

October 2020 Haiti Trip – Bob McCoy

Haiti Oct 7 - Nothing too exciting today except airplanes took off and landed on time. My sweet Kathy drove me to Birmingham to catch American. There is not a good way to make it to PAP in one day unless you want to risk a 43 min connection in Miami. And then the luggage has to make it also. So, I opted for the HSV-CLT-MIA route with a 6 hr layover in MIA. I'm too cheap to spend \$150 for the hotel so the floor it was. Not too bad until some Haitian sat talking on the phone for 2 hrs at 2 am.

Haiti Oct 8 - Another on time totally full flight. Kathy called it a Petri dish and she's probably not wrong. In the US they asked everyone to stay seated until the row ahead of you emptied but they didn't bother in PAP. Social distancing is just not in the Haitian culture. But everyone was good about using face masks. I did get stopped at customs but had nothing suspicious so out I went to Bertone and Ancy's smiling faces. No social distancing there either, it was hugs all around.

Our first stop was Our Lady of Guadeloupe OLG. This was the system we were supposed to install Oct 2019 and ended up getting our Haitian team to do it and it is beautifully done. Pere Joseph is a very sharp priest and has one of the best water committees I have ever experienced. Eric Riddenbach who is the moderator of the LWW Peru network recently presented a wonderful paper on Marketing Purified Water. It is a real KISS (keep it simple stupid) type technique, logical and easy to

understand. So, I presented the concepts to Pere and his committee over a 2 hr session and it was very enthusiastically received. To give you an idea in the past 7 months they have sold 13K gallons of water to about 200 clients. With that money they built a second story on the water building to protect the tanks. Pere wants to begin a food program and by the time we were finished he saw his way to increasing his sales by at least 5 times. In 6 months, I'm going to be very excited to see what happens. After a great lunch and some more relationship building, we traveled to the Missionary of Charities.

This system supports a hospital of 250, primarily HIV and the sort of patient St Mother Theresa would help in the streets. Their well had dried up and they were drilling another one. While we were there. It was most timely because they needed a well pump but had no idea of the specifications. We hope we got them back on the right track again. Should know by Monday.

On the way to Leogane to see Eliane and the girls. They are all well and very healthy. We spent only about 30 min catching up. I will be there all-day Sunday. Then on to a quick visit with Brother Olizard, to drop off a truck part he couldn't find in Haiti and then up to the monastery. Frere Arie was waiting with his big smile and we had such a great dinner together. It has been 18 months since I have been here and he has been very busy building



Pere Joseph with his hands raised explaining one of his dreams for the community



The girls always make me feel so welcome

several things but the most notable is a 68K gal reservoir that he fills from several roof sources on his campus. He spent a lot of money each year trucking water 600 gal at a time (15 miles each way) up the mountain from Signeau. It took 9 loads to fill his reservoir which only lasted 2 weeks. He is now free of that expense. It is quite an engineering feat he has accomplished.

Dinner was not complete without a Prestige beer which I didn't want because I was exhausted but didn't turn down either. By 830 I finally get a chance to unpack and get a shower to wash off 2 days of stuff. Because I am a light sleeper, I took a Tylenol pm and guess what?

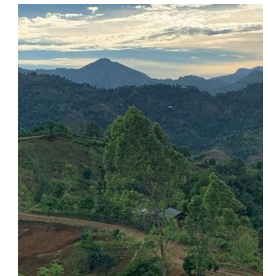
Haiti Oct 9- Waking time for 530am prayer is 5a and I almost set my alarm clock but forgot to do the final step. We had to leave by 630 so Monise made us breakfast by 6. I at least got part of a rosary in and off we go. Today Dr. Yanne took us on her Mobile Clinic run. During a month she has set with certain community leaders that she will provide medical services from 9 to 4. This particular day was in a community called Beausejour. We drive to about 2200' and turn left in the Fondwa road. I'm familiar with this road as we have a water system in Fondwa and know this was a place in great need of medical services. Normally



We went no further today. Note the mud on the tires. It is like ice and one wrong slide...

