

Holy Spirit Mission Trip March 16-23, 2021

Haiti Day 1&2- As many times as I've made this trip, you'd think I wouldn't be anxious but I was. My two connections were only 50 min long so one delayed plane can do me in. God rewarded me with on time flights all the way and because the Charlotte to Miami flight was totally full, He graced me with a flight from Miami to Port au Prince with only 38 people. While it's great to ride a near empty plane I am reminded that they won't fly them very long that way. And the icing on the cake was all the luggage made it.

Fre Arie and Bertone met me in the PFST ambulance. Because of some of the street trouble they have had it was felt the ambulance was least visible. We did great until we ran into a road block on the Carrefour bypass and were rewarded with an hour in Carrefour traffic going a total of about 2 miles.

I'm home again and our dinner conversation turned to a project we have been discussing for some time now. It is to begin another votech school in PAV. At breakfast the next morning Fre Blemur joined us who now lives at this monastery, teaches carpentry in Cafe Lompre and had all the books for the 3 yr program. It is a serious program and is governed by the state board of education which means it's accredited. We spend 1.5 hrs talking to brother which was incredibly helpful. Nic, I have some good information for you regarding this project.

Wednesday.

As often happens on these trips, schedules do not always work out and today was the case so with a phone call or two our first stop was in Carrefour with the missionaries of charity. Lucson was reporting that the water purification system was not being utilized because some people felt the water tasted heavy. We have heard the complaint before but when you are used to drinking bad water the pure water will taste different and the sisters did not know how to address the issue. We had a very good and frank discussion and agreed to get Dr Yanne to come by ASAP to re-educate the nuns and some of the community.

Bertone and I left Lucson and Ancy and went back to Leogane to meet with Yanne about the mobile clinic and her dead car. The transmission gave out in Fondwa. The challenges are more complex than I can describe here but we will meet as a team when I get back to brainstorm the issues. In the meantime, I think she may have a loaner vehicle so we will be spending Friday with her at St. Andre. She also agreed to work with Habibi while she is waiting to get into Cuba to go to medical school. Great news!!

Then we went into Leogane to the Natcom office to discuss how we can expand Fre Arie's Wi-Fi system at the monastery. Natcom and Digicel are the two Haitian phone systems. What should have taken 20 minutes took 2 hours and involved the director and two technicians. All were very nice and we were finally able to put a plan in motion. The director gave us his card and said Arie should call him. Last night Arie did and the upgrade is in motion.

When we finally got back to the monastery for lunch which was now almost dinner, I met Fre St Juste who is the general Superior of PFST and is staying at PAV for a while. There was a challenge I

had been trying to solve for the past year and diner gave me a chance to address it. Poof! Not only is it solved, but I now have all the background behind the issue.

This trip is focusing on sustaining relationships and building new ones and we are certainly off to a good start today. Off to bed about 8:30 to begin writing this report. I thank you for your prayers. Grace and peace.

Haiti Day 3 - Today we worked off plan D. How quickly things change in this country. We were scheduled to meet with our new group of university students headed by Pere Joseph at OLG and then have our first meeting with our next potential water site in Carrefour at Perpetual CC. Bertone and I were enjoying a leisurely breakfast and Ancy called to tell us the roads are going to be blocked about 10a-11a. Little did we know that had we waited at the missionaries of charity yesterday 10 more minutes we would not have gotten back until late at night. Ancy's advice was to cancel the day and in light of the last two days I agreed.

There's always another plan and plenty of things to do. We spent the morning getting a Roku device working and solving some other network issues. Living Waters for the World (LWW) has asked me to interview some of the in-country staff so I began with Bertone and then after lunch interviewed Fre Arie the Operating Partner and Fre St Juste who I found out today has been a little brother for 53 years. Fre Arie has one of the longest continuous running water systems in Haiti and was HSHM's 1st install. After 15 yrs of operation he moved it to a new water building and revitalized the parts. The water meter is reading 300,000 gallons. That's not real high but remember that they have no well, only rain catchment.

Late this afternoon we took a quick trip into Leogane to do some LWW warehouse work with Sonie and then go to a store to buy coffee and vanilla. And who should we meet at the check-out counter but Medina who is one of PAV university students and the recipient of last October's computer because of her high GPA.

Back to the monastery with another great diner with Fre Arie and Bertone and some wonderful conversation and lots of laughter. Tomorrow is Dr Yanne's mobile clinic.

