

## Holy Spirit Haiti Mission Trip Report May 15-22, 2013

Our goals for this trip were to teach, inspect and learn. The team was made up of five members, Shelley and Renee Corbett, Julie Lichay, Bob McCoy, all Holy Spirit-Huntsville and Chuck Arnold from the Diocese of Buffalo who has been with us on many trips over the years. We had two primary goals.

1. Teach the kids at Notre Dame de la Charite (NDC) as much English as possible while having fun at the same time and
2. Inspect as many of the 18 water systems as we could.

Secondary goals were to do another site inspection for the next water system, review and evaluate the progress on the NDC orphanage building, do a physical count in the warehouse (we keep about \$15K of spare parts in the Leogane area to support the 70 LWW (Living Waters for the World) purification systems now installed in Haiti, install a pre filter system on the monastery water system and continue our training program for the In Country Technician team. Following are a few notes from each day's activities.



Day 1: Wed, May 15 – Due to Kathy's very competent use of the Internet travel sites we have been blessed with travel arrangements to get to Haiti in one day. But it's a long day. Shelley, Renee, Julie, Eliane and Bob all gather at the airport by 5a, fly to Charlotte, Miami on US Air and then to Port au Prince. We meet Chuck in Miami who was up at a similar hour and uneventfully arrive in PAP at 5:30p. The first most obvious thing to me is the airport has finally been completely fixed and Haiti has done a very nice job of doing so. Customs, luggage and the general flow was very good. You still get accosted by the porters when you walk out the door, but it's all part of the cruise. Ancy is there to pick us up in the KIA (LWW has 2 in Haiti now that we rent by the day). He drives us about half way to the monastery in Palmiste au Vin (PAV) and we're able to conduct some much needed business on the way and plan for the training toward the end of our trip. Bob takes over the driving when we drop off Ancy and just after dark, we arrive to the big smile of Fre Olizard. He has just built 4 new guest rooms and we are in full luxury – each with a shower (still cold but delightful), toilet, mosquito netting on the beds – I've never been so pampered. It is miraculous what 3 years and a lot of people around the world caring can do to improve a bad situation. The brothers had graciously waited for us to arrive before eating and it was one of the postulant's birthday (Freeddy), so two bottles of grape champagne were popped open to celebrate. We all sat down to food and renewed friendships. It was important to me that Shelly, Renee and Julie all feel very comfortable in this environment and they all did so right away.

Day 2: Thur, May 16 – I am very anxious about this day. The logistics of getting to as many places as possible spread over a 200 mile radius of Palmiste au Vin was difficult. The fringe area systems could not be visited because there simply was not enough time. While 50 miles does not seem far, it is when you are traveling over brutal roads at 5-10 miles per hour and the first day we had 3 places to visit with such roads. Secondly I do not like to split the team, especially with people who have never been to Haiti

before, but there was no choice if we were going to let the girls (Shelley, Renee & Julie) get 3 days of teaching in and be able to visit other parts of Haiti also. So through much planning Chuck and I left the girls in Olizard's hands to get them to the orphanage and along with our wonderful technician (ICT) Bertone we were out the gate at 6am before sunrise. We had allocated 1.5-2hrs to visit each site. We arrived in Baudin at 8a to the open arms of Pe Delmas. It is a wonderful reunion as we discuss how things are going, discuss lack of rain and how to best manage his limited water supply among his school of 500 kids. The systems appears to be running great, the operators are well trained and serious. We leave for the next stop about 10:30a.



In the past 6 months LWW devised a specific check sheet for each water system that is filled out each month by the ICT. While the ICTs speak English, it is not their first language and the sheet is in English (an error on our part that will be corrected to Creole). Because the questions were somewhat subjective, I was anxious to see how Bertone filled out this sheet. So we spent the time in between sites evaluating each system, reviewing the questions carefully that the committee had put together and discussing how we each saw the outcome. This became my most valuable lesson. Acknowledging no matter how good communication is, there are still misunderstandings. The days we spent with Bertone were invaluable for all of us to better understand what it would take to keep a system sustainable and to assure that the water was always safe to drink. We still have work to do on the process.

