boys' and girls' orphanages, clinic and gift shop.

Children in the schools are all sponsored, which includes Christian schooling, hot meals and materials for uniforms.



Mike Frazier, pictured at top right, interacts with some Haitian kids during a game of duck, duck goose. Games, skits, worship, baptisms and construction all make up Frazier's mission trip to Haiti last month.

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Frazier, who is a 25-year-old Amherst resident employed by Camp Machasay, felt God laid the opportunity to serve the people of Haiti on his heart about a year and half ago when his friend Joe, who is actually the site manager in the country, suggested the idea of going overseas to serve. Months later, Frazier put the call into action and feels extremely blessed to have had that opportunity.

Frazier's group primarily worked at the school to help furnish the classrooms with benches, painting, sheeting and chalkboards. The upper level of the school holds an assembly area where Frazier's team did skits, songs and games with the kids. The primary focus of their skits were on the life of Joseph, Frazier explained, as other mission teams serving there would focus on different biblical characters and stories.

Aside from working at the school, the team helped move rock to build new walls around compounds in different locations. Basically, each of the days he was there, they would help at a different location. Meetings, worship sessions, meals, baptisms and swimming were in the schedule as well.

Having been on a mission trip to Juarez, Mexico before, Frazier has experienced poverty, but the extent he witnessed in Haiti was so much worse than he expected or imagined. In the area Frazier served, there seemed to be no jobs and no money while the "homes" were scraps of tin with dirt floors and scattered banana and palm tree branches.

The mindset of the people, Frazier explained, is so different from America's, in that day by day they have to question things as seemingly simple as, "What's for lunch today? Will we have lunch tomorrow?" Frazier pointed out that instead of trying to heal sick children, Haitians have to simply focus on the healthy ones because they oftentimes have virtually no hope for ill children.

Mission E4's church on base was planted four years ago, and according to Frazier, witch doctors in the area threatened to kill any pastor at that time. Frazier said, "I honestly believe the Lord's protection kept the pastor and church starters safe."

Now seven years later, the presence of voodoo has decreased, although it is still existent, as it

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is in most areas of Haiti. Frazier's first voodoo experience in country was on their very first bus trip when he saw a big loud brass band and drinking, questioned it, and discovered it was a sort of "rara," or basically voodoo-inspired demonic activity.



Enjoying the sunrise and watching the fishermen come in from a night of fishing, Mike Frazier, at left, enjoys some early-morning fellowship with a small group of team members he got to know in Haiti during his January mission trip.

Frazier contrasted the American society where it is very popular to marry to the Haitian society where only about 10 percent of the population is married. He noticed a completely different family structure, where men would have multiple children out of wedlock, then abandon them due to lack of resources.

Mission E4's church has helped bring marriage to Haiti, marrying about 35 couples since its start, which is impressive for the 80-100 people that regularly attend church.

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While he didn't feel he necessarily stayed long enough to experience culture shock, conditions were certainly different in Haiti. The place his team stayed ran on a diesel generator, which was on and off various times throughout the day. In addition, driving conditions in Haiti are drastically different from what Frazier is used to, with a lot of honking and overall carelessness.

In working with the Haitians, Frazier found that communication was easiest by way of hand signals and basic gestures, although he hopes to learn some foreign language they speak. French and Spanish would both leave him capable of some communication with the locals, whereas their Haitian-Creole language is quite complicated.

"Looking back on the experience, I'm definitely grateful for where I live and the mindset that the Lord has blessed me with," Frazier said. A passion within him developed to have more intensity in his walk with the Lord, be more vocal about what he believes and not be afraid of rejection. Regarding ministering to others, Frazier said with a smile, "We should be more like the lion, less like the lamb."

Frazier wishes to thank the many people in the area for their support, whose funding made this trip possible. He feels that God honestly put this trip on his heart and made sure money wasn't an issue.

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