

Trip Report Holy Spirit Haiti Mission April 25-May 1, 2019

Haiti Day 1-leaving HSV on Silver airways. As it turns out it is a brand new plane and smells new; it's second flight. Never done HSV-ORL-PAP but it seems logical. Will know more when I hopefully land in 7 hrs. Tonight we have a big meeting at NDC to discuss reviving the nutrition program. It will be my first true attempt to bring three cultures together (Haitian, Cuban, American) using the rules of American business practices of measurable goals. Please pray for Vivian, Mickie (Vivian's friend from Piedmont) and myself for a safe and productive journey.



Haiti Day 2-the Lord guided all of us well last night at our meeting at NDC to try and get the nutrition program back on track. We have a framework of what needs to be done and how we will measure

success. Everyone contributed and I was thrilled to have the collective wisdom of Eliane, Vivian Yanne, Arie, Olizard and Bertone to draw from.

Today we visited the new Haiti LWW office in Leogane. We spent a lot of time discussing the security of the warehouse assuming we move it from PAV to Leogane. There are several advantages to doing this but security is the priority and Sonie is responsible for the warehouse contents so she has to be 100% satisfied.

Then we moved on to the Missionary of Charities in Carrefour to do what I thought would be a very straightforward pump install. Nothing was straightforward from that point on. I've seen a casing installed in a hand dug well but they did and it was too small for the pump. These guys worked like dogs today first breaking up the concrete and then trying to get the casing out of the well so we could put a 6" one in. Electricity had not been run yet and the pump cover I was promised was not there so we punted and will return Tuesday. Hopefully the work will be done by then.

We then went back to the clinic to meet with Yanne and Arie about training some people in the greater Leogane area on water health education. Yanne was enthusiastic about the project so we'll see how this pilot goes.

Up to the monastery for dinner and then another meeting with Arie on a potential project in for the St Alphonse order.

While the day had its disappointments it also had many graces and the people interaction really enlivened me. Internet connection is not good so this will likely not get out until the morning when we are driving to Carrefour. Grace and peace.



Bertone, Sonie and Ancy



Haiti Day 3-today was very productive even if I did spend 5 hrs in a chair meeting with priest and water committee of Notre Dame Guadalupe. I was so impressed by the interest and enthusiasm that they all showed and the questions they asked. True it was a marathon meeting to get three covenants signed but we ended up with one signed for now and the other two as a work in progress. is. This system will be a good investment for HSHM I am proud to say. It will have its challenges but they all do.

Bertone and I left about 2:30 to go back to NDC to say goodbye to Vivian and Mickie who leave tomorrow. They have done a wonderful job and been such friends to the kids. In talking with Mickie

tonight I asked her what struck her most about NDC and she said 'how happy the kids were'. It's a great testament to Elaine and her team that run the facility.

We then went on to review the proposed health education program with Dr. Yanne. What a gift that woman is!! Arie is waiting for us for dinner when we pull into the monastery just before 7. We've made some real progress this day. Grace and peace



Haiti Day 4-every morning begins with communion service and now the Pascal candle is lit which adds one more light to the dark chapel. Praying in the chapel at this time of morning reminds me of the start of the Easter vigil service as the candle comes in the dark church. What I thought would be a pretty light day turned out busy and productive. One of the reasons I like to come to Haiti alone on occasion is when I am responsible for a team my focus is on the team and the work we have to do and it seldom gives me the opportunity to be spontaneous but today I got that chance. Ancy, Lucson, Fre Olizard, Bertone and I began the morning removing a water system from Darborne. It was unfortunate but it was not being used and the priest did not want it and gave permission for its removal. The system will be installed in PaPx at the MC hospital. The solar components will be installed at the new LWW. Office in Leogane. That was all we had scheduled for the day.

Because Eliane had a catering gig with Fonkoze bank that day I asked for an introduction to the director and had a delightful talk with him. I was then invited to address about 50 Fonkoze employees. Fonkoze is a micro finance bank we have used since 2003 and LWW and HSHM moves a lot of money each month into the county so we are a big customer and I told them how grateful we were for their great service. One of my concerns for a while has been that those who have jobs do not have access to the banking system for auto or home loans and every time I ask the question I am told it is not possible so Bertone and I called on BNC bank, one of a half dozen large banks in Haiti. We were politely received by a first level person and when he understood my interest we were brought upstairs to the bank director who was equally polite and explained the system to me. The bottom line was it was not hard but the Haitian people are afraid of banks. Bertone finally saw the possibilities and even though the interest rate was about 10% (high by our standard) he felt was manageable. If people will use the banks responsibly it will open up the middle class and really improve the economy assuming the government can remain stable and inflation under control.