The rest of the day we spent going to Café Lompre and Fondwa essentially doing the same thing-taking pictures, water samples, talking to the people and learning about the needs they have. It is with these two systems that I learned that when leadership turns over in the convent or monastery, we have a disaster in the making unless the new leadership fully embraces the responsibility it takes to keep this water system going as per the covenant that we both signed. By the end of the day both of these



facilities had experienced two leadership changes each and it became immediately apparent that the baton had not been properly passed on. So we have more work to do to shore up this process, but it is doable. We were able to get back to the orphanage by 5p to get the girls who had an incredibly eventful day. You will be able to read about their adventures in other journals that will be written by each of

them. At first the girls were going to sleep overnight at the orphanage, but with further thought on the subject, it was too large of a footprint to place on their fragile ecology already bursting at the seams, so we decided everyone would stay in the monastery each night which was equipped to handle our presence. I could not wait to see the progress that Fre Olizard had made on the new building and I was not disappointed.



So we wound up the day with another wonderful meal at PAV and then a hearty game of UNO afterward. Boy, talk about a personality change, the sweet girls became tough cookies and hardened players when you put some UNO cards in their hands. However, what happened at the UNO table, stays at the UNO table.

Day 3: Fri, May 17 – Today, we have more paved road, so four systems are on the agenda to visit. It also means we can start after breakfast which is served at 7a. On each trip to Haiti there seems to be some tradition that the team does naturally and on this trip we all decided to skip the rosary with brothers and say it ourselves at 5:30a as the sun is rising. It was a glorious experience with each of us leading a decade. It was at this time that I think I felt closest to the team. We then went on to join the brothers for the rest of their morning communion service. Chuck and I are very anxious about this day because of yesterday's visit to 2 out of 3 we were questioning why these systems were in the places they were



because the organizations were not using them as intended and promised by the covenant. Our fear was that because of our rapid building program over time we had missed an important element of sustainability. Also, when I first came to Haiti with John Wolfsberger we were dependent on others for transportation, so all I saw the first couple of years was Leogane and on one occasion Palmiste au Vin. Since then we have been blessed with transportation from LWW, so I wanted to make sure the girls got the full tour on the first trip. The Jacmel highway which runs north-

south over 3 mountain ridges in the west central part of Haiti is one of the most beautiful roads Haiti has to offer. We started at 1100' in PAV and got to 3500' and then finally back to sea level on the south shore at Jacmel. The sun rising over the mountains, the step hills, terraced crops and lifestyles along the way are incredible. I have driven this road many times now and I never tire of another opportunity to travel it and such as it was with the girls. Later Shelley was to describe the country as far more beautiful than she had ever imagined. Our first stop was Lavoute which is NE of Jacmel about 8 miles. No trip is complete without the experience of the brutality of some of the roads and this was one of them. Several times I think some thought 'you're not really going to go there are you?', but the KIA just lumbered along. It took us 1.5 hours to travel the 8 miles up to Lavoute once we left the highway. This stop was certainly one of the highlights of whole trip. As soon as we got out of the truck we were greeted by Sister ?, the prioress of this house (Sisters of the Holy



Ghost) and the one in Jacmel (more on this later). Upon introducing the girls I told sister they were teachers and she immediately whisked them off to show them their school. It is rare to have English speaking teachers visit, especially in remote places, so their services were more than welcome although this was not on the schedule. Over the next hour we had a great visit reviewing the water system which we deemed the best overall run system of our visit. It certainly began to neutralize Chuck's and my feelings from yesterday that the systems were being used properly. This was also the first time the girls had seen one of the systems so after we were able to extract them from the classroom; they got a chance to see how the system worked. We thanked sister for her hospitality and headed down the mountain back to Jacmel where we visited the Catholic Conference Center and then Moncheil which is the other house of the Sisters of the Holy Ghost. Here we ran into our first electrical problems – very low voltage from both the street power and their solar system. It would not be until Monday that I could get Ele our electrician to review the system where he found a common theme; too many devices plugged into the grid and not enough inverter/solar panel/battery power. Managing electricity must be done carefully, so sister now knows how to better balance all their electricity. For instance, the freezer is unplugged during the day when other things are needed. Until they get more batteries and a bigger inverter, that's all they can do. In between these last two visits, we were able to spend a short period getting something to eat in Jacmel and letting the girls do some quick arts and crafts shopping.

