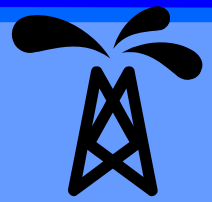




HAITI MISSION, INC.
P. O. Box 694
Thibodaux, LA. 70302
Phone: 985-872-4549
www.haitimissioninc.com
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A Cup of Water

After the trip Newsletter 2010

What to do next?

We've just returned from another powerful trip to Haiti. We had two weeks filled with activities – visiting the schools, helping facilitate the feeding of the kids as well as delivering the precious shoe vouchers and treats that we had brought. Distributions of \$20 cash vouchers and provisions to the families were especially moving since almost all of them had friends or relatives from PAP staying with them since the earthquake.

The mountains called to us in a special way this year. No matter how often one travels to Haiti, the incredible splendor and beauty of the place is always spectacular. There is peace and serenity as one walks up into the rain forests that still flourish around the hidden water sources which nature has provided for the people of God struggling to survive in Haiti. As a person happens upon these mysteries of nature sprinkled throughout the Jeremie region, the startling reality is that there is a loving God taking care of His people. But somehow, mankind has not been able to capture and develop these “diamonds-in-the raw”! Here lies the mandate that fate has handed to Haiti Mission, Inc. We have been chosen at this time to seek and find, capture and direct, facilitate and make functional - along with whoever will join us – the water sources of Haiti. Sounds like an impossible dream but when one reflects upon the size of Haiti and the technology currently available to us, the question which flashes in one's mind is “what is the problem?” All it takes is little red drills, PVC pipe and cement!

As always, after reflection, HMI rolls up its sleeves and goes to work. This seems to be the key to our success – while much of the world continues to reflect, discuss, study and plan, HMI is busy drilling holes in the earth, finding water and delivering it to a thirsty people.

In this newsletter is a report by Buddy Spell, an attorney involved in human rights issues. He has done a great job in describing the effect of the latest well drilled by HMI in Jeremie. I know it will make you proud. The bottom line of all of this is that we are helping orphans and widows, innocent children and their families to live. So, the question, “What to do next?” keeps calling to us as more and more needy and worthwhile projects are thrust before us.

We know water is primary and we are constantly and systematically addressing those issues but then there are the children. The beautiful and happy children who have no understanding of what is happening, as they continue to play and look forward to the blessings that they know “Bondye” (the Good God) will bestow upon them. What a difference the “brick & mortar” buildings have made in their lives. One of the educators who had worked in our schools prior to our having real buildings - upon visiting them this year - exclaimed, “This is such a better environment for the children in which to learn!” He was so right! It really has made a big difference. The reality is that we are only half - way there. The buildings are up – standing tall and beautiful – but standing unfinished. When we ask, “What next?” the finishing of the school buildings has to be top priority. The children's health is of utmost importance. With the buildings finished, the dust will go away; we will be able to clean, bring about order and the structures will be much sounder to serve as security and safety for hurricanes and earthquakes. So look into your hearts, invite your friends and together we will be able to raise the \$100,000 or so that it will take to get the St. Bridget school buildings where they need to be. St. Bridget, pray for us!

Scholarships

Since the January 12th, 2010 Haiti earthquake, several new circumstances have presented themselves. Not the least of which is the need to get schools up and running and make room for more children in the current facilities which are available. A member of our Board of Directors and wonderful friend of Haiti, Gary Lirette, wrote the following for our consideration after this past trip to Haiti.

While in Haiti, I had discussions with a number of secondary school students who have ambitions of receiving a college degree (mathematics, agronomy, priesthood, medicine). I believe that these are just a few of the number with such ambitions.

There are presently two issues which may keep them from their goals - the university in PAP has been closed since the earthquake and lack of funds. I talked to Father Joe about the situation and he agreed that the time is right for a scholarship fund. I propose that HMI set up a scholarship fund for secondary grades and college students in the parish. I am not including grades 1-6 for several reasons; one, the universe is so large, two, HMI already supports these grades with its schools, three, those students in secondary school and college have already demonstrated their desire for higher education by their attendance, and four, a higher education scholarship fund would tend to promote encouragement and hope.

