

Bonjour,

Just back from a short trip to Cap Haitien with a small team of 4 - 2 educators (Diane W. and Melanie R.), Janet and myself. I say it was a short trip but it was packed full of life changing events. If you'd like to follow along with pictures, click the following:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/Ron.Fullmer/January2012HaitiTrip?authuser=0&feat=directlink>

Diane, Janet and I drove down the Gorge on Thursday, January 12th, to spend the night in an airport hotel, in preparation for a 6:00am 3-leg flight to Miami. Portland to Salt Lake City to Atlanta, where we met up with Melanie, and then on into Miami where we would spend the night in a nearby hotel. Up the next day, bright and early, for a 7:30am flight on IBC to Cap Haitien. Nice, non-stop flight to C.H., where we were met by Fr. Noe and whisked off to our home in C.H.

The purpose of this trip was to work with some of the teachers at Fr. Noe's school - training teaching strategies to K-4 teachers. So upon our arrival, on a Saturday, we pretty much took it easy, setting up our living quarters and planning the week with Noe. Shirley (Noe's wife) and the brand-new twins were in Port au Prince, so we didn't get to see them at all, but the rest of the Bernier family and house-hold welcomed us back. Sunday morning, we attended church and then scouted out the school to plan where we'd do the training (I use the word 'we' loosely, as it would be mostly Diane and Melanie doing that work). Fr. Noe mentioned that he was going to be meeting with a group from Living Waters for the World, to discuss a potential water purification system for the school, and of course I asked if I could attend the meeting. We also mentioned that we'd like to meet with a health organization that we'd heard of - Konbit Sante - and Fr. Noe said he'd arrange that for us. Both of these groups would play important roles in the week ahead - far more important than we yet knew.

Monday morning, we had our breakfast of spaghetti, Haitian coffee, juice and eggs and headed over to the school. Diane and Melanie had already arranged to meet with the head teachers from each of the K-1 classes - they have a head teacher and an assistant, so the classes would continue while we worked with the teachers. They had also decided to meet in the church, since it would be quieter (they thought) and had lots of space. We had arranged with Fr. Noe for interpreters (2 teachers from the school) - Monarque and Cardy. As the meeting began we realized that 'quieter' is a relative word, and I asked that the PA system be set up so that Monarque could be heard. Monarque turned out to be a great help for Diane and Melanie, because he was not only excellent interpreter, but also an excellent instructor - he quickly understood what they were attempting to do and was able to get the meaning across to the 'students'.

But I jumped ahead and missed one of the early, significant events - Janet opened up the day by presenting a talk on how Jesus educated the people that he talked to - it was a perfect introduction to the upcoming 3 days. In the meantime, Cardy and I went off to Fr. Noe's office to design a set of bookcases for all of the books that we'd brought and sent over in the last 2 years - they were mostly sitting in boxes, unused by the school. My plan was to measure the available space, tell Cardy what we were going to do, and have him draw up the plans. Worked pretty well - we had room for 2 3x6' bookcases (these will eventually move to the library, once it is completed). Then we had to talk with a carpentry instructor from the trade school to find out what was available for lumber at the hardware store right across the street from the school. Boards come in 16' lengths, so 2 12" boards would make

one bookcase, with a 2x4 base and a thin plywood backing. After pricing the materials, Cardy and our carpenter purchased what they needed (sans moi), including glue, nails and varnish. Initially, they thought that both book cases would be ready the next day.

Janet and I sat in on the remainder of the teaching sessions and then we all headed back to Fr. Noe's house. We took a walk over to the wood shop, where I straightened out some of the plans with our carpenter, and then Fr. Noe took us by the prosthetics lab, where a man from Togo had been brought in to set up the shop and train a pair of Haitian men to learn the trade. He was delightful and carefully explained each machine and technique involved in the process. From there, we went over to visit the Physical therapy room, because Janet hadn't seen it before. While there, we met a little 6 year old boy, Andy, who was having trouble taking more than one step without stumbling forward or backward. Diane got involved in the therapy and we learned his story. Andy has a brain tumor. His parents had taken him to the Dominican Republic where he'd undergone a CAT scan and some evaluation by the doctors. They'd installed a shunt to drain off the fluid that was building up inside his head and then were forced to send him home, with no other treatment.

