

I Got Back on the Horse that Threw Me Off

Don Hopkins and I have just returned from Haiti. It was good to be there and good to get home safely.

Counting Sheep: I started a sheep flock program a couple of years ago where I provide 2 female sheep to a family. There were 80 families at the start of the program. Buying sheep just two at a time felt like I was making really slow progress. To my surprise, Chrisnet reported that we were half way. 82 sheep being shepherded by 41 families. The 36 kids in Texas who took on the sheep project for their VBS goal made a HUGE advancement in the project when they bought 36 sheep this summer.

I wanted to meet the families and see the sheep so Chrisnet and an ever-growing entourage of “boys” that have followed me everywhere since my first trip to Haiti in 1996, escorted Don and me all over the mountains around Seguin. We covered miles of mountain trails, reaching an altitude of 6,300 ft. We passed through the Stone Gardens, visited the water falls with all of its Century plants, and hiked through the National Forest. Below, are the plants that I’ve been told grow for 100 years and then blossom and die. No one I know has seen the beginning and end of the plant. I have seen the blossom that shoots about 20 ft. into the air. As I stand next to the falls, in the midst of all these plants and surrounded by a forest of huge pine trees and ferns, I feel like I’ve stepped back into the Garden of Eden. To be able to stand in this paradise, hidden on a mountain top surrounded by the poorest country in the western hemisphere, is truly and “mind-blowing” experience.

So that you know I’m not making this up, below is a picture of me, in the mountains, surrounded by sheep and forest. For 16 years, I’ve always taken the pictures of my teams and their projects and shared their experiences in the newsletters. After seeing myself in a picture I think I will go back to photographing everyone else.



Don Hopkins, a friend from Hickory Valley Christian Church, Chattanooga, TN, was the perfect travel companion for the week. He was just 7 months and a few days younger than me, so he didn't run circles around me as we hiked in the mountains. He also liked my cooking, which I must say turned out pretty good considering that I was experimenting with a variety of freeze-dried items, and cooking everything on a tiny stove-in-a-can that I found in The Sportsman's Warehouse. We had the one pot so I made coffee and then while we enjoyed our morning drink, I made our meal.



We had a 20-gallon drum of filtered water and had 10 gallons left over to give to our hostess when we left. Based on our water usage, you need not ask how often we showered during our week.



We also had the fun task of finding some little girls who would fit into the half-dozen pillowcase dresses Connie Coblenz, my sister-in-law, had given me. All the red T-shirts worn by the boys on page 1 are left-overs from an HVCC VBS that Judy Pease supplied.

I wanted an opportunity to speak to the people about things not of this world but all about things concerning our future eternal destination. I was honored by the people of Seguin as they responded to my invitation to join me on a Wednesday mid-day meeting. They filled the church building and listened intently to my every word, not mine but His, and not even my voice but the voice of my translator. I did give a part of my talk in Creole and my translator and the crowd both told me that I spoke perfectly.



As a part of this week in Haiti, I have launched an aggressive Discipleship program that directly involves 10 young people and will impact a large number of the population on the mountain. To make this happen I need your help. I need your prayers for success and I need your support to provide the essentials of daily survival along with funds needed for education and implementation of the program.

I was able to deliver 4 very high-end HP laptops, thanks to an HP charity program and Ken Powers (FL), and these will help us to stay connected and be able to communicate as well as implement the program.

The Sheep Project is on the home stretch. If you would like to purchase one or more sheep for any reason (Christmas gift, a birthday present or just because you want to), sheep are about \$60 each and I supply them in pairs because sheep get lonely by themselves. 39 families to go.

Thanks for letting me share.