Then Bertone and I went to visit Sister Edna at one of our water installations. The site had not been working for a while because of a bad pump and in spite of the fact that I told her I would pay for half the pump 3 mons ago she did not get it fixed. So we had a “tough love” discussion that the systems cannot sit idle. Sister understood and next Thursday after I leave she will give money to Bertone to fix it. I know the religious do not have a lot of money but we cannot create an environment of dependency either. These must be free standing operations.

Our last stop was to Natcom the phone company who has a far greater internet service but exponentially more complex to figure out. We learned a lot from the tech and even learned that the Haiti phone carrier Comtel has been pressured by the US carriers to not allow their sims to work in the US so it just makes it harder for me to keep the same phone number every time I come to Haiti because an unused sim expires in 60 days. Oh the webs we have woven.



This is the first garbage I have ever seen in Haiti. Chuck and I often would laugh about the business we could start down here in this business.



Haiti Day 5-morning martens chanting psalms and prying the rosary is always a special time for me and an incredible way to lay the foundation for my day. We were not hurried this morning as our meeting did not begin until 10. We stopped a couple of places to get some items and going though DuFort on market day is always a treat. Mind you this is a two lane highway which often becomes one lane because the people set up the market on the road. Today there didn't seem to be so many people until

Bertone told me they moved many of the vendors to a market off the road. They did that in PAP and made a nice market with hundreds of stalls for the vendors but a year later when I came back they had consumed 3 lanes of a 6 lane road again so I suspect Dufort will be no different.

Today we have a meeting with all the LWW team in Haiti. These are the people that maintain all the 90 active water systems in Haiti. They are the finest team an organization could even ask for. Today I did a session on self-assessment of the water system which is handed out at each regional meeting to the operating partners. It tells us where we need to focus our training efforts in the meetings but also tells us as a network how we are doing. I had asked each of the 'boys' as I call them (Sonie the one woman is our warehouse manager) to choose 5 of their clients and assess them. There are four categories to be rated: Operations, Education, Finance and System Management. There is a 5th Overall category. Blue-outstanding, Green- Good, Yellow-fair, Red-must be improved. Within each of the category there are specific actions listed to put you in that color group. You can see by the chart that overall I think we are doing pretty well and are very strong in operations but very weak in education (which we already knew) and that is where we will focus some energy over the next year.

The meeting was scheduled to go until 2 but there was such great discussion we didn't leave the new office until 3. I don't get to see and talk with all of these guys very often so I relished the opportunity while it was available. Thank you team!!!

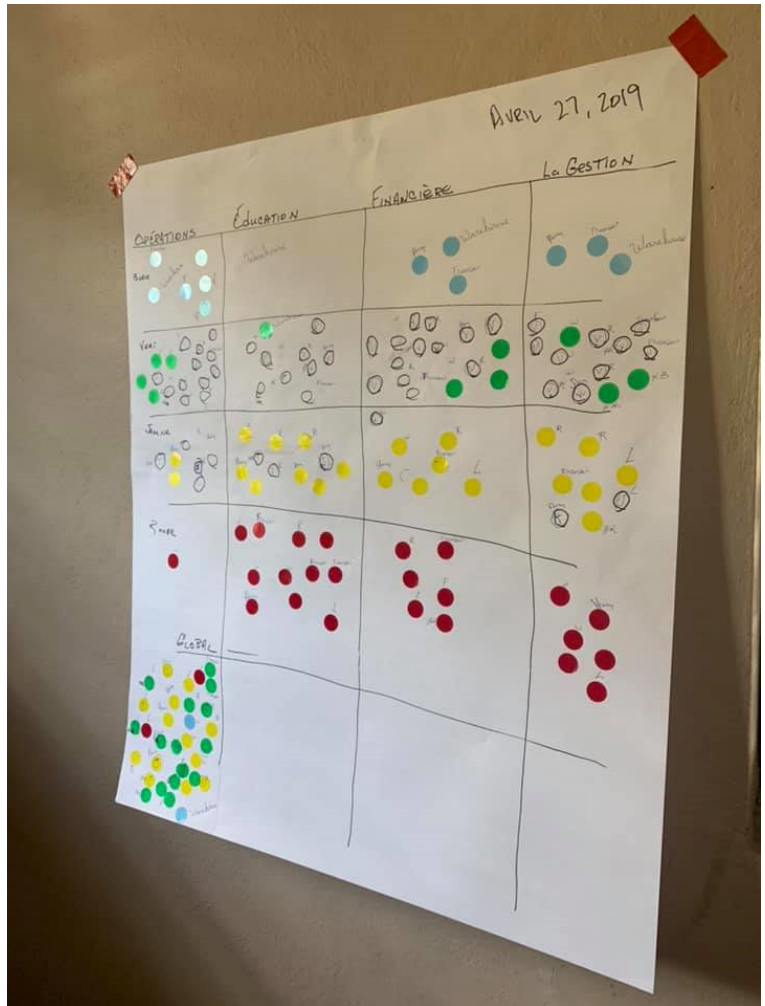
Eliane catered our lunch for us and it occurred to me that there is a growing business opportunity here to help sustain the orphanage. On Friday she catered 50 people at Fonkoze bank and she's done weddings in the past. We're going to begin some marketing and see what can be done.