All of us were touched by Andy, but what could we do? Fr. Noe drove us to meet his mother, who cooks and sells food on the street. We also met his father, who told us that we could take a look at medical records, if we wanted - we asked to take them to our meeting, the next day, with Konbit Sante. So, on Tuesday, while the carpenter worked on the book cases and Diane and Melanie plowed ahead with day 2 of their training, Fr. Noe, Janet and I headed to the hospital to meet with Konbit Sante. Our initial intent was to learn about them and see if we might in some way partner with them. It turns out that Konbit Sante is a Maine organization, so Janet and I immediately felt bonded to them. They bring over medical staff to teach at the hospital in Cap Haitien - they don't do medical procedures themselves, but they help the Haitian staff with new techniques - along the same idea as what Diane and Melanie were doing at the school.

After visiting and learning about them for a while, we broached the subject of Andy and what, if anything, could be done to help him out. They summoned one of their teammates, a pediatrician, who looked over the medical records and the CAT scan and volunteered to write a short summary of what she could determine was the case - that way we could present something knowledgeable on Facebook, emails and blogs. We would try to get the word out and see what happens (I will include the report as a PS at the end of this letter). It certainly was a good meeting with them and we knew that God was in the works. Upon returning to the house, we found that one of the bookcases was done, nearly, and after discussing some minor re-adjustments and asking them not to shellac them (wouldn't dry in time?) we ended our day.

On Wednesday, the last day of working with the teachers, Diane and Melanie had very productive sessions, both inside and outside of the classrooms. Meanwhile, Janet and I observed, and then Melanie and Diane sorted through the books in preparation for the arrival of the bookcases. Fr. Noe, Janet and I went back to the wood shop, where we discovered our carpenter and his helper busily shellacking away. Fr. Noe assured us that they'd dry in a couple of ours, but I imagined otherwise. So, asking that they not shellac the 2nd one, we headed to the house for water and a quick snack. Upon our return, you guessed it, the 2nd one was being shellacked. Oh well! When they were done, we loaded them on the back of the pick-up and headed back to the school, where they were hauled up the stairs and put in place. They certainly looked great, despite the smell of wet varnish. We were planning on visiting a country-side

school on Thursday, but we would start the day out by loading the books in place.

After returning home for the day, Fr. Noe informed me that the water people (Living Waters for the World) were at the school, so off we went. What a great visit that turned out to be. They will be installing a solar powered water filtration and ozonization system (the contract has been signed) that will purify 300 gallons of water an hour. Fr Noe has the well, already, and will be putting up a small cement-block building to house the system. The water is pumped from the well, purified, and pumped up to plastic cisterns on top of the school (that's where the solar panels are too). Fr. Noe and the school can use as much of the water as they need and can actually sell 50% of it to the people of Cap Haitien, if they choose - clean water and an income source. If you haven't guessed already, I'm hoping to be on the team that puts the whole thing in place. If you want to know more about the organization, take a look at <http://livingwatersfortheworld.org/> . Their blog will give you a whole lot of information on how it all works.

And then, if that wasn't enough, God stepped in (actually He was there all along). I was talking with one of the 3 men about their work and I happened to mention little Andy. He told me that I should go back and talk with Rev. Robert (one of the 3), because his son Rob was in med school at Harvard. So I did. And, wow - Rob knows Dr. Paul Farmer, and dad Robert encouraged me to pass along the information to him and he'd get it on to Rob and who knows what would happen. Afterwards, Fr. Noe and I motored back over to the house, but I think both of us could just as easily floated there - it was hard to tell all of the good news to the ladies without tearing up - clean water and a possible link to PIH and Paul Farmer.

