

**Haiti - Day 1 - Thursday.** The team converges on Haiti. Because Huntsville is so expensive to fly out of, Lauren, Pat, Nic and I left Huntsville at 4:00am and drove to Atlanta. Amber had flown into Atlanta the day before from Waco and stayed with family. Other than the usual fun traffic in Marietta, the drive was quite smooth. We parked the cars at Park N Fly which I have used in Nashville, and they could not have been nicer or more efficient. It was wonderful seeing Amber again. Delta into PAP was very smooth, and we were through immigration and in Bertone's hands in less than an hour from landing. That has to be a record. PAP traffic was awful though even for 3:00pm. We stopped at Missionaries of Charity hospital to take a quick inventory and make sure all was set up for next day. What should have been a quick trip onto Leogane turned into another traffic nightmare because a big 15-ton truck fully loaded with charcoal lost his real axle and suspension on one side right in the middle of the road. Finally we get into Signau to visit quickly with Brother Oizard (knowing full well there is no quick visit in Haiti) and it was getting dark when we left. Finally up to the monastery to the welcoming arms of the Little Brothers. We are home again.

**Haiti - Day 2 - Friday.** Up at 5:00 for Matens, breakfast and then off to Carrefour to install the iron filter system. As some of you may remember reading the saga from last year, the system failed to filter the iron because basically the manufacturer and reps lied to us; so after much research, we found what we felt was the real deal and shipped it to Haiti. After an hour, we discovered we had left some components at the warehouse. Poor Bertone!! So he is back in the Land Cruiser, and on his way back he gets stuck in a demonstration in Leogane. Some bad guys were trying to spring another bad guy from jail and to do so they hijacked a couple of big trucks and put them across the main roads to block all traffic. Then they began burning tires. When cars started finding another way around, they were trying to hold them up for money. All in the interest of springing a statutory rapist who had some political pull from jail. So Ancy is reporting all of this to me because he is with us at MC at another meeting we are having with two MC sisters from the Port-de-Paix hospital regarding a water system. So now the question is how will we get home? No vehicle and blocked roads between us and the monastery. Ultimately Bertone got around these clowns and the police must have gotten involved at some point because about 3:00 pm he arrives. After all this, we still needed a couple more things but had finished about all we could for the day by 5:30 and left for the monastery. The roads were now clear but plenty of evidence of burning tires. Everyone just tries to take it in stride and deal with it as best they can. Without Bertone and Ancy and the Little Brothers many things would not be possible for us to do in Haiti. It also shows you how quickly things can change and how adaptable one must be to work in this country. We finished the evening with a wonderful meal and discussion with Brother Arié (who is now the superior of Palmiste au Vin) and then off to bed. Everyone is pretty tired.

**Haiti - Day 3 - Saturday.** Matens with our Lord, breakfast and on the road by 7ish. We are determined to finish the system and begin testing. In order for an iron filtration system to work, you have to inject chlorine into the water which causes the iron to oxidize (solidify) and then run it through a filter to remove the chlorine and iron. After some final plumbing and a major leak repair, we went into the first stage to determine how much powdered bleach to put in the chlorine holding tank. We have tables to tell us assuming we know the concentration of chlorine in the bleach, but this is Haiti and nothing is labeled. So through a process of running the brine through the system and several chlorine strip tests, we know what the rate is so we can now set the chlorine injector properly. Each test takes 10 to 30 minutes though, so time keeps ticking away. Finally in the late afternoon, we get it right and test the output for chlorine and iron – and there is none. We are doing the happy dance until about 30 min later we take another sample and the iron is back. So we backflush again - 20 more minutes and it is better but not perfect. Another backflush and still better but still about 0.5 ppm (parts per million) iron and you can see a slight yellow tint in the water. We're now out of iron test strips, and it will be Monday before we can get more. It's almost 6:00pm so we pack up. The next two days are scheduled for other stuff so we will return Wednesday. On the way home Nic has a revelation: These systems are designed for houses and we have observed that during the backflush operation we still have water going to the reservoir at a substantial rate. In a house, everything would be shut off, but with our system it did not occur to us that we may need a valve on the flow to the reservoir so the backflush only touches the drain. We now think we have not been backflushing properly. After dinner, we all retired. Nic and I are in the main building and Amber, Lauren, and Pat are in the guest house. So Nic and I are talking in my room, and I feel my chair begin to shake. My brain told me what it was, but I did want to believe it. Then the chair started rocking again. Nic was standing and said he didn't feel it but then he saw the mosquito net over my bed shaking. It was definitely a tremor at 8:13pm. Bertone sent me a text later saying there was a 5.9 earthquake in the north in Port-de-Paix at 8:11pm. We are ok here, but I do not yet know the fate of those up north. I pray none were hurt.