Yanne parks her car at Fondwa and from here on hires motorcycles and/or

donkeys. Since we had a strong 4 wheel drive truck we suggested she load the medicine in the truck and we all got in. This is a road where 20-30 degree inclines are common with no guard rails and steep drop offs. And it had been raining in the past days so mud was as common as the ruts. At first the road was very passable but as we worked our way eastward down the first valley and up the next hill it got much trickier. The truck performed well and Ancy is very skilled at managing the



This country is unbelievably beautiful. Mountains beyond mountains – Paul Farmer

ruts as the back end slides back and forth. It's not bad if you don't have to look at how narrow the road is and one misstep could be disastrous. About 45 min in Ancy stopped at a high point. We all got out and discussed this very precarious situation. It was determined that since we had one more mountain to go over still and rain looked likely later in the day, that discretion was the better part of valor. It was not worth the risk to lose the vehicle and ourselves as much as we wanted to keep the appointment. After much pondering we turned around. What I did gain from all of this is how big Yanne's heart is because we were in a part of the country where there is no possibility of medical services and Yanne



Jean Pierre, Dr. Yanne, Bertone, Ancy Trou Coffy Community center

brings a lot of hope to these folks. There are 4 stops along this road and as we ventured back, we stopped at the first one, Trou Coffy. We met some of the community and Yanne showed us the community center where she holds her clinic. It is a great place for her to do this work. During the rainy season we discussed the possibility of asking the folks

further East to come to this center until the road is more passable. So, by 11 we said our good byes sad that we could not bring hope that day but certain it was the right decision.

That afternoon I spent down at the school and looking at a plan to relocate the water system from the 30K gal school reservoir to the new reservoir. We spent some time with brother Leandre ,who Ancy knew as a child because he grew up where brother served for a while in Café Lompre. I helped Bertone get his Iphone working better and in general relaxed.

At dinner I learned that brother Montclair who lives I Signeau in the PFST retirement home had a stroke. He is 88 and had a good life. They got him to the hospital but only God's Grace will save him now. He was the director of the school where Bother Arie attended in the 4th grade. Aire is now the superior of the monastery and shared with us what a great influence Brother Montclair had on his becoming a brother. Lord Jesus bring your grace upon Frere Montclair. Sadly, brother Montclair joined the Lord the next morning.

Tonight, I will get to bed earlier and hope I don't repeat this morning's performance.

Haiti Oct-10 I managed to get up at the appropriate time and made it to chapel on time. It is difficult for me to explain the peace I receive from praying the rosary and liturgy of the hours with the brothers. It is the highlight that begins my day. Breakfast was spaghetti, avocados, eggs and coffee. It was great and since we had an hour before our first appointment the conversation turned to Biden and Trump. There is great interest by the Haitians in our upcoming election but since they only hear the media's view, I had a lot of steering to do toward the truth. Great discussion.



Saturday is wash day at NDC and God is the dryer.

Today's schedule was all meetings but very important ones for reasons I won't elaborate on here but suffice it to say successful beyond what I had hoped. Bertone, Ancy and I met with Fre Olizard who is the Haiti Initiating Partner (IP) for LWW. IPs are those teams that install water purification systems and up until October 2019 was done exclusively by US teams. He has just completed a very successful install in Maniche and they are reviewing doing a solar install in Port Salut. There is a lot of planning that goes into this process and Fre Olizard has been really good about

doing each step properly.

The second item I brought up was to seek ways we can find Haitian funding donors. As moderator of the Haiti network I have always felt that the Haitians are very capable of running their own operation as long as a funding source can be identified. We took the first step today toward this goal by their agreeing to put together a Haitian non-profit that would be recognized as legitimate in the eyes of Haitian donors. They felt very strongly that having the solid LWW organization already well established in Haiti supporting almost 100 purification systems will be a good story to those who want to help. This was a bigger first step than I had

hoped for thanks be to God.



Eliane and Yanne – it warms my heart to see these two like this, two very heartwarming & independent women in a man's cultural environment

Our second meeting moved us to the NDC orphanage with Bertone, Dr Yanne, and Eliane to discuss the effects of the current economic situation when on Oct 1 the Haitian government decreased the value of the US dollar from 104 gourdes to 67. Unfortunately, prices remained the same for many products so suddenly the value of what we send them is cut by 1/3. The new and highly successful mobile clinic that Dr. Yanne began in May is manageable because we can reduce some days, but NDC is a much harder problem to solve because we're not going to put 1/3 of the kids on the street. For now, we will watch the situation and hope it stabilizes. More in the next few weeks.