While speaking to Eliane I got more details on an exciting summer camp opportunity for a few of the girls. The program as I understand it today is: A program sponsored by IBSER who you may remember is responsible for the orphanages in Haiti. This program targets 10-14 year old kids and there will be 30 kids to join this group from 6 orphanages. 5 from PAP and 1 from Leogane. The kids will each be assigned a family in which they will stay for one month. All expenses are paid. IBSER gets the passports and visas. Eliane has chosen 7 children but will get either 4, 5 or 6 kids. She has no official info yet as it is still being worked out but the kids will come in July to TX. This tells me they must be working with a TX orphanage org to place the kids. The homes in TX have to learn some Kreyol. The director of IBSER is also going and he speaks English. He oversees the entire operation. That's all I know now. I may hear more tomorrow as the discussion topic is on the board meeting agenda. Grace and peace.



This is the best crew ever, but I could not get them to stop long enough to pose for the picture. This is the best of 5 attempts.

Lucson, François, Sonie, Réginald, Bertone, Watelin, Ancy



Haiti Day 5-on Sunday the monks do not say martens but go to mass a little later so this morning I recited the rosary while walking the yard and watching the sun come up over Port au Prince. There are some pleasures in life like this that can only be done in Haiti and I so enjoyed the time. Before long Bertone was here at 7 and we were off to mass in Leogane. For those of you reading this and have children, you can remind them that not everyone gets a ride to church and these are my escorts walking a half mile back from church. That means they walked 1 mile to and from church. Many of them do it every Sunday. Upon entrance Eliane had a nice breakfast waiting for me. I spent the next hour diagnosing an electrical problem and then a couple of hours with Guerline taking the rest of the girl's pictures. Bertone arrived about 2 from his church and then lunch where we celebrated Eliane's pending birthday on Thursday with a cake and presented a laptop computer to Daphne Simon who is one of the dedicated teachers at NDC that turned down higher pay to stay at NDC because NDC has paid for her university. She was very grateful.

Bertone brought an electrician with him and while we had the NDC board meeting the electrician fixed the wiring problem. We finally left NDC at 7 that evening tired but knowing we had made a difference. When Eliane is happy we are all happy. Weekend is over and only two days left to finish up more meetings and hopefully finish the well pump install at MC on Tuesday. Have a good evening. Grace and peace.



Haiti Day 6 - Matins at 530 and the beginning of a not too hard day. This morning at breakfast Bertone informs me they are organizing a one week long 'grieve' beginning this morning. A grieve is when a city or an area stops working and blocks the roads sometimes with guns. If this is true it will make it virtually impossible for me to get to the airport on Wednesday. We will see.

Today I'm scheduled to teach geography to 9 teachers and then meet with the brothers of St. Alphonse. Since class did not begin until 11 Bertone and I went to NDC to make a quick electrical repair. Thanks be to God - no grieve today. In Feb they closed the country down for 13 days - and accomplished nothing except make it difficult for people to go about their lives.

Last night we had to sacrifice the electrical plug from the water system board in favor of electricity to half the house so this morning we needed to replace the plug or they wouldn't have a running purification system. It was a quick change with one stop to buy some dry erase markers and then back to the monastery. The last geography class I had 6 teachers and this one was 9 and it was great fun to teach. They are hungry for this information much of which is not taught in Haiti. The 2 hrs was over before I knew it but all seemed really excited about learning the subject matter. I have been asked to expand the class to 3 hrs and teach some other subject yet to be defined. In addition Fre Arie wants me to teach the same subject to the Philo students (last year of high school).

We got a quick lunch and then had another possibly difficult meeting with the St Alphonse brothers. Communication had been so poor on their representative's part that we didn't know where we stood or if it was going to be a testy meeting. It was not and could have not turned out better. The general superior, the superior and two other monks attended and once I had laid out the difficulties and where we thought the problems might lie they fully agreed and the bottom line outcome is we are back on track. Nic, you would have been proud as your email was fully answered and we will get all the cooperation with good spelling from the superior general himself. This is the third meeting of this type I

have had on this trip and it has been so gratifying being able to fix these issues face to face with love and peace as Olizard likes to say.



