

Holy Spirit Haiti Mission (HSHM) Trip Report

Jan 25, 2012 – Feb 2, 2012

Like all of our mission trips, this one began about six months ago with the goals to:

1. Install two more water purification systems
2. Setup and implement the LWW warehouse for spare parts located at Palmiste-au-Vin (PAV) and then train the operator on management of the warehouse.
3. Get a specific plan to understand how to go forward with the NDC orphanage project which is getting very crowded in terms of space and kids.
4. Observe the new VoTech School at Palmiste-au-Vin which has just been implemented with grant money from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and donations from the Dioceses of Erie and Birmingham.
5. Assist the Haitians where time and resources permit.

Summary

Overall, all goals were met and the trip was very successful. The team was comprised of Chuck Arnold, Erie, PA, Kelvin Pressnell and Bob McCoy both from Huntsville, AL. Ashley Broadhurst was scheduled to go also, but got extremely sick the week before while in Haiti and had to come home early instead of meeting us. The really good news about Haiti is that there is a lot of building going on in the part of Haiti where we were working which was right along the earthquake fault. We went up and down the Jacmel road to or from Leogane at all times of the day and at least twice a day. Every time we would pass 3-5 sand trucks coming down from the quarry. That's a lot of concrete to be mixed. Leogane was truly coming out of the ashes which was a town about 85% wiped out by the earthquake. It was very gratifying to see.

We have now installed system number 15 at a convent, school and church at St. Michael du Sud under the direction of the Sister Jeanne of the Companions of Jesus order and number 16 in Baudin at St Francis Xavier Church and school. Both systems were left fully functional and the local religious were trained in their operation and very excited about having clean water they could count on. Baudin is an especially remote location with a lot of children going to the school. Their only water source is captured rain and bottled water is hard to come by during some parts of the year.

Our warehouse project has been ongoing for over almost two years. Since the earthquake and the rapid increase of Lining Waters for the World (LWW) systems in Haiti from 15 to now 50, a central location for an organized parts distribution system has been sorely needed. Since HSHM had the resources of people, location, monetary transfer techniques and skill sets to implement this project, LWW gave us the project to manage. LWW gave a generous \$20K gift to purchase spare parts and get them shipped into Haiti. Which occurred between June and October 2011. When we got to PAV everything was set up and ready for implementation. Specific details of this adventure are toward the end of the report.

We spent Sunday Jan 29th at NDC with Eliane and Garry to discuss the future of the orphanage construction. It was a very insightful day as I went there with great trepidation and frustration because we have not been able to find an engineer that understands earthquake structure techniques and did not have dollar signs in their eyes because the project had American connections. We solved the dilemma by agreeing to get an American engineer to draw up the plans and then have a Haitian project engineer oversee the project with Eliane and Garry in charge of purchasing all of the material and overseeing the payout of the money. It seems so simple now, but it was an 'out of the box' breakthrough as we have been focused for the past year trying to find the right engineer. In addition, we have a partner by the name of Huecco involved in this project. Huecco is a Spanish rock star and a genuinely nice guy. If you put the two of us side by side you would see a major generation gap, different lifestyles, certainly different music styles and yet God has joined the two of us together along with our organizations to find ways to improve the lives of Eliane, Garry and their kids at the orphanage. It has been said that God makes strange bedfellows and this relationship which I cherish with Huecco is certainly one example. Look up Huecco on the internet and you will see what I mean. All things are possible through God.

On our trip in March 2011, Fre Olizard shared with us his dream to begin a VoTech school at PAV to provide an avenue for the kids in the area beyond 9th grade which is the last grade his school teaches. At the same time, Chuck had begun developing a relationship with CRS in Baltimore who encouraged us to write a proposal for a grant on this project as CRS had not done any specific work in the PAV area. Among other things, this proposal required the signature of both the Bishops of Birmingham and Port au Prince, not an easy task to get done in 20 days but when God is involved, it gets done. The grant was awarded; Fre Olizard put up another building (not part of the grant) and school began Jan 15, 2012, just 10 days before our arrival. What we saw was an incredible effort on the part of Fre Olizard and the PFST to put together a program sanctioned by the Department of Education in Leogane, staffed with teachers and tools and running in just 60 days. The plan called for 20 students the first year, but the school has 28 of which 5 are girls. They go to school from 7-11a five days a week. Two of these days are concentrated on math and geometry and the other three on building techniques. Needless to say, the kids look forward to the later 3 days more than the former 2 days. To be successful, they have to sell at least \$5K of furniture the first year. They already have a contract with the LBST for \$4K of that and HSHM just gave them a contract to build some sewing tables for NDC, so I am confident that the goal will be achieved.