**Haiti - Day 4 - Sunday.** A day of rest it is supposed to be, and a day of rest it was. Most Sundays we try to spend at the orphanage (NDC) especially if we are working in parts of the country as we were on this trip. Bertone drove us down to Signeau to Sister Claudette's church for 7:30am Mass. The plan is we will walk to NDC after Mass and Bertone will meet us there when he finishes his services. While standing outside the church after Mass awaiting Amber to finish her prayers, there right in front of me is Sister Claudette whom I have not seen in 8 years. We are invited to coffee (which was more like breakfast) and Father Gerald (the Salesian priest who celebrated Mass) showed up also. We had the best time visiting with a mixture of Creole from Amber, and

French from Nic, and English. Then we walked to NDC about 1 mile away to another breakfast and reunion with the girls and Eliane. We all talked and played with the kids and fixed stuff that needed repair and gave Lauren and Pat the fun tour of the compound and school. We met Daphne who is one of the NDC university students that is now teaching at NDC school. She graduated with the highest grades in the whole Leogane area and was offered considerably more money to teach elsewhere but turned it down because NDC and HSHM had invested in her and she was committed in her mind to pay back to the NDC community. We had a board meeting to discuss the budget for the coming year and some other matters. It was 6:30pm and dark before we left. It was a grand day with plenty of fun for the kids and the team. Back at the monastery, we had dinner waiting - our 4th meal of the day. Brother Arié has been such a wonderful host in his new job of Superior of PAV and is spoiling us rotten.

**Haiti - Day 5 - Monday.** Today was the best so far for several reasons. We begin with Matens and breakfast. We are going into the mountains to visit another religious order who has asked us for a water system - the Missionaries of St Alphonse. Pat and Lauren got to see what the roads can be like and why we have a Land Cruiser to navigate them. The discomfort was worth the incredible view. I doubt this picture really shows the beauty of this place sitting at 2000 feet, but it was like the opening scene from Sound of Music. The brothers have 150 children at the school – some of whom walk 45 minutes each way to get there. The only water is rain captured and a spring 35 minutes down the mountain and hauled up via mule. Yet everyone seems perfectly content. We left the Missionaries with a promise to investigate ways we could help with their water situation. I cannot emphasize the spectacular beauty of this area and hated to leave. The wind never stopped blowing at 10+ mph so being engineers we are thinking this has some great wind power possibilities.



Now we head back down the mountain and back to the MC in Carrefour about 1.5 hours away. With this precious free time I am anxious to get back and test out the theory that

the water output valve must be closed during the regeneration cycle. And as it turned out, this was exactly the problem. Our output line from the iron filter system to the reservoir is 1" and the discharge line is 1/2", so the open reservoir line was not allowing the backflush process to fully purge the tank of iron trappings. Once we did this and re-ran the backflush for 20 minutes, the system produced perfectly clear iron free water. 3 ppm going in and 0 coming out. We were all doing the happy dance!! It was a simple solution but frustrating that the manufacturer did not note this in the manual.

We leave in time to get back to PAV to speak with the 10 university students that we are funding. My take on this is that it one of the best investments HSHM has made because this group was very motivated. They will finish their final exams in two weeks so we are anxious to see the report cards. Bonne nuit to all.



**Haiti - Day 6 - Tuesday.** Today was a day of relationship building. We began by driving to one of our installations in Decouze way up in the mountains off the Jacmel road. The only water source they have is rain and Father has a limited reservoir. He wants to build a larger one, but I think it is beyond our financial capacity. His purification system runs well but the parish is very poor. As we arrive, there is a big demonstration by the students because the teachers don't think they are paid enough – which is true but Father has no more money. Teachers are paid by the hour and if you only have 8

students in a class (which is the case for some of the classes), it's not enough to cover expenses. But of course the students want/demand teachers. So how can he pay for a reservoir? We are going to look into a rubber bladder reservoir which might be within our means with some help. We leave not sure we have done much but will try.

