

Haiti Orientation Document

But God Ministries seeks to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ through acts of compassion and to share the love of Christ through every aspect of the project as we develop sustainable communities.

Haiti was considered one of the most challenging environments prior to the earthquake. The 2012 disaster has magnified those challenges. Beyond the typical international challenges of language barriers and loose schedules, we are also dealing with corruption, very poor infrastructure, damaged communications, and the rapid evolution of services and programs. Patience is expected and required. Even with its challenges, we see the beauty of the Haitian people and we see great hope. There are many wonderful followers of Christ in Haiti, and we sincerely believe this is an amazing moment in the history of this nation.

But God Ministries expects all team participants to understand and share this compassion for Haitian people and our dedication to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ through all we do there. Thus, each team participant serving in Haiti with But God Ministries will be expected to abide by the Team Member Covenant:

- Willing to follow the doctrinal beliefs of BGM (found at www.butgodministries.com)
- Willing to abide by the BGM dress code* (found in this document)
- Willing to refrain from use of tobacco products, alcohol or profanity while on the mission trip
- Willing to refrain from pairing off between members of the opposite sex during the mission trip
- Willing to perform any ministry related task assigned to you.

NOTE: BGM reserves the right to decline any application for team membership for any reason, including (but not limited to) theological differences or personal behavior deemed incompatible with its ministry and/or testimony.)

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS RELEVANT TO BOTH GALETTE CHAMBON AND THOMAN UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Immunizations (none required, but strongly recommended)

You should consult with your physician about these. The health department is the most cost efficient provider:

- DPT - Tetanus/diphtheria update (if over 5 years rather than the usual 10 due to the exposure risk)
- Hepatitis A and B
- Typhoid (oral or injection)
- Oral malaria prophylaxis – malarone is one that is highly recommended as it causes the least sun sensitivity

** The Hepatitis A and B immunization is given in a series of shots. For that reason, immunizations should be started at least six weeks before your departure date. Immunizations must be completed two weeks before departure in order for them to be effective.*

Food/Water: We will provide two meals a day. You are responsible for breakfast and snacks. Consider cereal, granola bars, protein bars/shakes, crackers, jerky, fruit snacks, pop-tarts, etc. #1 RULE: Check everything that goes into your mouth and wash your hands often! Only eat food prepared by your group, only drink bottled or filtered water, and only brush your teeth in filtered water.

Charity: Haitian people will often beg from others more fortunate than themselves. You will be asked to give often. Please follow these guidelines to promote healthy behavior throughout the community.

- Please do not give out money or pay any expenses for anyone.
- If someone asks you for something of yours, do not say “maybe.” “Maybe” often means “yes.” At the end of the trip you can arrange to leave things you want given away discreetly and appropriately.

Money: The most we recommend you take is \$50 - \$100 for airport meals, emergencies and possible souvenirs. Take nothing larger than \$20 bills. Most Haitians will take \$1 bills for anything you buy.

- Each person will need to be prepared with a \$10 bill to pay a tourist fee and \$2.00 per cart for luggage transport whenever the carts are acquired inside the airport in Port-au-Prince. Each cart will hold 3-4 pieces of luggage. The team members will also need to be prepared to pay the But God Ministries Haitian staff member that meets them \$2.00 per piece of luggage for every piece of luggage that is transported on the carts to the BGM vehicle.
- On Thursdays at the Galette Chambon Hope Center, a market will be available for Haitians in the area to sell their handmade items to team members. If you plan to buy items at the market, please have small bills with you. Change will not be available.

Cell Coverage: For AT&T customers, there is outstanding cell coverage where you will be staying and working. Check with your cell provider for texting, internet, and calling rates. Also, check for international plans that may be applicable. You can come home with a considerable cell phone bill if you are not careful.

Internet Service: There is no Wi-Fi service for team members in Haiti.

Haiti Team House Guidelines: We have electricity, bunk beds, toilets, showers, and a kitchen. This is remarkable in Haiti. You will be in tight quarters so be considerate of one another. Please follow these guidelines to ensure a peaceful and productive mission.

- We are on limited power. Please conserve as much as possible. FOR THOMAN, do not bring hair dryers. They drain the power quickly before the generator is ready. We recommend headbands, bandanas, and ponytails.
- Do not flush feminine products. Everything except human waste and toilet paper goes in the trash can. Do not put razors or aerosol cans in the trash can - bring them home with you for disposal.
- Everyone in your group will need to take a shower each day. Please limit your shower time.
- Space is limited. Please be clean, neat, and tidy – mindful of other people’s space.
- Please be mindful of others while they are trying to rest.
- DO NOT invite children to eat with the team at the Hope Center.