It was a very joyful occasion when we arrived after dark at PAV the first night to be welcomed by all the brothers and to be home once again. And it was an equally joyful and sad occasion to have to leave again in the dark eight days later. We celebrated friendship and life the evening before with Marcus Ermert, an editor for a German newspaper and representing a community that has made a heavy post earthquake investment in the PAV region. Marcus had come to visit and write on Haiti post earthquake. Actually Marcus found Fre Olizard and the LBST through the HSHM and the work we have done in the past. Marcus and I have been communicating for the past two years since the earthquake but had never met. He is an incredibly nice person and joy to be around. It was in this light and spirit that Fre Olizard

unveiled a bottle of champagne that night at dinner to celebrate life among God's brothers and sisters from around the world all gathered together in our home at PAV.

Daily Details

Wed – Jan 25: Up by 3:30 am to get to the airport by 4:30 to fly to Charlotte at 6a. Chuck leaves from Erie to Philadelphia at the same time and then onto Miami while Kelvin and I go onto Ft. Lauderdale. We arrive in PAP right on time at 3:40, are some of the first off the plane, make it through customs with no lines (something that has never happened before) and our bags are some of the first to come out. Problem is we have to wait for Chuck's plane from Miami for an hour, so all our good fortune is for naught. Felt good anyway. The good news is all the bags arrived! Ancy is there with the KIA to meet us and we slog through PAP and onto Gracier where Ancy lives to drop him off and then the three of us drive on to the monastery in the dark. We arrive about 7p to Fre Olizard's huge smile and open arms. Dinner awaits and we all catch up on old news. The showers were cold, but they thankfully were a shower and not a bucket.

Thur-Jan 26: Up at 5a for prayers with the brothers, breakfast of hotdogs and spaghetti and on to work. We have two water systems to pre-build that day. Bertone and Ele join us and will be with us for the next few days. All goes well during the day and by 3p our work is done on the boards. Fre Olizard has rebuilt walls and buildings and entrances such that business is conducted in the outer courtyard areas and only those that need to be in the monastery area are allowed in. So with a little extra time on our hands we took a tour around the grounds as well as down to the warehouse which is by the new school and get our first glance at the VoTech School. That night Fre Olizard and I have a serious conversation about the near future. He has spent 10 years at PAV which is longer than the brothers generally stay at any monastery and it is now his turn to move on. This is obviously of grave concern to me and the HSHM as much of our success over the years has been because of and through our relationship with PFST and being able to use the monastery as a staging area. I am certain that we will always be welcome here, but the other half if this is that Olizard is one of only a couple of brothers that speak English and he is an extraordinary project manager. So as we all do in times of change, ask what the future holds. Fre O does not know at this point where he will be assigned, but assures me that whoever is assigned to take over the PAV monastery will be chosen carefully, not because of the mission, but because to the pivotal role the monastery and brothers have taken in this area post earthquake and all the rebuilding they have done in the community. So we close our meeting as we generally do trusting in the Lord that He will show us the way.



Fri-Jan 30: On the road by 5am. We've loaded one of our boards into the truck along with the tools, parts and anything else we think we will need. This trip will be an overnighter because we are 100 miles away to the west and it is too far to come back to the monastery. We are driving two vehicles as Fre Olizard's habit is to bring us to the site, introduce us to the hosts, look over the site that he had pre-inspected and told the hosts what to prepare for and then he

leaves us to get back to his other projects at PAV. As we unload the truck, the kids are



beginning to come to school and that is always a fun time as we are usually quite a spectacle for them. Chuck is especially in his element since he is a retired 5-6 grade school teacher of 40 years. The board goes in smoothly. At this installation the water source is a concrete tank next to the water building that has constant water. The Companions of Jesus (COJ) at this convent are very close to a huge inland lake and are blessed with