The greatest news is after almost 3 days of effort by a cadre of people we have confirmed that the Covid 19 test to get back into the US is given at the airport in 15 min and is quick and easy. To avoid the blockades Bertone and I are going to PAP early Monday to make up for our lost day today. We will then be on the east side of the blockades and close to the airport. We will stay at La Masion hotel Monday night. Bertone will drop me off Tues morning at 6:30 which will give him plenty of time to get back to Leogane before the blockade begins again assuming it does. That's our plan for now at least. However, remembering today... Grace and Peace.



Making cassava at the monastery

Haiti Day 4 - Today began as each day begins with the rosary, Matins and communion. Two trips ago Fre Arie gave me the Kreyol Liturgy of the Hours book. While I am proficient with the English version, I struggle with the Kreyol version. It's the same book and same prayers but without Marsale's help, I'd be lost. Listening to these brothers chant the psalms is worth the price of admission.

After breakfast we drove to St Andre to be with Dr. Yanne and her driver Pierre Louis to implement the mobile clinic. It had been announced by two of the community women that the doctor would be there Friday. Yanne has 7 stops within a 20-mile radius of PAV that she spends 3 days a week rotating to. She begins each clinic with a prayer and some general hygiene instructions. Her clients were mostly women and children but of the 33 she saw today over 4 hours, 5 were men. We've posted many pics of her clinic on the website but being there touched me in a very different way. Many of these people could avoid this visit just using basic hygiene but then you have to be able to read and have at least a fundamental education to comprehend these principles. Using purified water would eliminate 20% of her clients, but they would have to have access to and at least some money to buy the water. Unfortunately, we just can't help everyone all the time but observing what we did today got Bertone and myself having a deep conversation about some possible future solutions.

Another thing I saw and did not realize was when a woman who had a very sprained ankle had to leave limping very badly as she had no crutch. It's not like at home. You can't just go to the store and rent or buy one. And a crutch costs about \$20, so there's the money question again. To get one you had to go to Carrefour to buy one some 20 miles away and a trip of a couple of hours in a tap tap. The solution in this case was I provided 1200 gde to Yanne for someone to go to Carrefour to get the crutch. When the lady is through using it, she will give it back to Yanne. The longer-term solution is Yanne will give us a list of some likely needed items that she can store in her clinic until needed. It's a lot faster trip to her clinic than it is to Carrefour.



Lord, I am not worthy to be under your roof, but only say the word and my soul will be healed

After the clinic was through about 1p, I got a chance to interview Yanne for a blog LWW is doing on in country personnel. While Bertone translated my questions from English to Kreyol she answered in Spanish. When I sent the voice memo to LWW this afternoon, Kendall detected a lot of emotion in Yanne's voice and she was right. Yanne is passionate about these people and her emotion comes across clearly even without video. Her parting words to me were "the perfect combination is mobile clinic and education of water purification". What a privilege God has blessed me with to work with these folks.



Dr. Yanne

We got back to the monastery about 3p and spent the rest of the afternoon discussing future strategy and solving several computer problems. In between we've had a lot to laugh about. A great dinner with Arie and



Amber refurbished St. Therese and Fre Arie created a beautiful new home for her right outside the chapel

Bertone and I learn that Arie will celebrate his 43rd birthday tomorrow and I will celebrate 20 years coming to Haiti this month.

Here are a few pics of today's clinic and one of the St Therese of Lisieux statue that was fixed up and painted by Amber during her tour here about 3 years ago. Grace and peace to all.



Many of Yanne's patients do not read, so she devised this method. O=sun 1 pill in the morning and left and 1 pill in morning and 1 in evening center pic

Haiti Day 5- Part of my responsibility to LWW is my role as the Haiti Network moderator. Living Waters for the World employs a team of 8 Haitians to oversee the sustainability of the 100 water purification systems in Haiti. I am in charge of that team and the US Network committee that oversees the work in Haiti. (This is apart from the work I do for Holy Spirit Haiti Mission). I try to spend one day meeting with the entire team to discuss challenges facing them and convey information that is passed down from LWW. Today was that meeting which I won't bore you with except to tell you God has blessed me with the greatest people in the world to work with. This operation runs as smoothly as the best of them in the US which is a testament to their commitment to make sure the investment each church puts into a water purification system is maximized.