Personal Conduct

- Carry yourself in a way that honors Christ and offers a positive witness to the Haitian people.
- Be enthusiastic, positive, and supportive of group members and team leaders.
- Conduct yourself conservatively and respectfully. Dating is proactively forbidden, even for existing couples. Romantic entanglements complicate mission work and distract from building friendships.
- Use of alcohol and tobacco is never allowed.

- DO NOT GIVE OUT YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS, phone number, or mailing address to Haitian friends.
- DO NOT LEAVE the Hope Center village area without approval from the missionary or team host.

Clothing (See Packing List for Specific List)

- **Regarding tops/shirts:** Wear only t-shirts with sleeves and modest necklines. Do not wear tank tops. If you wear a sleeveless shirt or shirt with low V or scoop neckline, you will be asked to change. If you do not have t-shirts with sleeves and modest necklines, you will need to purchase or borrow them.
- **Regarding shorts:** Do not wear Nike shorts or running shorts. Wear basketball or soccer length shorts. Shorts should be at least mid-thigh. If you wear inappropriate length shorts, you will be asked to change. If you do not have appropriate length shorts, you will need to purchase or borrow them.
- **We reserve the right to ask an individual to change any attire that is not appropriate.**
- **Shoes:** Wear one and bring a second pair of comfortable shoes. Consider bringing flip flops for the shower. Work boots will protect against incredible thorns.
- **Church:** Women – some sort of skirt; Men – long pants and golf shirt
- Don't bring anything you can't live without.
- It is hot, but the answer is not less clothing. Consider clothing hikers would choose. "Quick dry" clothes are not required but they are helpful.
- **Worksite:** Long pants and long sleeves will protect from the sun and the environment. Bring a hat with a wide brim or a protective flap for your ears and neck.
- Take enough clothes to wear the entire week. There will be no opportunity to wash clothes except in case of emergency.

Haiti background we all should know

Haiti occupies the western third of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, sharing a border with the Dominican Republic. It sits about 700 miles off the coast of Miami and occupies an area just slightly smaller than the state of Maryland. Port-au-Prince is the capital. Haiti is rugged and mountainous. Deforestation has left the country bare and contributed to large-scale loss of topsoil. Much of the countryside suffers from chronic drought. It has a very large young population, in part because of a high birthrate and shorter life expectancies – 42% are younger than 14, 54% are between 15 and 64 years old, and just 4% are 65 and older. Over 9 million people live in Haiti, making it the second most densely populated country in the Americas – and one of the fastest growing. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. More than 2/3 of the population is unemployed. Haitian Creole is the official language with some French spoken.

RELIGION IN HAITI 80% of the population is Roman Catholic and 95% practice a Voodoo religion. About 16% of the nation is considered Protestant, with about 4% being Islamic, Jewish, or Hindu. Notice the math does not add up correctly. Inherited from West African practices, Voodoo is essentially a cult of the spirits. Voodoo acknowledges God as creator of heaven and earth who has removed himself from the daily problems of mankind, so he has delegated spirits as intermediaries. Male “witch doctors” called *hougans*, and their female counterparts, called *mambos*, are chief interpreters and “ministers” of the religion. Thus, a voodooist will consult the spirits to seek their approval or counsel before engaging in any activity.

From the mid-1600's African slaves transported to Haiti were forbidden by their French masters to practice their ancestral religion. Forced to convert to Roman Catholicism, the slaves never deserted the spirits, but secretly worshipped them in the guise of Catholic saints. They do not regard this blending of the two faiths as profaning either Catholicism or Voodoo. They see the blending as an enrichment of their whole religious experience.

Therefore, what is predominately practiced in Haiti is a blending of these two religions into a "folk religion" that accounts for most of the religious climate of the nation. This is a religion of confusion; with its abundance of gods and beliefs. Our hope is to bring them to a point of belief in a personal Savior, Jesus Christ, who offers them eternal life.

American Culture vs. Haitian Culture...

Note: **Scroll down for a list of practical observations**

Note: For questions or comments, I invite your feedback at

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Great care, patience, sensitivity and a generous dose of mutual trust and respect are required as we endeavor to be in healthy cross-cultural relationship and partnership. It's often a tough road to navigate, but it's a worthy God honoring and rewarding journey! When it comes to our church partnerships, this is where RMI comes in. We can help bridge the gap.

RMI American missionaries on the ground in Haiti, along with our national missionaries, both with a little more multicultural experience, developed trust and understanding, can have mutually honoring, but also frank, honest and even awkward conversations face to face, so that we can understand one another and communicate that understanding with both our American and Haitian church people. For instance, the RMI national team can ask we American missionaries straight forward questions like, what in the world are these crazy American's thinking?! ;)

Generally, the Haitian culture is based on shame (pride, embarrassment, respect, honor) whereas American culture is based on guilt (judeo-christian, absolutes, sin, morality). Paul Heibert, renowned missiologist and anthropologist says, "Guilt cultures emphasize punishment and forgiveness as ways of restoring the moral order; shame cultures stress self-denial and humility as ways of restoring the social order."