abundant water. The first trick is to figure out how we will tap into the water source. A pump was not called for with this job so the choice is to tap off the existing pipe at the bottom of the tank. Since there is no shutoff valve, you may want to watch a humorous video of this process posted on the HSHM website. What we did not look at carefully enough was the position of the water tank and its level in relationship to the pump on the board. We have been so used to having the tanks on top of the roof, not much thought was given to this configuration which by late afternoon would give us a lot of grief. When we built the board we put the pump in the vertical position which we have done on several installations. This saves some board space but ONLY works if you have enough gravity to get the water into the pump head so it can stay primed. The pump is spec'd to pull water up to 25 feet when primed, but we could not get this to work. The pump was only 15 feet from the water source, but what we didn't see at first was that the tank was actually downhill of the board room so the top of the water line of the filled tank was about even with pump. There was not enough water pressure to prime the pump no matter how hard we worked at manually priming it. So by late afternoon as it was beginning to get dark, the decision was made to redesign the inlet and drop the pump to the bottom of the board. This would get us about 3' below the water line and thankfully it worked. Unfortunately, the trash filter head was broken. This was the 5th broken head we have experienced in the past year. In this case the water was quite clear and free of debris, so we put a bypass in until Bertone can come back and put another filter in at a later date. I am in contact with Hayward who manufactures these filters and they are trying to help us figure out what is wrong. This time we carefully documented the installation of the head and paid close attention to not tightening the fitting too much. Hopefully it will be solved for future missions. As a side note the team that came in the week before also had a broken head, so we are not the only ones having the problem.



After dinner we sat with Sister Jeanne and went through the covenant relationship in great detail explaining the training process, the warehouse, the in country technicians and other resources we have to keep the water system sustainable. One of the benefits of not having a lot of electricity in an area is at night you can look at the sky which is incredibly beautiful when you have no light pollution. You could almost reach up and touch a star they were so bright. Ele Delance who is a Haitian electrician and has become a regular member of our local install team spent a lot of time with sister running wiring, fixing toilets and even got Chuck and Kelvin



hanging shower curtains. So that night before bed I had the benefit of a nice shower. Hot water hasn't quite come to Haiti yet, but the shower sure felt good anyway.

Sat Jan 28: This morning we got to sleep in until 5:30 and off to 6a mass. After mass sister got up and told the congregation about the new water purification system, so I suspect this was the first of many where the word begins to spread concerning clean water. After breakfast we go back over our work of the night before and everything is functioning just fine, Bertone begins his 3 hour training session for the sisters. They are very receptive; ask a lot of questions and have a lot of fun as Bertone makes each of them go through the system piece by piece until they can describe it and how it functions. This of course is all in Creole, so we understand precious little, but you can always read people's faces and see that they are 'getting it'. It is this joy in their eyes that I see as we get ready to turn the system over to them. At the end of the training we have a signing ceremony where everyone signs the board and then we drink our first glass of clean water together. It is a joyous occasion to see the smile on sister's face knowing she can provide the precious gift of clean water to her students, her sisters and to her community. As usual, one cannot do anything in a religious community in Haiti without eating three meals a day, so we sat down to a delicious fish lunch and then were on our way back to Leogane. Sister needed to be in Leogane that afternoon, so we were happy to have her ride back with us. Late that afternoon Fre Olizard gave us a tour of his newly resurrected St. Charles Clinic which is a site to behold; an absolutely first class effort.

Sun Jan 29: Up early for 6a mass in Dufort with Pere Bleu. Attending Haitian mass is always a treat because they generally have no musical instruments except bongo drums, but listening to Haitians sing is a heavenly experience. Just as we saw a lot of building going on around the countryside, so did we see improvements to the church. Six months ago we had to bring our own chairs and now we had pews with kneelers (something I rarely see in Haiti). Little by little things are getting better.



We returned to PAV for breakfast and then Chuck, Kelvin and I are off to spend most of the day with Eliane, Garry and the kids at the orphanage. Each of us had packed a good portion of our suitcases with clothes, gifts, letters, candy and other things for NDC. This is certainly one of my favorite places to be and today was no exception. Eliane proudly showed us another school building that she just finished, so now she has K-3 grades on the premises. There are also kids from the surrounding community that come to the school that help defray the cost of the teacher that is brought in for each of the grades. Then Eliane showed us her new guest house which was on the back part of one of the school building and very cute. It has a bedroom and kitchen and is where we all sat around to discuss the next phases of the orphanage. For the past year we have been discussing expanding the orphanage in terms of constructing a large main building to house the kids. This would be a two story structure about 1500 sf/floor. Through Garry and Eliane we have asked a couple of engineers to look at this arrangement, but all we get back are simple drawings with