I'll start the discussion with some proposals. I believe that the scholarships should be based equally on merit and need. HMI has many capable supporters that could devise a proper application process. For lack of a better suggestion, we could start with scholarships of \$300/year for secondary students and \$1,000/year for college students. An initial fund in an interest bearing account of \$10,000 could start the process. No more than 10% would be awarded from the fund annually and replenishment would be through interest earned and donations.

We could take it a step further by talking with local universities and immigration authorities to determine the possibilities of having college students educated in the U.S. It is my hope that these few words will start the discussion. I was impressed with the hope and aspirations of those students with whom I spoke. HMI has done so much in the area to bring hope to our friends in Haiti. This is a natural extension of HMI's activities. Gary

Soooo, there you are my friends – another challenge. I know with your help and the grace of God, Haiti Mission, Inc. will be able to help these aspiring students. HMI will now create a separate scholarship fund as Gary has described to be administered by a board appointed by the Haiti Mission, Inc. directors. Thanks again for your consideration and support of such a noble and worthwhile endeavor.

Feeding the Children!!

Another force driving HMI is the need to feed the children every day. Those of you that have been following this drama as it unfolds know that for years we simply did not have the funds to feed the children. Every day we knew many, if not most of them, were leaving school at noon to go to a home without food. We prayed and worked to try to somehow find an answer. We finally were able to raise the funds for a monthly meal – a wonderful meal of beans and rice with a nutritional meat sauce that they eagerly devoured. It costs about \$1 per child for such a delicious and nutritious meal. But that didn't meet our goal of a daily meal of some type. Fr. Joe once again had the answer. He began to build a bakery – a bakery to bake breads and pastries to feed the children and be a part of the economic development in the community. As always, funding was an issue. As things developed, it was clear that our little Rebecca Claire Fakier, “St. Bec”, liked the idea. Her parents began sharing the dream with friends and relatives. Rebecca's Aunt Beth and Uncle Marty Deitchman enthusiastically supported the idea and through their generosity and major donations from several friends the bakery has become a reality. It was with great joy that the Fakier Family and the rest of the HMI team were able to dedicate “Bec's Bakery” on this trip. Some remaining finishing work and the installation of the ovens should be completed for this upcoming school year, thus making a major part of the dream of having daily meals for all the school children come true. Thanks to all who made this incredible dream a reality!

SMALL FIRST STEP ON A LONG JOURNEY: REFORMING THE PRISON IN JEREMIE, HAITI

BY BUDDY SPELL

*Trouble Oh trouble set me free I have seen your face And it's too much, too much for me
Trouble Oh trouble can't you see You're eating my heart away
And there's nothing much left of me* -Cat Stevens

Upon entering the yard within the prison walls at Jeremie, Haiti, one is overwhelmed by sensory input: the smell of human waste, the feel of the heat, the stickiness of one's steps on the filthy prison ground, the sight of the inmates' arms vainly reaching for freedom through the bars of the cellblocks, and the sounds of the wails emanating there from. The sensory overload is staggering and life changing.

In mid April, 2010, I was blessed with the opportunity to travel to Western Haiti with a group of Catholic missionary workers from South Louisiana who form an NGO non-profit called Haiti Mission, Inc. When I first contacted them in March, I explained that I wanted to hitch a ride with them so as to acquaint myself with Catholic Superior School of Law and to look into the conditions at the jail in Jeremie. They more than accommodated me; they were the key to success.

I say “Catholic missionary workers” because these people were not in Haiti to pander their faith through words, but to joyfully live it through their deeds. Over the past dozen or so years, this small group of peace makers has drilled fresh water wells in the towns and hamlets, built and funded three schools, established a pig farm, and have given the communities where they toil the best of what America has to offer; of themselves. Soon, they will complete work on a chicken farm for laying hens and a bakery designed to feed children who attend their schools. They give away pigs, donkeys, and goats. They encourage agriculture and commerce. They are absolutely selfless. And they made me, a non-Catholic, feel comfortable and accepted despite our different political and religious views. We found common ground and worked together.