Here are some other differences from my American cultural perspective.

- Americans focus on productivity, Haitians focus on mutual respect and relationship.
 - American's get right down to business, Haitians take time to develop the relationship and hold business conversations for the very end.



Mobilizing Global Partnerships



- It's rude to ask for directions, or anything else, without first taking the time to greet someone, even if you don't know them.
- Americans focus on the future, Haitians typically focus on today.
- Americans focus on the clock, Haitians focus on the event.
- Americans prioritize authenticity over appearance, Haitians prioritize appearance over authenticity.
 - Americans will come to church in very casual attire, Haitians wear their best.
 - Americans don't care what is on their feet, Haitians will shine their shoes the day before church, and wipe them again before entering the church building.
- American will lie to shame someone, Haitians will lie to not shame someone.
- Americans think about the future and how to make things better, Haitians think about today and how to meet basic needs.
 - Americans have the luxury (time, wealth, opportunity) to think about the future, Haitians do not and therefore focus on fighting to survive today.
 - Americans are always trying to make things better, Haitians will make do with what they have.
 - Americans are crippled when they don't have the resources they desire, Haitians find a way to continue.
- Americans trust their fellow man, Haitians typically distrust those they don't know, especially government authorities and institutions who have burned them in the past.
- Americans are emotionally reserved, often misinterpreted as cold disinterest, Haitians are passionate, emotionally demonstrative and expressive, often misinterpreted as anger.
- Americans think EVERYTHING is natural (science, flesh, earthly), Haitians think everything is supernatural (divine, spiritual).
 - American will assume someone with mental illness has a chemical imbalance, Haitians will assume they are demon possessed.
 - Americans pray little and Haitians pray a lot.
- Americans de-emphasize immediate and extended family. Haitians emphasize immediate and extended family.
- American's emphasize the individual, Haitians focus on community.
 - Americans take care of themselves, Haitians take care of everyone in their sphere of influence.
- American children are expressive and involved, Haitian children are to be seen but not heard.
- Americans value order, control, structure, Haitians do not.
- Americans value form (aesthetics), Haitians value function.

It's not weird, it's just different.

Additional Notes:

1. Discipline of children
2. Sexual relationships, promiscuity -- often based on economics
3. Created mentality of "being given" -- learned responses-- asking for things, money, children being taught "give me one dollar", etc.
4. Lots of focus on ceremony -- i.e. extensive and expensive celebration for kindergarten graduation, "promotion ceremonies", etc.
5. Many requests for financial sponsorships of various kinds --"godparents", help with wedding, funeral expenses, school expenses, etc. Even if asked for a "loan", assume that it is a gift instead.
6. Failure of Christian discipleship -- attendance at church, "salvation", etc. does not mean that values of honesty, integrity, sexual purity, etc. are recognized, valued, or practiced
7. Assumption among all that having white skin infers power, wealth, privilege
8. Haitian enthusiasm/involvement in making things work (ie. piecing together broken down vehicles, multiple people directing traffic) vs. American's being more hands off (car doesn't work, lets call a mechanic)- some of this may be economic

9. Haitians value food. Americans value being full. Haitians will not eat food they do not think is well-prepared, whereas Americans often see food as fuel. Americans seem willing to try new foods. Haitians are pretty picky and tend to not want to try new foods (they strongly prefer their own Haitian food).

Commonly Used Haitian Creole Words and Phrases

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| Good morning. | Bonjou |
| How are you? | Kouman ou ye? |
| I'm fine, thank you. | Mwen byen, mèsi |
| Good afternoon. | Bonswa |
| Good night. | Bon Nwit |
| See you later. | N A Wè Pita |
| I don't speak Haitian Creole. | Mwen pa pale Kreyol |
| Do you speak English? | Èske ou pale Angle? |
| What is your name? | Kijan ou rele? |
| My name is... | Mwen rele... |
| Do you have children? | Èske ou gen timoun? |
| God bless you. | Bondye beni ou |
| Jesus loves you. | Jezi remen ou |
| How old are you? | Kilaj ou? |
| I am happy to see you. | Mwen kontan we ou |
| Do you go to church? | Èske ou ale legliz? |
| How much is that? | Konbyen sa a koute? |
| What time is it? | Kilè li ye? |
| 1,2,3,4,5 | Youn, de, twa, kat, senk |
| Red, white, blue, black | Wouj, blan ble, nwa |