On to Decouze. The day is slipping away and we still have one more stop plus we need to get back to the monastery before dark. The Jacmel road is beautiful, but very treacherous in the dark. Decouze offers another brutal road, but fortunately not as long. Pere Affrico greeted us warmly as we visited his system. While the system was working great, he had no rain and his reservoir was small and dry. We discussed the possibilities of building a reservoir or getting a 20K gallon bladder tank or best of all digging a well. However, digging a well in the mountains is tricky business. The Holy Spirit would have something to say about that later in the day. As we did with each system, we tested a water sample. It is a two day test, but the sad news was that in less than two days the water would prove to be bad.

While Bertone has trained Father Affrico 3 times on proper use of the system, his logs indicated that he was not using the system properly, so we are confronted with another challenge. We leave Decouze about 6p to get back to the monastery at 7p just in time for dinner. Fre Olizard is hosting a religious conference for the next two days of 35 people, so the place is bustling with activity. We eat our dinner, try to catch up on email since the Internet is only up at night when the Delco is on and then retire to the UNO table before going to bed. We are rapidly gelling as a close knit team.



Day 4: Sat, May 18 – This day is not so hectic. The girls are off for their second day at the orphanage of teaching. They are excited about what they have planned and Shelley being the consummate planner and teacher from the past has made more lesson plans than they can ever use. The girls dedicated one 50 lb bag going into Haiti with just supplies, so they had a lot to work with. The boys had three visits to make that day, one about 100 miles away, but on decent roads. In addition we had a guest come with

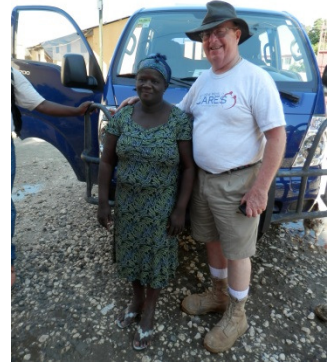
us. When Fre Olizard was a novice beginning his life as a religious, he first went to the Missionaries of the Poor(MoP) and his first station was Jamaica where the MoP have a large facility. He returned to Haiti in less than two years to join the Petite Freres St. Therese, but during that time in Jamaica his novice master was Fre Murray Goodman. Murray was visiting the PAV monastery for 3 days and was most interested in the work we were doing with the water systems. He was a



Fr. Murray Goodman

great companion and fit right in. His English was better than mine. During this day we taught Murray all about the systems including the evaluation process that we were all getting better at. At St. Michael du Sud the system was working well but it was here that we learned that the sisters had to pay a fee to DINEPA to get their water. There is a lake not far away that is very large with plenty of water but someone has to pump it and so there is a fee. After lunch we left to head back to Leogane where we would visit the Guerin and NDC systems. All

Eliane St. Jacques, Dir NDC



were running well and around 4:30 we stopped at the orphanage to pick up the girls. They had another very successful day with the kids and I could see pieces of artworks and tags on some of the kids as a result of projects that day. There were also plenty of jump ropes that had come out that day. In addition they had helped the kids with letters and artwork to their sponsors back in Huntsville which is now being delivered. We returned to the monastery just in time for Saturday night mass, but we were going to mass in DuFort early the next morning, so took the opportunity to wind down before dinner. After dinner, more internet work and then we just had to have one more UNO game.

