

## Holy Spirit Haiti Mission Trip July 18-26, 2017. Vivian Reiss, Kelly Hall and Bob McCoy

**Haiti Day 1**-Vivian and Kelly leave Huntsville at 1a to drive to Birmingham because the ticket prices are so high. Because I'm staying 8 days I get a better fare but not by much. Our prayers are answered in that we safely arrive and all our bags make it ok. The traffic coming into the airport is worse than I've ever seen it so we meet Bertone outside the parking lot. This is Kelly's first trip and her comment half way through pap is it reminds her of Iraq and Afghanistan. We arrive at the orphanage about 5p and Vivian is right back at home. Eliane and the girls are fine. I leave all the letters everyone has sent along with the sheets and remaining sheet money (almost \$1700) thank you Holy Spirit parish. Bertone and I drive up to the monastery and arrive about 7p to Olizard's great smile. All the brothers except 2 are in retreat in Rivere Froide so it's a little deserted here but Bertone, Olizard and I still conduct business until 9:15. I finish unpacking and sorting out my 150 lb of stuff I brought. By the time I finish it's 10:15. Good night all. Big day tomorrow.

**Haiti Day 2**-This morning began with a bad omen. As I walk into the chapel to pray the rosary and pull my rosary out of its pouch, it broke. I string my rosary with 30 lb fishing line which should not break but tell that to the beads on the floor. The main task today was to replace what I thought to be a bad well pump at NDC as it is rated at 10 gal/min and we were barely getting 2 gal min after installing it in Mar. Simple job, get there by 8a, set up the tripod to help pull the pump out of the well (about 100 lbs of pumps and pipe which is full of water), yank it out, replace one pump with the other one I brought in, test it out, drop it in the well and be done by 10a when the sun was really getting hot. What really happened was our tests could only produce 2 gal/min regardless of the pump. So we go into Leogane and buy some PVC because the only thing left was the black coil (one continuous piece of 1" pvc 100' long) had something lodged in it and being 100' long we had no way



to find out what it was or where it was located. Bertone and I worked all day long in the sun and finally by 5p had it back together wired up and dropped into the well. We have a test valve in the line that we use to fill up a 5 gal bucket and count the sec. 30 sec to fill up a 5 gal bucket is 10 gal/min - what our goal was. The first test yielded 13.68 seconds and the second 14.6 seconds. An incredible 20 gal/min!! What this means in terms of money is gasoline that fuels the generator (delco) costs \$5/ gal and each 1.5 hrs it drinks a gal. The picture is Maneuscha checking the water level of the 2-600 gal tanks. Do you know how fast 70 women can use 1200 gal of water?

I am bone tired when we return to the monastery at 7p. Dinner was a little later this evening and Fre Olizard made it back from his retreat by 7:45. We had the nicest impromptu talk in the yard about our families.

It's almost 10p now and I have to shower still or they won't let me stay any longer. So goodnight and thanks be to God for the many blessings He bestowed on all of us this day! Tomorrow, relationship building.



**Haiti Day -3** Boy 5a came early this morning. After mass and breakfast, Bertone and I take off for Petite Soeur St. Therese at Rivere Froide to discuss their upcoming water purification system. There are a lot of details to the relationship both before and after installation. Sister Denise who is the General Superior of the whole order in Haiti and I have become good friends over the past two years and the meeting had a good bit of laughter as well as a lot of work. Even though we had the documents all laid out there was still a lot of information their water committee will have to deal with before an install. So we all ended about 1:30 with homework to do on both sides. What may be more exciting to my readers though was the 30 degree drive going up to the convent. Interestingly there was a fairly new Mitsubishi SUV that could not make the grade so he parked his car and

got in our Land Cruiser and up we went. The photo hardly does justice to the incline but we ended up on top of the mountain that is in the distance of this picture.

Sadly Vivian and Kelly will be going home tomorrow. Kelly adopted very rapidly and Vivian was her very comfortable self with Eliane and the kids. Kelly being ex career Army and has done tours in Iraq and Afghanistan so much of Haiti did not surprise her. After a couple more meetings we make it home at 7p. Thank you for the prayers and goodnight to all

**Haiti Day 4-** What I thought would be a quiet day turned out quite bittersweet. Bertone, Ancy and I arrived at the Missionaries of Charity (MC) hospital in Carrefour to implement a System Management Plan about 9:30. On this trip we did a lot of relationship building which is the bedrock foundation of any work we do in Haiti. Without the relationship we have nothing. We were about 2 hours into a very good conversation and Sister Francisco excuses herself because there was a pregnant woman who came to them yesterday with severe stomach problems, vomiting, etc. They instructed her to go to the hospital because the MC does not have the facilities to handle pregnant women. The woman did not go and got worse in the late afternoon so the Sisters let her in, bathed her, gave her an IV and got her to a steady state. This morning the child aborted at about 6 months. The MC truck was not available so Bertone took our truck and brought her to the hospital. In the meantime Sister told us a woman who had been there 4 days with blood pressure well over 200 and had died this morning. She had no means of burial so the MC will give her a coffin and bury her in a public cemetery. We did finish our meeting on a high note though in that all that the MC want to do in making use of a very productive well is very doable with a minimum of engineering effort. We will be able to filter out the iron content in their well water, thus eliminate their need to buy 3500 gal per day and purify that water to eliminate their having to truck in 1000 gals a week of drinking water. We left the MC knowing St Mother Theresa was in their midst and vowing to do our best to make ill of this work.