One cannot go to NDC without eating a meal. Eliane who is such a wonderful host just wouldn't hear of it. Besides the food is incredibly good all cooked by a team of girls. God's Grace was really flowing today!



Bertone in front of his almost finished house in Leogane

Back to the monastery to help Bertone get his Iphone operational, diner and off for another evening but not before we stop by Bertone's house he has been building in Leogane. 18 months ago, this was hardly a footing. Little by little. Tomorrow I have decided to go to mass with the brothers at 630 and then on to NDC. See you then. Thanks for all the prayers.

Haiti Oct 11- We were to leave the monastery at 545 for mass in Dufort but the driver slept in and only Fre Arie drives, Unfortunately, he had to take his mother to the eye doctor in Cayes. So, at 6:05 the brothers give me the keys. Not my first choice. It's still pitch black out and my eyesight at night is ok on US roads but not unlit Haitian mountain roads. But we made it with the windshield fogging every 30 secs and the brothers are all praying the rosary really hard, Mother Mary heard their plea and guided us safely. I could tell you of all the other obstacles in the road but you wouldn't believe me.

We arrive at St Andrew and my opening prayer was since I would not understand the words that God would just fill me with His love. Their choir was 6 young men and women who had incredible voices, a bongo drum and a keyboard. When they began singing, I was flooded with this wonderful peaceful feeling. And it didn't leave until after I was out of the church. Prayer answered!



The Blood of Christ celebrated at St. Andrews in Dufort

I was dropped off at NDC and spent the next 4 hours eating breakfast and talking with Eliane, something I've never been able to for more than a few minutes at a time. She shared many things with me, some about some of the challenging girls, some about how the school system works and a lot about license documents and fees. At 1p Bertone arrives from his church and after lunch, he, Eliane and I went to visit Guivenson's new home. Guivenson is a 10 yr old young boy



Charles showing off his handiwork. This is a large project they have undertaken.



The Lesley family now with Guivenson and the triplets (all 10 yrs old).

who grew up in NDC almost since birth. For the obvious reasons he could not stay but it is not NDCs practice to put the people on the street. For the past year the plan was to transfer him to another orphanage but we were holding out in hopes a Haitian family would take him in. About 6 mon ago Eliane met the Lesley family who are Catholic, have 10 yr old triplets (2 girls and a boy) and wanted Guivenson as their 4th child. Charles is a construction engineer and Liza is a HIV nurse in Leogane. They are building their own home and are a lovey couple. Guivenson is looked upon as one of their own and this couple could not show more parental love. What was supposed to be a 15 min visit turned into 1.5 hrs. This is a test year and if all works out in another 9 mon or so Guivenson will likely be formally adopted by the family.

Back to NDC for a board meeting where the first not so bright news is presented. Parts of the electrical system in the building need repair, their vehicle is on its last legs and we have yet to see what the dollar reduction will do to the school program. They have homework to get us more detailed budget information which we should have in a week. Bertone and I left NDC just shy of 7p. Returning to the monastery we just beat a major rainstorm which I estimate dumped over 1" in 45 min. Bon nuit as another busy day approaches tomorrow.

Haiti Oct 12- Matens was the usual spiritual filling event to get my day going. Bertone has had a cold and so I knew it was a matter of time before I



The PAV University students (7 of 9). This is the future of Haiti.

acquired it and this morning the Alka Seltzer cold and cough came out. As some of you know we have two major educational programs that we have had much success with. One is the education of all the children in NDC including university if they want to go. The other is what is called the PAV

scholarship fund begun by Fre Arie 3 years ago for 10 select young people to get their education paid for and in

return come to the monastery school and teach for the same number of years. At breakfast I was able to meet with 7 of them and the future of Haiti could not be in better hands. These young people are energetic, enthusiastic and anxious to tackle their future. Several times their gratitude was conveyed to the donors of this program without whom they had no hope. I presented each of them with a Luci solar light for studying in the dark and to Medina who has been top in her class two semesters in a row a Dell laptop. To show you the quality of this group, I was concerned that some might be jealous of Medina but it was anything but. They all clapped and gathered around her and cheered her on. I truly left in a cloud of love.