We travel back to the monastery for lunch and then Amber packs up so she can spend the next 3 days at NDC with Vivian and Eliane. After a short visit with everyone and conducting a little more business with Eliane, we leave to visit with Brother Olizard at his new assignment in Signeau. For the first time in quite a number of visits to Haiti, I have had so much time to visit with people to catch up on their various situations; something that is very difficult to do via e-mail. The visit went so well that by the time we stopped to refill the Land Cruiser with diesel, it was well after dark and our last stop with Dr. Yanne would have to wait until tomorrow. Grace and peace.

**Haiti - Day 7 - Wednesday.** Matens, breakfast and off to train the MC Sisters on their new iron filtration system. It continues to work perfectly although we are still a little unsure of ourselves having not done one of these before. We spent 2+ hours with the sisters and 3 workmen that will manage the system. Sister Neha (the superior) is a sharp woman and picked up on all of it quickly. I feel very confident they will get maximum usage out of the system. She is paying about \$6000/month to get the water trucked in, and this system will reduce that to about zero. Mid-afternoon we bid the MC goodbye and head to the Monastery clinic to talk with Dr. Yanne. Besides having a proposal to present to her, I wanted to find out how she is faring. I find out she has no electrical power due to battery issues. By the time we sort through all this it's dark so we make plans to come back tomorrow afternoon to see what we can do. That night at dinner we sit with Brother Arié to try to sort through the whole mess of lack of battery maintenance both at the clinic and monastery. The conversation was frank but at the end I thought we had made some headway. I would confirm at tomorrow night's dinner with Brother Arié that he had bought into the program 100%. In fairness to Brother Arié, it is like a priest moving to a new church and little has been maintained. We will begin anew tomorrow. Grace and peace.

**Haiti - Day 8 - Thursday.** Matens, breakfast and Nic packs up for the last time as he goes home today. He had been prepared yesterday to try and get a flight out if hurricane Michael had hit Atlanta but thankfully it didn't because changing tickets is an expensive nightmare. We head off to Carrefour only this time to visit Notre Dame Guadalupe. They are a parish of about 1500 and serve water to about 2000 in the community per week. They have a 50-foot hand-dug well that feeds a 20,000-gallon reservoir. Besides beginning to build a relationship and gaining a lot of information and testing the water, there was not much else we could do for 48 hours until we can see the results of the bacteria test. I am certain they would utilize the system well if they need one as their water committee whom we met was outstanding in knowledge,

organization and interest. Since Ancy had met us there and we had two cars, he takes Nic on to the airport which is a blessing for Bertone not having to deal with that part of the drive. Bertone and I head back to the clinic to see what we can do about the battery situation. Of the 20 batteries, only 8 were salvageable. We then take those 8 and arrange them in 2 banks of 4 so we now have a working 24-volt system again, albeit it will only last 40% as long because the other 3 banks are no longer available. But the really good news is the process we used to show Yanne and Brother Arié how you maintain and analyze the battery system stuck. He vowed to use the same technique on the monastery. Now we will have some sustained manageability. 7:00pm again when Bertone and I get back for dinner. The clinic was a big deal though, and we are thrilled to get it up again. It's moments like this and the end of a good training session that make me want to keep coming back. The monastery is lonely now with Amber and Vivian at NDC, and Nic and Lauren and Pat gone. But I'm pretty worn out so sleep doesn't come too hard. Grace and peace.

**Haiti - Day 9 - Friday.** This is a day of travel. Vivian has to get to the airport and Amber, Bertone and I have to travel up to Gonaives about 4 hours north. Simple enough except the people of Leogane have scheduled another big demonstration by blocking the road between DuFort and Leogane. There are no other routes except for vehicles like our Land Cruiser. So we leave at 6:45am right after Matens to avoid any problems. The reason for the demonstration is about 1.5 years ago a man took big track hoe and attempted to take out a bridge going into Leogane. He succeeded with one lane but it was all a political stunt to get him elected as deputy. Over the past 6 months, there has been an organized gang kidnapping or attempting to kidnap prosperous store owners. One couple was kidnapped and the wife was let go because she was pregnant. She went to the deputy to see what could be done and recognized one of the kidnappers. The deputy is clearly involved and the people want him out. I have so many questions with no answers.