no earthquake proof designs and a lot of dollars. To make matters worse, it would put us at the mercy of someone we would not know well and trust is a major factor in doing business in Haiti. As we discussed the trust dilemma it became evident that the best approach would be to get an engineer



in the US to draw up the plans, use Eliane and Garry to purchase the materials and to get a project manager that we know to oversee the work. We also discussed additional property as Eliane just does not have room on her lot to build the structure without sacrificing the rest of the kids play area. With that in mind Garry took us out to show us two pieces of property that are almost next door, but are not adjoining the NDC existing property. We now have a layout of the property in the area of what is for sale, what might be traded and what was not for sale. As the sun was getting low in the sky, we said goodbye to the kids and Eliane and

Garry and returned to the monastery to get ready for the 2nd water system installation the next day.

Mon Jan 30: On the road at 5:30 to head for Baudin which is tucked away in the mountains at about 3200 feet. While we had mostly paved roads on the last trip, this one not so. Olizard had warned me that this was a very treacherous road and it would not be until tomorrow that I would find out just how treacherous. We get on site about 7:30 a distance of only about 30 miles but we go through 3 valleys to almost sea level and back up each time a little higher. The scenery is spectacular, but if sharp drop-offs, no guard rails and narrow roads make you woozy, this would not be a trip you would want to take. We are gaining more experience in transporting the pre built systems and have learned because of the roughness of the road, it is best to remove anything on the board that is not bolted down.



Although the roads were terrible compared to last week, this board fared very well to the site and once it was installed on the wall all we had to do was screw the unioned components back together. It seems that Father Delmas did not make his water building quite 8' wide as was specified, so the first order of business was to cut about 8" off one end of the plywood. You have to be prepared for everything. In this configuration we had two water tanks on the roof. One was the source water which is pumped up from a roof water catchment reservoir and the second tank was for the clean water so gravity was with us

on this install. This is the 16th installation and by far the fastest and smoothest. Even though the roof crew got a little ahead of the board crew below and had to reroute some plumbing, we were finished with the initial install by noon. As it turns out there



was a dental clinic team there at the same time from Indiana. The doctor heading the team comes in twice a year and has put together a very nice clinic in the middle of some pretty harsh country. After lunch we tested the system for leaks of which there was only one because yours truly did not apply glue to one joint. After that all seemed well so we shocked the tank and got everything in place for training the next day.

We spent the next hour or so going over the covenant relationship with Father and made sure he was aware of all of the available resources to keep his system sustainable. Because we have a strong Haitian team in place, putting new clients at ease with the local support is easy. We left about 3p to wind our way back to the monastery before dark. Beautiful scenery, but don't look down and to the right.



Tue Jan 31: Since there is precious little for the team to do while Bertone is doing his training, it was decided that Chuck and Kelvin would stay at the monastery and begin the thankless job of cleaning out and reorganizing the LWW warehouse in preparation for training Sonie that afternoon and evening. Father Delmas had a wedding to attend that morning, so Bertone and I did not have to leave until 9:30, which made it a much easier day or so I thought. We arrived at Baudin just in time for lunch. Afterward, the training began with Father and three other young men responsible for running the school and other facilities. While Bertone was training I was



outside watching dark clouds roll in and then it began to rain. Not hard but a light mist just enough to turn the dust into a little bit of mud. Bertone finished about 3p which was a record training session for him. We then did the board signing and made our first 5 gal batch of water which we celebrated by raising our glasses. We left Father Delmas a happy priest that he could now provide clean water to this remote part of Haiti.

As we started back to the monastery, my worst fears were realized in that the small amount of rain had made the road like ice with the combination of mud and wet rock. Carefully and slowly we crept down into the first valley trying not to think about the consequences of one mistake. At the bottom I knew the challenge lay ahead because the tires on this vehicle were like those that go on a forklift, smooth in the center with ridges on the sides. Good for the highway but not good for climbing wet rock. We start up the next climb keeping the engine steady and trying not to lose any momentum until we came to a rock that we got the front wheels over but couldn't get the rear wheels to climb it. Bertone gets out and we carefully back down a bit and try again. No go. Bertone backs me down again but this time guides me to the right which is exactly where I did not want to go. There is no room for error on the right.



