

# From where I stand

by Amber Noblit



The moment I stepped off the plane an all too familiar smell and the hot humid air let me know I was back in Haiti. In the recent months I had been asking God to give me the courage to stand where few have stood, not really sure what that would look like. Since the earthquake of 2004 I had led 11 teams to Haiti, but each time was so different, as if it was my first time. The drive through Port au Prince was very surreal. Crumbled buildings and make shift tents were spread as far as the eye could see. Media had not captured the devastation this country had endured.

Finally we arrived at what would be home for the next seven days. We were greeted by smiling faces, all ready to impact Haiti for Jesus. As plans were discussed for the week a small village was mentioned. To their understanding it had been a place that had received very little aid after the earthquake. The idea of helping people who had not received aid was not only exciting but also a bit intimidating.

Early the next morning we loaded the bus for another long drive up the side of the mountain. As the bus came to a jerky stop, it was as if time stood still. Haitians peering out of their pieced together homes seemed fearful of a bus full of strange Americans. We departed the bus, and despite the hesitation of the Haitians, soon our teens were busy playing games of soccer and jump rope with the children.

One of the Haitian leaders approached me to ask if I would go with them up to the top of the village where the pastor of the church lived. I wanted to stay and play with the kids, but hesitantly I agreed to go. As we began to traverse the rocky, uneven hillside, I quickly became aware that not only were the living conditions of the village inadequate, but also their sewage system. Ruts in the ground had been made for the raw sewage to run down the mountain; the mountain I was now trying to walk up. On our journey up, it began to rain. Before long my sandals were full of mud and human waste that was rapidly flowing together down the side of the mountain. Disgusting as it was, I determined to hike on.

Soaking wet and very dirty we finally made it to the top where we found the pastor. He was a gentle old man who loved God and loved God's people. In Haitian Creole he said, "I received word that you may be coming. I prayed that it was true.

Can you come and pray for this dying baby?" We followed him into a home made of two tarps and some old galvanized metal. There lied an almost lifeless baby girl wrapped in a t-shirt on the dirt floor. She was unresponsive and very weak. Struck with Cholera, this little girl was almost certain to die unless she could receive the proper medical attention. We prayed for her and quickly made arrangements to get the baby to the hospital located at the ministry compound.

As I stepped outside to see the now clear sky, I could hear the laughter of the playing children in the valley rising up the mountain like a song. I stood there for a moment and looked out over the village below. Then remembering my journey, my thoughts shifted and my attention was drawn to my feet. For a moment I became nauseous. There was no telling what kinds of disease-infested fluids were now drying into the fibers of my sandals and skin.

Looking away from the disgusting site, I was quickly reminded of the fact that I was standing where few if any Americans had stood. We were the first to offer help to these people and what an honor it was to be used by Jesus. My journey up the side of that mountain had been hard, but because we persevered this baby would now have a chance to live. Wiping the tears from my eyes I realized that in order for us to stand where few have stood we have to walk through stuff most would never walk through.