Day 5: Sun, May 19 – Mass is at 6:30a and if you want a seat you have to be there by 6:15, so we leave the monastery at 5:50a to drive down to DuFort just as the sun is coming over the mountains. God’s splendor is glorious. Richard Roy who is from Montreal and a good friend of Fre Olizard’s joins us this morning as well. More about Richard later. St. Andrews was a beautiful old church, but like so many others, the earthquake got it also. So he has a wooden building next door that seats about 300 people, but I know there are twice that attending. The place is always packed. We put a water system into this church in January, but the well runs very low during the dry season. Pere Bluet is an incredible man, full of life and a person with two doctoral degrees from McGill U. in Ottawa. He often says mass for the brothers in PAV and, while I don’t understand most of the homily, just listening to him has a quieting effect. He usually begins mass right on time at 6:30 and enters from the front of the church. Not this morning. The procession is in full regalia with altar servers, choir and all decked out in red. I couldn’t figure out what was so special about today until I remembered it was the Feast of Pentecost and this indeed is a big event. What I thought would be 1.5 hr I am certain would be 2.5 hrs and while I am very strict about waiting until the last song is sung in mass, we had a mission of mercy to do today with only one opportunity to get it done, so God forgive me after we had all received the sacrament, it was back to the monastery.



Taking attendance at St. Andrews. If you want the services of the church you better have your card stamped.

Richard Roy is a diviner, one who finds water. I don't understand horse whispers and dog whispers either, but people are given certain gifts and I was certain I was in the presence of one. We desperately needed to locate a well in Decouze for Pere Affrico that morning because Richard was leaving tomorrow morning. So we got breakfast, got the working clothes back on and set of for Decouze. I have to admit that there was a lot of skepticism in me regarding divining for water. As humans and especially as engineers if we don't understand something and how it works we tend to not believe. This is where your faith has to take over. Richard had taught four others at the monastery how to divine, but Ignace was the best student and we brought him along also. There were three spots they found on the parish property and at each one I watched the rods go up or down when they walked over the site. Richard even told me the water was at 80-90 feet and the flow rate was 12 gal/min. I know this sound hokey, but I witnessed it. I consider myself a man of strong faith and Richard who is of similar age to me seems to also be a man of great common sense and faith. We will be digging the well shortly and when we reach water at 90 feet at the rate of 12 gal/min, I will do my final rejoicing because I still have a little Missouri in me.



We finished up this task. Richard went on to Jacmel and we went back to the monastery to do a physical inventory on the warehouse. We gathered Sonie our warehouse manager and we all helped with this less than fun chore. The count came out very well though and showed Sonie is doing a superior job of managing the assets. After dinner we all hit the internet for a while with our Iphones and then sought our revenge at the UNO table.

Day 6: Mon, May 20 – This was to be another day of adventure for the girls. We were going to visit the Riviere Froide site which is the mother house location for the PFST located in the mountains above Carrefour (just to the west of PAP). In fact, Riviere Froide was only about 1-2 miles as the crow flies from the epoch center of the earthquake, but almost nothing was destroyed at this location. God was truly watching over these men at that time. What was supposed to be a 1.5 hr drive became a 2.5 hr drive because there was a bus broken down near a bridge as you are entering Carrefour. The Haitian way is to go around the problem which means the opposite traffic lane. Shortly everything came to a standstill because no one was going to back up and in most cases could not back up. After about 30 min some UN personnel and local police showed up to untangle the mess. This IS true progress because in the past we would not see the police. The ride up is spectacular, but I suspect through the streets of Carrefour is as spectacular also because it is very close quarters with people and cars everywhere and the markets often spilling out into the street. The operator of the system at Rivere Froide was very good and quite knowledgeable. He ran the system in Port Salut and when Fre Mano became the General Superior and moved from Port Salut to Rivere Froide he brought his team with him. Good choice. I had forgotten that we put this system in in 2006 and it was working just as well now as it did then. It was a true testament to how well these systems



can be kept if you just do a little TLC. Everything was quite clean and Bertone gave it high marks on the evaluation form. Back to the monastery 1.5 hrs later and the traffic jam was still there. We were just in time to see the bus being towed away. What a mess! This is why we always leave for the airport 3 hours early because you can't predict when you will run into one of these things. Back at the monastery we had the opportunity to give the girls some water purification building experience. We have been



