

Are Too Many Missionary Groups Entering Haiti?

Many organizations have initiated ministry in Haiti over the last year in direct response to the massive 2010 earthquake. The Mission Society has been considering work in Haiti for years, but they have been careful not to jump hastily in.

The Mission Society's Jim Ramsay says Haiti has been on his heart for a while. But after meeting Haitian Yvan Pierre, leader of International Christian Development Mission (ICDM), Ramsay was finally able to embark on an exploratory trip to the country.

Ramsay recently returned from Haiti full of ideas—yet still rightfully cautious—and in search of God's will for The Mission Society. Ramsay says too many groups have gone into the country with their own agenda, and The Mission Society will not be one of them.

"We want to make sure that anything we do in Haiti, or anything we encourage our constituents to do in Haiti, is done wisely, is done with humility, and is done recognizing the Haitians know their own country," says Ramsay.

After speaking with various people while in Haiti, it was clear that good intentions of some can go awry without the help of the local people. "The one thing that we heard loud and clear from Haitians is they don't feel like they are taken seriously, and they don't feel like they're listened to—even by the very people who want to help them."

Needless to say, if The Mission Society enters Haiti permanently, it will be under the guidance of Haitian leaders.

"Christian missions need to be working alongside, and in more cases under, the leadership of Haitians. That's a difficult

position to be in, especially when we have the financial resources they don't have. That tends to put us in a position of power which we need to very intentionally step out of, and recognize that they have incredible resources in their human resources that we need to encourage and empower."

Ramsay says for now, it looks like work would be focused on an ICDM partnership and a great deal of training with the local church. The ministry believes working with the local church is critical and would thus send experts in several areas like women's ministry, water sanitation, and more, to train church leaders in those realms. The church would then be at the forefront of innovation for the community. This would undoubtedly allow for immeasurable opportunities for kingdom building.

The Mission Society is still seeking God's direction. Pray for discernment and wisdom as to whether or not God wants The Mission Society in Haiti. Pray also for ICDM's current ministry in Haiti, and for ways The Mission Society can help, even if a permanent ministry in Haiti is not established.

Is the Church doing too much, or not enough, in Haiti?