Then another short break and a 4-530 meeting with Arie. I am then free and for the first time have time to myself to sit and do nothing which many of you who know me is not something I do well. So tonight will be quiet with a book because tomorrow we have to make the MC pump work. No pressure. Grace and peace.

Haiti Day 8-up for my last matins with the brothers as I will be leaving the monastery around 4 tomorrow morning. I so enjoy my time with them and Fre Arie is so gracious about helping guide me through the prayer book. I struggle with the English version let alone Kreyol. Tonight when I got back Fre Arie presented me with a gift of a new prayer book. While I can't use it yet; it was an incredible gift because these books are very expensive.

After breakfast Bertone and I set off for MC in Carrefour to install the solar well pump that we tried to install a week ago. The site was now properly prepared and all we had to do glue some PVC unions together, put a switch in place and drop the pump. All worked flawlessly and pretty soon we had water flowing 400' from the well to the water house. Tomorrow Bertone will bring in two valves to complete the job so we can adapt the tank as a second water source to the water purification system. Sister Genova fed us lunch in my favorite spot - the orchard outside the convent house. It is like another world there with the madness of PAP and Carrefour just 1500 feet away and hardly a sound can be heard in the stillness. It's a bit like Nardia I suspect.

We said good bye to the sisters and made one more stop at NDC to pick up two bags of Haitian rice for Vivian. Then across the street to meet with Fre Olizard. He and his team are about to embark on their second installation up in the north country in Port au Paix at the MC hospital in that town. While much of this has become old hat for me I am so excited about passing on the torch to a Haitian partner that will be installing water systems. A five year dream of mine is being fulfilled. We had numerous details to discuss and in the end he and Bertone were ready for the next step.

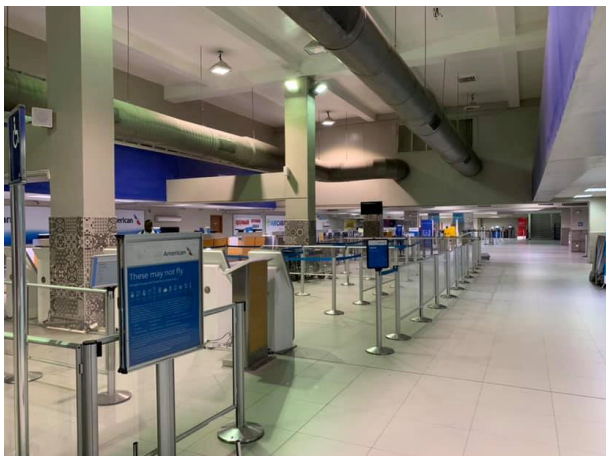
Then time to put 40 gal of diesel in the land cruiser (2tanks) and one final step to see Yanne to say goodbye. That night the brothers moved me deeply with a special celebration for me including a bottle of champagne, ice cream and cake. This place I have come to visit every 4-6 months is truly my second home. It's just as if I had only been away a few hours.

Thank you for joining me on this journey. There will be another in Oct. and thank you most of all for your prayers. Grace and peace.



Haiti Day 9-coming home. Bertone was at the gate 4a. The monks do not get up until 5 and in spite of my asking Fre Arie to disturb his sleep, at 3:50 when I walked out of my room there he was to walk me to the car. I had loaded the two big bags the night before. Big hugs to Arie and the brothers. The party the evening before was still fresh in my mind. I was sorry to leave his side. In spite of the fact that we do not speak a common language it is surprising how much we think alike. He and Bertone are very close so it's always like three brothers when we are together. We left at 4 and were at the airport at 5:15. We did not see one car in PAP. It has to be a speed record. I was glad to sit in the airport for a while because it meant Bertone could get out of PAP without any traffic. I hugged Bertone hard when I left. He is like family to me. Before I took off he had called me and sent me a picture of the new valves in place to finalize the MC well and additional tank installation.

That's when God sent me an angel. After I got through customs in PAP Lucson called me about a pump problem. Upon hanging up I picked up my bag and began walking toward the gate when I suddenly realized I didn't have my passport. Fear gripped my heart as I turned to retrace my steps. I know I had it coming through customs. Going back Marco came running up and asked if it was mine. I had somehow dropped it while on the phone with Lucson. He saw a lady pick it up and he got it and ran after me. Thank you Marco from McAllen, TX. God bless you. From there in it was not too eventful. Got caught up on email and phone stuff and ready to begin another day at the salt mines. It will be good to get a warm shower tomorrow but Haiti will never be far from my mind. Grace and peace.



PAP Airport at 5:30AM