Since we had a little extra time we stopped by NDC the go over a number of administrative items with Guerline since we couldn't do it on Wednesday. About half way into the conversation about the sponsorship for the kids I am informed that one of the girl's mother has come by to take her home. I was ecstatic until I learned the mother's motivation is through her brother who got a US family member to provide financial support for Minerva. We questioned the Mother regarding her true intentions for quite a while but unfortunately my suspicions do not override the fact that she is the child's true mother and Eliane had to let her go. There were some tears all around and I ended up giving Minerva some money in an envelope instructing her that it was to take care of her and her mother. I doubt I'll even know the end of this story but I know God placed me there this afternoon for a reason. After two more stops we make it back to the monastery by 7a.



I came to dinner with 8 tabernacle candles in my hand for Fre Michele. He was thrilled as they had been out for some time. Good night to all especially to Kathy.

**Haiti Day 5-** We got rain last night and this afternoon. I had hoped a lot of the haze over PAP would clear up but it didn't. I can hardly see the coast line let alone LaGonaive Island. Today was another

day of relationship building but it turned out differently than expected. We were at the Little Sisters in Sigeneau to complete a covenant and system management plan. But before we began that process Eliane and I met with the sister Denis and Sister Bernadette to discuss a possible future direction and role of the Little Sisters with the NDC orphanage. The answer was as expected, they will have to present it to their community.

I let Bertone take over from there as he is most skilled in explaining the LWW documentation. When we visited this site on our last trip the sisters had told me where the system would go with which I was in agreement. When we got into that part of the discussion they had changed their minds and wanted it down by the road in a building we could not use and electricity not available to us. This caused a good bit of anxiety on both sides but with more discussion we were able to reach a compromise as to the next step. The journey along the way is worth the price of admission. Thinking we would get back to the monastery a little early went up in smoke when we reached Dufort and the market. Nothing was moving. We finally got to the back road that takes us across the river - I should clarify - that is through the river. When we arrive it turns out there is no mass tonight because the priest had to cancel. We who have live in priests are very spoiled. So we say the Office and pray the rosary and on to dinner. Bertone will go to his church in Tomgato and I will go to mass in Leogane tomorrow. Fre O has loaned me a vehicle since Bertone has the LC for church. What I got reinforced in my mind today is the Lord will help us find a way. We just have to be patience and seek it. Good night to all and especially to my wife of 50 yrs.

**Haiti Day 6**-this was a day of quiet surprises. I actually slept in till 5:30 this morning, said my morning rosary because the brothers don't do morning office on Sunday and got ready to drive to Leogane to mass since there was no mass Sat evening. At 6:30 Fre Leandre says they are doing the morning office and since I had 30 min before I had to leave, I went. As we concluded they had a communion service since they had concentrated hosts in the tabernacle and I realized my Sunday obligation has been resolved and now I can get breakfast before going to NDC to take pics. When I get home I'll find out from a priest if I have erred. Fre Leandre and I discussed substituting a communion service at length during breakfast and it all seems valid.

The pics of all 70 kids went smoothly. Guerline was an enormous help getting them lined up and entering info into the db. Canvas painting and rosaries are coming along well.

In the afternoon Bertone and I had two sites to visit where we had installed water systems in 2011 and the past two years we have had no communication although many attempts have been made to get ahold of these people. The first priest in Decouze knew we were coming. After showing him the document that says we have the right to remove the system if the OP is not maintaining it properly, we focused on what he needed to do in order to keep the system which he desperately wanted to do. It was a great meeting of the minds and I think a win-win for everyone. The second stop was like the first. Sister very much wanted to keep the system and was very concerned about our wanting to remove it. Today I think we have learned a new and very powerful technique that can be used by LWW folks when an OP decides to go off the grid.

This afternoon was gorgeous in the mountains. A front had come through and a 10mph wind was blowing up the valley. It was about 75 deg and felt like April.

Bertone and I got back about 6:30, got some leftover dinner and had some quality after dinner talk time with Fre O.

I said quiet surprises in the beginning because so many things turned out so well today and the relationship building just gets better. Good night and a special kiss to my love.