We have a wonderful breakfast at NDC and then say our goodbyes and head for the airport. Traffic is light today but you never know so Vivian will have a good bit of seat time before her plane takes off. We head up to Gonaives to get ready for the Living Waters for the World conference tomorrow. It's an opportunity for me to get with the whole LWW Haiti team and see how things are going, and they are well. We're in a hotel tonight but services are limited. Grace and peace.

**Haiti - Day 10 - Saturday.** We spent most of the day in an LWW conference put on entirely by the Haitian team. There were about 35 in attendance representing 13 Systems. It was an excellent meeting, and they held their audience well. There was excellent participation from the audience, and during my session the questions flowed over 30 minutes. The questions were very thoughtful like "what is a challenge and

success LWW has recently faced?" Now the long ride home about 4 hours. Grace and peace.

**Haiti - Day 11 - Sunday.** Amber and I are driven to Signeau to Sister Claudette's Church for Mass where we meet up with some of the girls from NDC. Afterward Amber goes to NDC with the girls and I walk over to Brother Olizard's new community to discuss several important topics to the future of our mission and to try and get a closing resolution to the situation in Hinche. He was very forthright and I feel privileged that he shared a number of internal details with me that I would not have gotten if we had not had so many years of trust together. We spoke for 4 hours solid and then ate fish for lunch and I went to meet with Bertone and Amber and Eliane at NDC. The time Amber and Vivian have spent with Eliane on this trip has been very valuable to all of us in better understanding how we can better serve those in Haiti but also maintain sustainability. The most serious issue we have to contend with right now and I ask all that are reading this for prayers of peace toward the kidnappings and unrest in the Leogane area. For all the years I have been coming to Haiti, Leogane has been quiet and restful. Perhaps it is inevitable but I ask Mother Mary to bring calm to the situation please.

At 3:00pm we head back to PAV to do a battery analysis and inventory on the monastery solar system akin to the one we did the other day at the clinic. The clinic I am pleased to say is producing electricity all night and Dr. Yanne could not be more pleased. Unfortunately the news was not good at the monastery but I gave them one possible remedy using the battery charger we have at NDC. We'll see. That night we spent more time with Brother Arié discussing battery maintenance and sustainability and I think reality is becoming clear. He is implementing several steps we recommended and time will tell whether they work. Amber and I pack up for the ride home tomorrow. As we are talking and I am sorting out clothes, she screams and tells me to drop the jeans in my hand immediately. As I do, a good sized tarantula walks calmly out inches from where my hand was. My boot took immediate action. Thank you Amber for your young eyes. Grace and peace.



**Haiti-Day 12-Monday.** Up at 5:00am for Matens and breakfast but no lingering. Brother Arié has arranged for me to pull 6 teachers from the school that I had taught last trip to continue our geography studies. I had 7:30-9:00. They were very enthusiastic and a great group. I hope they will implement some of the things I shared with them because geography is not something they seem to teach in Haiti. It was fun to do and a subject I take great interest in. Amber had to use a hook to get me out of the classroom. Next stop on the way to the airport was NDC to discuss some common sense measures. Eliane can take light of the unrest in the area. [Today (Wednesday) it's really bad. The whole country is shut down as the people protest against the corrupt government.] We spend an hour on the subject but she neither knows what a fire drill is nor has any experience drilling for a disaster. I feel very badly that I cannot be there to guide them because to be effective there will have to be a lot of serious drilling among the 71 girls. Please pray that peace comes back to the country. We say our last goodbyes and head to PAP airport. We have 5 hours before our flight but PAP is so unpredictable one never knows. We were very blessed with traffic because it was as light as I have ever seen it. As we checked into Delta we learn that the flight is delayed and true to the usual untruthfulness about these things I knew it would be bad because the plane had not left Atlanta which is 2.5 hrs away; so my prediction of 5:30 as opposed to 3:05 turned out accurate as we took off at 5:20. Amber unfortunately missed her connection to TX on American but both Delta and American said tough tarts. Fortunately she had a bed in Atlanta awaiting her with family and got out on Tuesday ok. The saga is closed on another Caribbean cruise as Kathy likes to call it. We survived a 5.9 earthquake and a demonstration, and a ton of love was given to us. What else could one want? Grace and peace.