Another Our Father and Hail Mary and off we go, this time with the angels pushing. Over the rock we went sliding more than I had hoped, but going forward. I did not stop until I could get to a place where I knew I could start up again, so poor Bertone had a bit of an uphill walk. The next 3 miles into the next valley was equally as dicey, but then

thankfully then rain stopped and had not touched the road for much of the rest of the trip. I now understood why Fre Olizard was so concerned about that road. God had Graced us.

Back at the ranch I quickly learn that Kelvin and Chuck have been working like warhorses all day. Not only is the warehouse now the new and improved warehouse, but it is organized and labeled in English, Creole and French. Sonie who is our new warehouse manager played an integral role in the labeling and identifying which was all part of the training process that Chuck had designed. Before the day was done, the boys had evicted about 25 rats from the premises, some of which had found their way into one of the plastic bins – how I do not know. It was an incredible effort by all three of them and as I am writing this Wil Howie the Director of LWW will have now seen the warehouse and I believe will be very pleased. Just before diner we begin the computer training with Sonie for keeping up with the warehouse records and lo and behold that evening we get our first customer for the warehouse. Sonie does it just right. She is a smart lady and we are lucky to have her on the team.



Wed Feb 1: The mission is winding down, but one of our goals on each trip is to provide assistance whenever possible and so this day Fre Olizard calls on me to take the truck into PAP to pick up Marcus Ermert who is coming in from Germany. Right after breakfast Fre O gave us all a tour of the new VoTech School which is something we have been waiting to see all week.



The VoTech School was born out of one of our evening conversations around the dinner table last March. (It is at this dinner table in the monastery that we often get our most serious work done.) Fre O had a dream to provide training in carpentry skills to kids after 9th grade in the PAV community. During the summer Chuck made a contact with CRS in Baltimore and they encouraged us to put a grant request together to fund the VoTech School. In September Chuck and I had hammered

out a proposal for Olizard and it was finalized at the dinner table, written up as soon as we returned home and sent to CRS who ultimately funded \$10K of the project with the Diocese of Birmingham and Erie funding the other matching \$10K. Fre O built the building, organized the kids, got the curriculum approved by the Haiti Education Department and Jan 15, 2012 opened the doors to 28 kids. I have to tell you it was a very impressive site. The kids spend two of the five day week doing math studies and the other three days working with wood. There has been a sufficient quantity of hand tools purchased with the funds and Jackson who is the lead instructor is doing a fine job with the kids. The return on investment for this project calls for \$5000 of furniture sales the first year. The PFST will purchase about \$4000 for their upcoming

conference in June 2012. Jackson has already completed one small job we had him do for the NDC orphanage, so we are on the way to what I pray is a very successful venture. When we can prove that the carpentry portion works, then we want to expand the school to include agriculture and solar power fundamental classes. The bottom line of course is we are not providing the young people the fish, but teaching them how to fish,



That night as we are all sitting around the infamous dinner table with all the brothers and Sonie and Marcus from Germany and other friends, I realize just how closely connected we all are in this world. In that room that evening as Fre Olizard was raising his glass of champagne to toast everyone it was clear that the Holy Spirit was amongst us because there was an incredible amount of love and respect for each other regardless of the cultures or positions in life we have come from. It all ended far too rapidly. I really wanted to savor the moment longer, but God only gives us glimpses at a time. So we bid each other farewell for now as the three of us will be up before the rest and on our way to the airport long before the sun rises.

Thur Feb 2: Our plane doesn't leave until 9:45, but PAP traffic is so unpredictable that 4 hours to drive the 35 miles is always allocated. We leave in the KIA after a big hug from Fre O and make our way to Gracier where we pick up Ancy and his son. Gracier is on the western edge of PAP and where the driving becomes much less fun. Even with the delays we made it to the airport by 7:30. We hugged Ancy goodbye who would take the KIA and get it ready for the next group coming the following week. The flights back were on time and not overly crowded and the hamburger in the Ft. Lauderdale Chili's was excellent! My thanks to Kelvin, Chuck, Sonie, Olizard, Ancy, Bertone, Ele, Garry, Eliane, Markus and all our benefactors that make these trips possible. Without each of you the Lord's work would not get done. Mesi anpil.