

Reflections from a First Timer, Mary Ann Plumb

My first trip to Haiti was one of the most humbling experiences of my life; an experience that I am most grateful for and one that has changed me forever. I didn't know what my reaction would be to this foreign land and nothing could have prepared me for what I saw.

The traffic was so bad that we rarely got above 5 mph in the van which gave us a front row seat to the abject poverty of these proud people. The streets



were lined with Haitians selling their wares to support their families. The structures most scene were cargo containers turned into store fronts and small tin or stucco houses too small to adequately house these families. This was in stark contrast to the opulent homes we encountered on our drive up the mountain to visit the Baptist Mission. The farther up the mountain we went, the more foreign it felt. The beautiful green hillsides and breathtaking views were not the Haiti we had come to know throughout the week. It was hard for me to reconcile the difference. The Baptist Mission was lovely; full of rich history and still working to serve the people of Haiti.

Other memorable things from the trip include roosters that crow all day, the metal work shops filled with amazing works of art, the animals in the street, the horrible traffic, and the lasting friendships made among team members.

The most memorable event however was our visit to the Village of Hope School where we distributed Christmas gift bags to the children and staff. It was fun to see that teenagers aren't so different around the world. Their circumstances are vastly different but the girls still giggled as the boys got their gifts and the older students seemed unimpressed with Papa Noel. But the little ones were amazing and they melted my heart!

As I returned to the warmth and comfort of my home, I knew that I had left a part of me in Haiti. I will carry the images of the less than humble dwellings and poverty and the beautiful faces of the children with me always. And above all else, know that no matter your circumstance, if you trust in God, all things are possible!