The good will generated by Haiti Mission, Inc. (“HMI”) rendered my own mission not only plausible, but achievable. Upon my return to camp following my first visit to the prison, I met with Lloyd Duplantis, the director of HMI, and described my initial observations based upon a tour of the facilities and interviews with four inmates: incredibly overcrowded cells; men, women, and children housed side by side; disgusting “kitchen facilities”; stagnant open sewage; the lack of electricity..... At the conclusion of the meeting, HMI had launched a prison ministry and it was on.

One of the wells recently drilled by HMI, with funding from the Seton Hall School of Law, stands just outside of the prison in the slum neighborhood which surrounds it. Within three days of my first visit, HMI, with the assistance of the local Catholic leadership, including Father Jomanas Eustache, dean of the law school, had managed to tie a water line from the Seton Hall well into the prison yard...running water there for the first time in history. I fought back tears as I washed my face in the flow from the bare PVC pipe in front of the cell blocks.

The clean up was in full force. The fecal matter had been scrubbed away and the smell of the place was transformed from that of death and despair to one of hope and promise. The attitude of the guards was much improved and the prisoners seemed just a bit less desperate.

We arrived with the Catholic Bishop and several priests in tow to dedicate the well and to deliver worm pills, multivitamins, sandwiches, and soda pop to the inmates. Because I had so much heat with me; i.e., the Bishop, I pushed the envelope and as the prisoners each left their cells, I was able to videotape each one individually for future documentation. I was also able, with all of the activity in the yard, to conduct brief video interviews with several English speaking detainees.

Being the cynic that I am, I suspected that much of the cleanup I saw that day was for the benefit of the local clergy in attendance. Accordingly, the next evening, I arrived unannounced at the jail under the auspices of delivering soccer balls, flashlights, and playing cards to the guards as thank you gifts. I am grateful to be able to report that, at least on that night, the clean up continued unabated.

I write today seeking financial support to continue in these efforts. HMI has agreed to help me with coordinating future services including running water lines to each of the cells, providing worm pills and multivitamins, dental services, and creature comforts to the prisoners, many of whom are detained without charges or convictions. Small donations go a long way with strong charities. HMI's administrative overhead is but ten percent of their income. Please consider forwarding a tax deductible check in any amount to Haiti Mission, Inc., Post Office Box 694, Thibodaux, Louisiana 70302. Please note “Prison Ministry” on your check. For more information, visit their website at www.haitimissioninc.com.

Here lies an opportunity to serve humanity in a most meaningful way. Onward.

Buddy Spell is a felony defense lawyer, peace activist, and human rights advocate from Covington, LA.

Golf Tournament Report

We didn't send a report to you since the Golf tournament, but it was a resounding success! Between the tournament and the silent auction we cleared about \$18,000. Unbelievable! Thanks to all who helped put it on, especially Don Robinson our local coordinator and Greg Core the Golf pro from New Orleans (who along with our daughter Carmel) initiated and directed much of the process. Thanks to all who played – we definitely could not have done it without you. Thanks especially to our sponsors who are listed in this newsletter. You were a wonderful blessing!

Faie's Facts

It is always amazing how God puts together His people on these mission trips. They are unique individuals who are genuinely concerned about the kingdom on earth and mesh their gifts and talents together for the common good. Here are a few comments from them about the emotions they experienced on this trip describing the villagers, the activities, the scenery, and/or the mission team: powerful, passionate, practical, preparing, perseverance, perspiration, peaceful, prayerful, rewarding, spiritual renewal, sharing, troubling, painful, compassionate, people who are beautiful, diligent, patient, humble, singing happy songs, relaxing scenery, love, joy, friendship, happiness, prosperity, laughter, faithful, fruitful, a blessing and in summary putting good deeds of Matthew 25 into action. It is only with the love, trust and bonding with and through Jesus that HMI can and does succeed.