Fre Arie and Bob



PAV University student at special breakfast in their honor with Fre Arie. These young'uns can put away some chow!

The rest of morning thru 2p in the afternoon, I met with the LWW in country staff at our office in Leogane. There are 8 on this team that I am truly blessed to serve with. Each time I come to Haiti we always try to get together to review new things that are happening and better ways we can serve the pure water systems in Haiti. I always try and provide one item on some form of education and this session was Marketing Pure Water,



The LWW in country team in front of the Leogane office. There is no team better!!

an incredibly good, simple plan to follow written by Eric Ridenbach, that will help our OPs increase their revenue stream. Then for lunch they surprised me with a meal catered by Eliane and sang Happy Birthday with a card and gift signed by all and a very moving, personal speech by Ancy. Definitely a close moment for that day.

From yesterday's board meeting at NDC I have learned the electrical system is not functioning. It's a major wiring problem. So, Bertone and I meet Gelo our electrician, and for the next hour lay out a plan to analyze the issue in detail and make a proposal to fix it once and for all. During the walk through afterward Gelo found one critical problem and solved it on the spot. We at least left NDC that evening with electricity. Tomorrow he will return to do a thorough analysis and we will review his plan that evening. Another 8p dinner with Arie and Bertone and in bed by 10 after solving another Iphone problem for Bertone. The days are flying by. Decouze and Jacmel tomorrow. Bon Nuit.

Haiti Oct 13- This day was intended to be light. Matens of course and breakfast. I have so enjoyed breakfast with Bertone and Arie each morning and supper in the evening. Our conversations have a wide range of topics from Trump/Biden to cultural challenges for both of us. The brothers all eat in another dining room in the back and the front dining room is reserved for guests and conferences. I always sit at the right of the superior. Don't ask me why except years ago this was where I was asked to sit and have never changed. It feels just as natural as sitting across from Kathy in our breakfast room at home. This is where we laugh a lot and often get serious.

Bertone and I head south toward Jacmel. The monastery sits about 1100' and we will go through 3000' on the way. This road runs north to south between Dufort (Leogane) on the north shore and Jacmel on the south shore. It is the major artery to get people and resources between PAP and towns on the south coast. It is also one of the most beautiful and scenic drives Haiti has to offer. The road is built mostly along ridges. Paul Farmers book Mountains Beyond Mountains is so evident when traveling this road (as much so as traveling with Dr. Yanne on Friday). The scenery is breathtaking. And this morning we were driving in the clouds for part of the trip. Decouze is close to high point which is our first stop.

Pere Laguerre is the rector of St Michael's Catholic Church, in a community where hardship is taken for granted. About 8 yrs ago we put a water purification system here but about two years ago their reservoir cracked at the top and they could only fill it to about 6000 of the 8000 gal. Everyone's answer

of course is dig another one, but we decided to try something different. Nic Price researched water bladders and found a company in Texas that had just what we needed. We bought the bladder, shipped it and got some of the Union Tech Depot team to install it. This thing is 20'x25' and holds 10,000 gal but is earthquake proof. It is definitely heavy though. Lucson and Bertone got it installed early this year and built a nice 4" drain



St. Michaels water bladder

system from the rectory roof to the bladder. There is another building next to the bladder foundation that Pere Laguerre built with a lot of roof space so Bertone built another gutter system and ran it into the first one. Now it takes only 1 week to fill the bladder. On his own Father built a roof over the bladder to protect it from the sun which should preserve it for years to come. We commend Pere for this initiative as it shows how



4" plumbing coming from two roofs to fill the bladder.

vested he is in preserving this gift. There was a lot of 'it should work' on this project and my hat is off to Nic for all the successful effort he put into it. This is the way we will likely go in the future for reservoirs of the 10-20K gal size.