The churn is ready. The cross is a touch we picked up from the protestant groups

having a problem with the PAV reservoir that seems to have something growing in it that we can't get rid of and it is rapidly clogging the .5 and 5 micron filters. So we made a 'pre filter' for the system which is not something that LWW has done before. Essentially we rerouted the reservoir pump to go through a separate trash filter and then ozonate the water, run it through a separate churn and then back into the reservoir. This should run 24 hours a day, but since we only have electricity for about 2 hours a day, that's all it will run. Basically it is like aerating a fish tank. We installed two more valves in the system, so when we need to process clean water, we change a valve and run it though the pre filter and then into the system instead of back into the reservoir. Bertone is going to pay special attention to cleaning the trash filters once a week and we should soon be able to see if this device will work. We needed some PVC fittings and specifically a churn which is 30 feet of up and down PVC to mix the ozone

into the water since ozone is lighter than water and left to its own devices will ride on top of the water. They all had great fun and Chuck was back in his element as teacher and project manager.

Day 7: Tue, May 21-Right after breakfast, the girls are taken back to NDC to do their last day of teaching together. This will also be the beginning of Julie's week to stay alone and teach, so Shelley and Renee wanted to make sure Julie had all the resources necessary. Part of my role with LWW Haiti Network Field Committee is to help train our in-country staff on finding better ways to sustain our systems. Ancy, Valdes and Bertone had all agreed to meet with me in Leogane to discuss one of these processes. The meeting was one where I shared with the team the technique Chuck and I have been using to track all of our systems and what we use to predict when filters or other components likely need to be changed. This was the first of this sort of meeting I had with all of them and it was very well received. There was a lot of good interchange of ideas and all, including myself, came out knowing we would be able to improve our Haiti water purification sustainability.



Now Bertone, Chuck and I head west with a priest from PAP that has a school in Marrion, a community about 5 miles west of Petit Goave, to do a site inspection. The trip and inspection are uneventful, save there are multiple challenges associated with this location. As it turns out Julie is part of a distant learning graduate class on Logistics in Emergencies, so I have given this location as a real case for them to solve. They have done so very enthusiastically. We returned to PAV right after noon and spend the rest of the



day working on getting the new pre-filtration system working. The initial reports from Bertone say it appears to be working, but it is too soon to tell. Down to NDC to pick up the girls. It is a sad moment when we leave one of our own behind. As it turned out Julie had a fantastic following week and was watched over closely by several in Haiti in addition to God's special angels He sent. No time for UNO tonight. Packing needs to be done and we all figure out ways to reduce the number of bags we carry back. We bid fond farewell to the brothers at dinner as we will be up and gone before they are up.

Day 8: Wed, May 22-The girls tried to ignore it, but 4a is the wakeup call. While it only takes 2 hours to get to the airport, one traffic jam can add another 1-2 hours to the drive. Out the gate at 5 to pick up Ancy at 6 who keeps the truck. This time there are no traffic jams thankfully, so we are at the airport in plenty of time. They have finished this part of the airport which was badly damaged in the earthquake. It is all very nice now and a facility I am sure Haiti is proud of. I was certainly proud of them for the work accomplished. The rest of the day went pretty smoothly except of Chuck who suffered some stomach ailments. It seemed like only yesterday that we had arrived and now we are leaving. We left Haiti a better place, but primarily because the Haitians have taken it upon themselves to make their country a better place. It is cleaner and more orderly than I have ever seen it. What a difference an earthquake can make.

Your brother in Christ,

Bob McCoy – Haiti Mission Team Lead

