



# World Wide Village, Incorporated

## "They want you to feel welcome": Interview with David Ophaug (May 18, 2010)

This week we return to our interview series with comments by David Ophaug, a gentleman who went to Haiti with World Wide Village Inc., in early 2010:

### **Interview with David Ophaug:**

#### ***How many times have you been to Haiti with WWV?***

This was my first time in Haiti.

#### ***What activities did you participate in? Where did you go? What did you see?***

Basically this was a familiarization trip. Randy (Mortensen) had set up several business meetings with a number of organizations to discuss collaboration, in addition to touring several of WWV facilities. We toured the hospital in Leogane and visited with the Mayor, Gael Jean, of one of the suburbs in Port Au Prince. Then we met with Leslie and Dirk Dijk, a banker from Holland, regarding an entrepreneurial contest they were launching for college students (the Dutch would support 25 entrepreneurial business start ups). We also visited Dr. Yves Jean Joseph and his wife at the clinic in Luly. Meetings continued with James Kishlar, Arn Foundation (they have set up a wonderful greenhouse) and many others.

#### ***Did any locals say or do anything that made you think? What was it?***

We were up at (Arcahaie) on Saturday and the children came out to meet us. They came up from behind and held my hand and wanted to know my name. I asked our interpreter, Peter, "Why do they come up and hold your hand?" His response? "David, they want you to feel welcome here." I also had a chance to pray over the children, and I was impressed by how quick and eager they were to pray. They huddled together immediately, folded their hands, bowed their heads, and we prayed. They were



also very proud of their school. When I asked them to sing a song, they immediately had a great song that they sang very loudly and were happy to do so. One young boy named Orlando kept asking me to get him a pair of shoes, over and over again. I now realize that he needs a pair of shoes to enroll in school, which means that he will receive a meal at least five times a week.

### ***How did going to Haiti change how you face life back in the United States?***

I will never complain about another pothole on the streets in Minneapolis again! The disparity between what we have and what they have, the chasm-it is just horrendous. I am energized to focus my attention, energies, and abilities to support a nation or a small group of people whom WWV has selected to help bring them out of the struggles of daily survival. Seeing an image of a mother sitting on a dirt floor in the entrance of a stick hut doing the hair of a little child in her lap-that was a powerful image for me. I am going to redirect my attention and my abilities to support people who are extremely grateful for whatever we can do for them. ... In Haiti, there is an attitude of humble gratitude that really inspired me to redirect my focus and efforts in life to support the very basic needs of the Haitians through WWV.

### ***What was the most encouraging part of the trip for you? Discouraging?***

To me, the most encouraging part of the trip was meeting with young Christian men in positions of leadership within education, government, healthcare, agriculture, and finance whose desire is to establish a righteous infrastructure upon which the Kingdom of God can be established. I was very impressed with Carlos Sanchez with Esperanza. He has a Bible study with his staff from 8-10 am, knowing that he is discipling them, explaining to his employees that they are not just in micro- lending, but they are using that business as a platform for spreading the Gospel in the marketplace. I felt a connection with mayor Gael Jean, who has 80 young men whom he is training and equipping in the principles of the Kingdom of God so that the new leaders will build the country on a foundation of righteousness.

The most discouraging part of the trip for me was the fact that Port Au Prince is a city of walls and iron gates that separate the "haves" from the "have nots". I believe the earthquake was God responding to the cries of the people and sending the walls crashing down.

### ***How would you encourage others to pray for the Haitian nation?***

Pray that God would raise up leaders with a mantle of the spirit of Moses. They need someone who will lead them forth out of darkness into the light. My sense is that God is looking for a people or leaders who are willing to take them out of their Egypt into the promised land. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy. Righteousness exalts a nation--the Bible says so; if they will truly establish that foundation, the nation will be blessed.

We need to pray that mental strongholds be broken so that the minds of those WWV works with would be ready to receive the truth of the Gospel, which will, in turn, transform their heart and change the nation and give them the hope that is needed to keep the country stable.

### ***What would you like anyone who has never been to Haiti to know?***

First, an hour and a half's flight from Miami lies one of the poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere. Second, "He who tends the poor honors God" (Proverbs). I was very impressed with the hearts of people who came from all over the world and worked together. During the time of utter chaos and destruction, I saw racial barriers melt. I saw people from all tribes and languages stripped of all their prejudices as they came together to help another member of humanity, another fellow human being who was suffering, regardless of race, color, creed, or religion. I was also proud of the US military. They were standing tall and looking sharp. Everything was in order; the tents and trucks were all neatly lined up. When they came out of garrison, they were geared up, trucks were large and powerful, and they went out and completed their missions with a sense of purpose and destiny.

### ***What should the general public keep in mind while watching news about Haiti's recovery from the earthquake?***

First, coverage is going to diminish and if you really want to know what is happening on the ground, contact people like WWV. Second, recovery is going to take a long time--it is a long process that will take a generation.

***How would you describe the work being done in Haiti by WWV?***



I think what WWV is doing by identifying communities that they can support to build out the development necessary for spiritual, educational, and economic growth is imperative to improve their local lifestyle. WWV is smart and has identified eight locations in which to work towards creating systems to build a Bible-healthy, educated, successful, and righteous community.

There are many wonderful NGO's in Haiti that WWV will be partnering with in order to bring a message of hope to smaller communities. They will establish a model so that the nation may see what is necessary in order to improve their way of living.



***How would you respond to someone indicating fear/nervousness about going to Haiti?***

First, you need to know that without a doubt, through prayer, that He wants you there. If you have a peace about going, then go! I would have no fear. Something the enemy cannot duplicate is God's peace. Try to get a sense about timing regarding when you should go and what you feel that your purpose should be. Then hang on, in everything give thanks because Haiti does not function like you would expect. Your emotions will be stretched daily from tears to laughter. If you feel led to go....do it, that page in your book of life will be like no other.

**Staff here at World Wide Village, Inc., are in the midst of organizing vision trips to Haiti throughout the rest of the year. If you, a friend, or a church group would be interested in experiencing Haiti firsthand, please feel free to call our office at 651-777-6908 and ask for Sarah Baptiste, or email [teams@worldwidevillage.org](mailto:teams@worldwidevillage.org). Blessings!**

***Donations can be made via our website ([www.worldwidevillage.org](http://www.worldwidevillage.org)) or by mailing a check to:***

***World Wide Village, Inc.  
2515 White Bear Avenue, Suite A8-205  
St. Paul, MN 55109***

**Donations received for earthquake relief will be used solely for the recovery and rebuilding of Haiti.**