We did have a surprise birthday cake and champagne to celebrate Ancy and Bertone's birthday last month. Ancy really humbled me in his talk about the work we do together and our love for each other as brothers.

The brothers celebrated Fre Arie's birthday tonight with a big party at the monastery. Some of the school personnel and children of the families that work here were invited. It was a joyous celebration. I was reminded a second time by three of the brothers in speeches they gave of how meaningful the work HSHM is to all whom we touch in this country. There are many involved in the mission effort and while I heard the words, I want each of you to know your support has made a huge difference in all the lives we have touched. Mesi anpil!!!



43? Not a day over 25!

Haiti Day 6 - Up at 5 to leave at 6 for mass at St Andre in Dufort. It seems like a strong parish with a good priest. They had a building collection and a box about 12x12x10" that was almost full after it was passed so the parish is very much behind the program. Fre Arie drove me to NDC after church but just as we were going by Fre Olizard's place in Signeau I get summoned on the phone by O so we turned in. He tells me he got a new report a few minutes before that they are going to block roads tomorrow IN PAP and everyone should stay home. As I understand it now, the govt is actually doing the blocking so if the gangs begin kidnapping, they have no way to run. The gangs on the other hand are incensed so it's unpredictable as to what will happen. I called Ancy to get his take on this since Olizard feels we should stay in PAP tonight and tomorrow night. Ancy will seek more information and get back later today. Olizard drives me to NDC and I begin with a great breakfast and chat with Eliane. By 1p we have all the pictures for the 2021 crop of kids thanks to Guerline's help. Then of course lunch is served. You cannot escape a Sunday visit at NDC without lunch. Afterward we meet to discuss some NDC business and Ancy calls back to confirm we really should stay in PAP tonight. Safety is first but we've got to get this site assessment visit and covenant done if there is any hope of doing an install in Oct. To throw more into the mix the whole road block thing could be a ruse. As we leave NDC and call Fre Arie of the change of plans, he presents another option. He knows a mountain road around the backside of PAP and suggests we take the ambulance, leave at 8 to meet with Perpetual CC at 9 and leave for the hotel at 11. Ancy agrees so we'll see how it works tomorrow. It will also give me a chance to get the Covid test tomorrow pm. We'll see how it works because right now several elements are still unpredictable. I pray for God's Grace to keep peace in this tinderbox and to allow us to execute the Perpetual meeting to keep our Oct meeting moving forward.



Birthday ties for Ancy and Bertone

There are a lot of challenges but I am not stressed out either. Thank you for your prayers.

Haiti Day 7- I know God heard my prayers because at least 4 of mine were heard this morning during matins. I prayed for peace in PAP today, an opportunity to meet with Father Leonard at Perpetual CC, a safe trip to the hotel next to the airport and a negative Covid test.



Without this you can not get on the airplane

Here I am eating dinner in the hotel and only a block away from the airport. We had a great meeting with Pere Leonard and his water committee. They asked some great questions and we laid a good foundation for the relationship building on all the front-end work Ancy had already done. The site has much potential for our next water purification system but we are first awaiting a test on the DINEPA water they have to see if it is bacteria laden. This is a two-day test. If it proves

bad, there are several action items to the next step.

When we left the monastery this morning it was with the intent to meet with PCC for two hours and then leave for the hotel right after. I didn't like constraining the meeting to 2 hours and wanted 3-4 but the spontaneity of things going south quickly in PAP

dictated caution until we could see for ourselves. Remember yesterday when I said it may be a ruse? Well this morning the streets were clear and while we saw a couple of blockades in PAP it was nothing compared to what we saw last week and these we easily got around. Because things looked reasonable, the meeting went almost the full 4 hours.



We are all three joined at the hip

My next hurdle was the Covid test. It was not advertised by the airlines but we did find the 15 min antigen test was being given at the airport. That was our next stop. With a negative result I could breathe easily that I could get in the airport tomorrow morning...and negative it was. So tonight, I get a little free time knowing we have done everything on the plan except the visit to OLG in spite of the numerous disruptions. For those of you who had made trips with us to Haiti you know there are always contingencies.

Tomorrow is PAP-MIA-CLT-Kathy. Thank you for your many prayers. Grace and peace .

Haiti Day 8. On the way home. Thanks to all. Your support makes me feel warm and loved. Until another adventure later this year...Grace and peace