**Haiti Day 7-** the week begins at the usual 5a with the rosary and mornings hours and they spaghetti for breakfast. Neither Bertone nor I are looking forward to the morning assignment of dropping the NDC well pump down another 40'. Not because it is hard work but you only have to stand in the sun without any exertion and your forehead will completely soak a paper towel in 5 min. We began this job at 930a and finished at 11a. It required us to pull the pipe up 20', set this section aside, make two new sections which requires gluing unions at each end, allow them to dry and lower the sections back down. At 135' we hit bottom so pulled it up 10', put the well cap on and reassembled the rest. It took us two rest times to drink water from the heat. I can not figure out how I made it for 4 hrs the previous Wednesday with only water and no break. Temp 100+ and no breeze. The reward-it worked and the additional length did not cost us any additional gal/min.



Until 4p we, visited, played with the kids, talked about next projects and generally hung out; something most of you know I neither do often or well but it felt good to do so. At 4p we had the NDC board meeting to discuss a new Articles of incorporation and future NDC sustainability and direction. There was a lot of quality discussion which told me how serious the board was about the future of NDC. Bertone and I had two more stops so we bid Eliane and

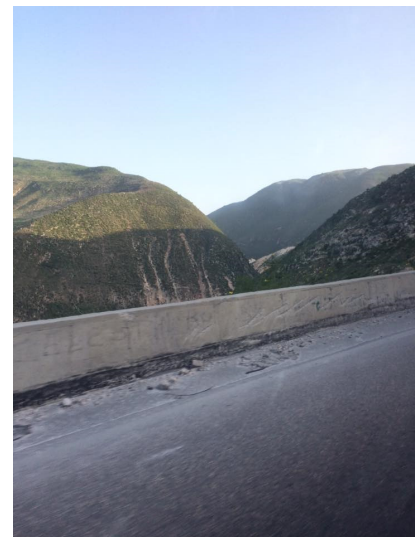


the kids good bye and returned to PAV at 730 to some chicken, soup and rice and a meeting with Fre Arie to discuss school books. Tomorrow begins much earlier so goodnight to all and especially to my sweetie.

**Haiti Day 8-**Love shows its face in so many ways. This morning Bertone and I were scheduled to leave at 5a to drive to Hinche about 80m to the East in the mountains. We were in the Land Cruiser about to go out the gate and Sonie runs out to inform us that breakfast has been made for us. To do this deed Monise our cook had to have gotten up by 4:15 because there was a big platter of eggs and coffee and Haitian rolls which I love. The general rule is meals are served at certain times and if you are not there then you go



without. I was already prepared that Bertone and I might go hungry today but it would not have hurt either one of us. This simple gesture moved me very close to tears. We picked up Ancy in Marianne just before



PAP and slogged our way through traffic. Once we get past the airport we begin climbing into the mountains. The road is good but I shall never forget Sister Caroline telling me when she arrived in Haiti 35 yrs ago (for a 20 year stay) of going to Hinche in the back of a pickup that took 8 hours over roads we cannot even imagine in the US. Our trip was 2 hrs and the scenery was beautiful. They use the lake for hydro power. We greet Fre Jones who has so graciously set up the Garden Girls program by making several trips from Hinche over the past 8 months to get the project to where it is today. In addition as part of my mailman duties, the HSHM girls have sent me with numerous packages for Fre Jones. He is the Prior of the PFST Agriculture University in Hinche. After an hour or so of discussion we got a great tour of the facility and then we leave to find Jackson in another part of Hinche. Jackson came to the US last year and went with me to LWW school in MS. He has a great job with the govt and is our pseudo connection should we need one. Now the return trip back to PAP to do some final shopping for Amber and then to NDC to pick up the mail and other assorted items and then back to PAV. We actually got home in time for dinner at 6. It's a good thing because at 7:15 Mother Nature showed her fury with a tremendous rain and lightning storm. I estimate 2-3" over 45 min. While I thought the whole show was spectacular the Haitians did not see it as such. Then it left as quickly as it came. Got to start packing as we leave a 6a tomorrow morning. Goodnight to all and a special kiss to Kathy.

**Haiti Day 9-** this is how we begin the day. We've been in this mess for about an hour now. This morning I have a meeting with all of the LWW Haiti In-Country team to review how we are doing and what we can to expect over the next year. Many of you



know me as the HSHM team lead but my other role in Haiti is overseeing the in country operation for Living Waters for the World. I am so proud of these guys. They are as professional as they come, quick to embrace change and always accepting responsibility. Each



country LWW has at least 6 water purification systems in has a network and the Haiti In-Country team is one of the best. I am honored to be able to lead the 'guys' as Ancy calls them.

In the PAP airport now for the trip home. Thank you everyone for your support, love and prayers.