We continue the journey to Jamel to visit with Pere Maurice whose system was installed before the earthquake. I remember the install distinctly because the bishop showed up one afternoon and was very interested in the work we were doing. Pere Maurice needed a little money to get his bottle program going which we left with him. Bertone will monitor his success regarding this venture.



Then, on to the Missionaries of the Holy Ghost who have a house in Monchil (Jacmel) and Lavout which is way in the mountains. I wanted to meet the new superior, Sister Maria who just came from many different tours in Africa. This was truly a woman on fire for the Holy Spirit. We had a great talk getting to know each other. As we say our good byes Bertone turns over the Patrol and click click. Normally a dead battery but he just put a new battery in 3 months ago. So, we get a couple guys off the street to help push us it into the street (not an easy task). There is a nice down down-hill outside the gate. Bertone kicks it over and we're on the way back to NDC to check on the electrical progress of Gelo. He's made great progress, identified several problems and cleaned up a few things. I give him money to go to PAP tomorrow to buy parts. We actually make it back to the monastery by 6:30. Of course, Prestige was offered but I had made it through the day with convenient library stops along the way and I wasn't going to tempt fate this evening. I left the table at 745 thinking I would get some writing done. After my shower at 8 my head hit the pillow until 455a next morning. Zzzzzzzz

Haiti Oct 14 & 15 - Easy day today. Usual morning beginning with Matins and a breakfast which lasted extra-long in conversation with Arie and Bertone because we didn't have to be anywhere right then. We then went into Leogane to the LWW office and warehouse to pull a physical inventory with Sonie the IC

Warehouse manager. Another well done performance by Sonie who has been doing this job since 2012. Nothing slips by her. We stopped at a store so I could buy vanilla for several folks back home. Then onto NDC to fulfil a luncheon invitation from sister Eliane. I am the most overfed person on the planet. We had hoped Gelo would have returned from PAP with the electrical parts for NDC but knew that was an outside chance. Traffic in PAP yesterday was awful. One of Arie's drivers spent 5

hours going 15 miles.

Before dinner a young man came to visit me, whose name is Erickson Celestin. For those of you who have followed the mission since 2007 you might remember Erick Celestin, the man who was thrown out of a truck going up the mountain carrying water for the monastery when the transmission came apart. His back was broken in 7 places and he endured lying on a board for 30 days until we could get a Medflight to pick him up. Erick was sewn back together by some awesome surgeons who worked 7 hours as I remember and 1.5 years later Erick went back to Haiti to meet his new son. It was Erickson, now in grade 9, who came to introduce himself. His father who was paralyzed from the waist down, passed away about 5 years ago and I asked him what he remembered most about his dad. He told me he always had something to give him before he went off for school. As you may be able to see from the picture, Erickson has a warm smile and I think a big heart. This is how I remember his father, a man with a big heart. For those who helped that operation you gave at least a dozen more years to Erick to enjoy watching his son grow up.

That evening the PAV university Students had been invited to diner and once again it was an equally enjoyable experience as Monday morning. We laughed and ate lots of food and they had a chance to fire some questions my way. Can you guess one of the subjects? Yep, elephants and donkeys and why doesn't Trump pay taxes? I think they have a little better understanding of our government now, at least a different perspective than the networks give. Later I was able to call Kathy and pack for tomorrow's trip.

Heading home. It is with great sadness I leave my second home where I have stayed ever since coming to Haiti 20 years ago. I was able to pray the rosary with the brothers and receive communion but had to leave before Matins began. PAP traffic is totally unpredictable and because there are still daily riots going on at different locations of PAP, Bertone wanted to get out of PAP by 10a and I certainly didn't blame him.



Fre Arie, Fre Marsies and Bertone comparing indexes of the Kreyol and US Liturgy of the Hours. They are the same.



Erickson Celestine and Bob.

On the way we picked up Castro, one of the PAV university students as he had a 9a class in PAP. On the way the discussion got to bad roads and where were the taxes to fix the roads? In someone's pocket is all we could conclude.

Your love and prayers came with me and their love and prayers come back with me. Without so many of you who give so generously this would not be possible. Thank you!!

Bob McCoy – Director HSHM October 2020