Thursday morning, we went back to the school and the bookcases were dry. Diane and Janet came up with an excellent system for putting the books in place so that the teachers could easily see what was there - books in Creole, English and Creole, French, English and French, and Creole and French. As soon as they were in place, teachers began coming by and it truly was moving to see their reactions - every one just stared and then picked out a book and began to read - they all could really see the new resource that was available to them.

Then, off we went for a drive in the countryside. Out past where Rick and Debbie used to live, over the large river where men are always at working heaving sand from the river bed up over the banks, to be loaded in trucks for concrete, on through Limonade and then 'oh my goodness', we saw the new University - a gift from the Dominican Republic built with funds from the EU offered as a sign of peace and hope - it truly is a magnificent complex, complete with a soccer stadium - it opens next fall to 10000 students. A little further and we came upon the sight of a new industrial park - by February 3000 people will be working there (many of Noe's students among them), and by next year up to 30,000 employed - and there is a twin park going up in Les Cayes, over on the Western peninsula.

We then moved on to a small (2-story) school that Fr. Noe watches over - small classes - we sat in on a math and an English class. We drove past Rick and Debbie's orphanage (not yet occupied and no one around), and on to Terrier Rouge (home of wells that I'd worked on). Oops - I forgot - we also stopped off at a Food for the Poor village that is going up (already occupied) and distributed some 20 or so hand made dresses that we'd brought along from The Dalles. Fr. Noe is supervising that village and has hired a man, who was displaced in Port au Prince by the earth quake and has relocated to Terrier Rouge- to run his newest school in Terrier Rouge.

There, we saw a really model school, run by a former Episcopal priest, Fr. Bruno. It was 3 stories tall with a library, cafeteria, running water, electricity, etc. - really nice - all nicely painted, tiled, the whole works. On the way back, we stopped to see an agricultural school that Fr. Noe looks over - he surprised us by calling ahead and lunch was waiting - fried fish from the ocean, fresh vegetables from the garden and an orange-carrot juice for our thirst - yum. Then back on down the road, home. One big difference between this year and last is that the road into Cap Haitien has been repaired - where once there were huge pot holes, now it was smooth sailing. And another thing, which you could see as we flew in - the airport is being re-done - the runway will be able to handle a commercial jet when it's all done, which means a new control tower and lights for night landings.

That night, after dinner, we went to 'Sharon's Bar', where we had dessert and reviewed the trip with Fr. Noe. The educators were very pleased, over all, with how things had gone, with new ideas for future trips, and we were all pleased with the contacts and the experiences we'd had along the way. That night, most of the packing was done, and we were ready to fly home (forgot to mention that we played cards, believe it or not, every night - even Janet).

Friday morning, we headed to the airport for our 10:00 flight, which became a 10:30 flight, which became a 12:30 and then a 1:00 flight. Oh well, we were staying the night in Miami and I got to talk with some more water and sanitation teams (afridis pumps - you can repair 26 in one week), and we managed another game of cards or two. Diane had booked us, complementary into the Airport Hilton, which was a real treat, but we didn't stay up too late - 9:00am flight on Saturday.

Flying back to Portland can be something else, too - into Atlanta, on time, and then wait, wait, wait, re route to LAX, Alaskan on to PDX and an unscheduled stay over in Portland - the Gorge was icy and it was after 1:00am, Sunday. Thanks to both Frs. John and Rusty who filled in for Janet while she was gone.

So, what's next? Well, Kairos is coming to Oregon this fall and Janet is clergy on a Women's Kairos in Washington in March (<http://web.mac.com/kairosfwa/Kairos/Ministries.html>). I'm thinking before then I'll be back to Haiti on a water trip. But for now, it's time to get rested up and enjoy looking at the new mounds of snow in our cul-de-sac that somehow appeared while we were gone.

Hope you are well,  
Ron (and Rev. Janet)

P.S. - here's the short report on Andy. If you've got ideas on what we can do to help, please contact us. Please pray for Andy and his family.

Andy Bonard

This is a 6 year old Haitian boy who appears otherwise well but has a space occupying tumor in anterior cerebrum. No biopsy has been done of the tumor. He has had hydrougthalus and a shunt has been placed. He has poor balance.