

Chiropractic in Haiti

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I had the magnificent opportunity to travel to the country of Haiti as a chiropractic missionary earlier this year. I traveled along with seven other chiropractors and four missionaries associated with Global Christian Ministry, Cocoa, Florida. Our trip began with the eight of us meeting our four missionary hosts from Global Christian Ministry in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. We anticipated an early departure via a nine-passenger prop plane from Ft. Lauderdale.

I had heard the usual horror stories of events that have transpired in Haiti over the years. Our group was a little concerned about safety and of course the accommodations that we had awaiting us. We were reassured that the trip would be safe and would be one of great satisfaction to us. We departed Ft. Lauderdale in the early morning and after a brief stopover for fuel in the Bahamas and a four and one-half hour flight, we arrived at Cap-Haitian Airport, in Haiti.

The poverty of this area was immediately evident. We saw children drinking from a drainage ditch along the side of the road, and those people that had a set of clothes, were sparsely dressed. Our host in Haiti, Fred Morisette, the founder of Global Christian Ministries, a nondenominational missionary group, had met us at the airport. He explained that because of the poor road conditions, half of the trips he makes from the mountains of RanQuite (where we would be going) resulted in his truck breaking down or getting a flat tire.

We loaded ourselves and our supplies (we were only allowed 40 pounds of clothing and/or food for our week-long stay) into Fred's four-wheel drive, Ford diesel pickup. The ride that followed was close to that of an amusement attraction. The condition of the road was so poor that walking was difficult. The 15-mile trip up into the mountains of RanQuite became almost an eight-hour ordeal, taking us along the steep mountain side and traversing along the sides of sheer cliffs. We arrived at Fred's missionary at around dusk.

Our first encounter with the villagers we would be adjusting was very encouraging. The little children of the village literally held our hands and just wanted to touch us. The love and appreciation that they were sharing was a sign of things to come.

Being exhausted from two long days of travel, the little cots that would be our beds for the next several days looked awfully good. I don't think there was one of us that took more than 10 minutes to fall into a sound sleep.

Our first day in Haiti started very early. Since there are no distractions when the sun goes down, people go to sleep early and arise before the sun comes up. We were scheduled to begin our chiropractic care sometime in the late morning. To our amazement, by 7 a.m. there were 500 to 1,000 people waiting to see us. I was unanimously chosen by our group to give a patient orientation and explain chiropractic through an interpreter to the Haitian people. I gave a brief explanation that the power that made the body is the only power that can heal the body; that life flows from above down,

inside outwardly, and if life gets interfered with because a bone in the neck moves out of place and prevents it (life) from flowing, the body gets sick. Chiropractors adjust the spine and its bones back into place, allowing the life energy to flow uninterrupted and the body to heal itself. We, as chiropractors, will move the bone off the nerve and God will do the healing.

Upon finishing this talk, we were literally overcome by hundreds of people trying to get on our makeshift adjusting benches. To keep the hundreds of people in some type of order, the missionary hosts set up ropes to hold back the crowds.

The eight chiropractors that traveled to Haiti were my daughters, Tina and Selina Sigafoose, who practice in Pennsylvania; Larry Webster; Dawn Von Ruden; Eddie Cohen from Georgia; Medhat Alolatar, a liaison from Life Chiropractic College; Jim Dubel from New Jersey, and myself. To say that the eight of us worked feverishly and with tremendous enthusiasm, would be an understatement. We were seeing as many people as we physically could, in the shortest amount of time. Language was no barrier as our only communication was through an interpreter who told the people to roll over from their stomach to their back as we worked.

The magnificent thing about this trip was the fact that no insurance regulations affected our care. No financial barriers stood in the way, and the only practice management that our group needed was that of ropes and lines to hold the people back.

This type of massive care continued throughout our stay. Word traveled quickly from village to village about the miracles that were happening and the people couldn't understand why. They knew they felt better and the doctors had only used their hands. Many of the people had healings from health problems that had plagued them their entire lives.

Since we've been back, I've heard people ask if one or two adjustments really made a difference? The answer is yes, it makes all the difference to every person that had an adjustment.

The primitive lifestyle that these people live and the extreme poverty that they deal with on a daily basis, seems minor to the health problems that they have. Like the little boy who drank from a drainage ditch at the side of the road, if his body can adapt to that environment, it will be that much stronger with a chiropractic adjustment.

As a group, we adjusted over 3,500 people. That is not a pumped-up number. The eight of us sat down together and very conservatively came up with that estimate. It is our understanding that the people walked two to three days or were carried by other villagers to see us. Our need is to return and bring chiropractic to these people who do not educationally question why they got well. They are very simple yet intelligent people, and their understanding of life is remarkable.

In the short span of time to see as many people as we did in Haiti, was a life-changing experience for all of us, as it was pure unadulterated chiropractic in its simplest form. We move the bone off the nerve; God does the healing. It was as simple as that.

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