

Trinity Times Weekly Edition

Haiti Report, la première partie
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Holy Trinity Anglican Church

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I just completed my first tour of our mission in Haiti, and I am thankful and happy to report it is an excellent mission.

Haiti is a very difficult place. It is so unique in every aspect that I sometimes wondered if I had left planet earth. The island itself is very beautiful and stunningly rich in natural resources. The mountains, the trees full of all kinds of fruit, the flowers in constant bloom, scores of birds chirping at every hour; chickens scurry, goats bray, pigs oink and cows moo in every corner of the island. All that beauty and life are a shocking contrast to the poverty (financial, spiritual, and cultural) which also marks that Island. Cap Haitien is simply ugly, filled in every possible way with concrete buildings, confining security walls, rusting metal security gates, old cars and motorcycles, people pushing wheel barrels full of stuff, and a thick layer of garbage covering every single inch of every public space. Then there is the sound – trucks grinding, thousands of car horns blaring and beeping, people shouting, motorcycles wailing, roosters crowing, hucksters hawking, children shouting and laughing at every single hour of the day and night. The smell of Haiti? Sea wind, trash heaps, dust, hibiscus flower, cooking banana and raw sewerage.

Our journey began with a visit to the Jacques Theodore Holly Institute (our school in Haiti) and the chicken broiler business which the APA constructed through the Lenten Appeal. I am happy to report that both operations are excellent. The land purchased through the Lenten Appeal is amazing, and will provide the mission in Haiti with resources for years to come. There is also a property which is ready for a much needed church building. The school currently has 84 students who, during our visit, were in the process of taking their second trimester exams. The exams are national exams and the cost is four Haitian Dollars per student – that is a lot of money in Haiti. There were not too many happy faces until the exams were over. But Fr. Mews, the priest in Haiti, has put together an excellent staff and the school is a very impressive ministry.

Following our visit to the property we learned that the school is not technically in the village of Ballan, as we had always thought, but is just outside Ballan in a district called Langlaise - a perfect location for an Anglican church. We then drove to Ballan proper, just a short distance from the school, and visited the center of the district where the market is held each Saturday.

On our way back to Cap Hatien we stopped in at Villa Cana, an expensive, new resort hotel that Fr. Mews had hoped we would stay at during this visit. Once we drove through the huge security wall we found a very lovely place with beautifully manicured grounds, very clean and attractive buildings, a swimming pool, conference center and a gift shop. The resort is owned and run by a Roman Catholic priest. I suspect Roman Catholic priests in Haiti are paid on a different scale compared to Anglican priests.

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Before reaching the city, Fr. Mews decided to treat us to a roadside sampling of fresh coconut milk, drunk straight from a coconut opened by a machete. Picture two men dressed in clericals on the side of a busy road in Haiti trying very hard not to wear the coconut juice while attempting to retain at least a shred of dignity as a crowd gathered to gawk. I asked Fr. David Haines, "How do they get a gallon of liquid in this small of a container?" Once we finished drinking the coconut milk, the seller cracked open the coconuts, fashioning a spoon from the shell, and we scooped out the meat. It was amazingly refreshing and delicious.

Back in Cap Hatien we met with Henry Couser (a missionary from Georgia who helped build our Mission's chicken coop) and a couple of others for lunch at LaKay (Bishop Grundorf's favorite place to eat during his visit to Haiti). We had an excellent meeting with Henry who agreed to set up a meeting for Fr. Mews and the Principle of the school with the Ministry of Education in Port-au-Prince in order to try and obtain the government subsidy of 700 Haitian Dollars per student a year. We also discussed the importance of building a security wall around the broiler chicken house as well as the tremendous potential of the property mission's for the future of the church in Balan / Lanlaise.

On day two at the Hotel Imperial, we met with four young men who desire to be Anglican clergy under Fr. Mews here in Haiti. The meeting got underway just after 3 PM and we were joined by Fr. Wilfred (the deacon at the church, St. Yves) and Mrs. Jocelyne Lezin (the principal of the school, who wants to become a Deaconess in the church). The meeting was very productive with excellent and encouraging conversations. We also told the candidates of our recommendations for training and study using Logos House of Theological Studies. This was a most uplifting and encouraging meeting. The caliber of all the candidates and their commitment to the Anglican Church in Haiti appears very strong and sincere. The potential for the growth and expansion of this work in Haiti seem very promising. God has clearly blessed the efforts of the many people involved in this work, and the Lord is providing the resources and human potential to secure the ministry of our Anglican Church in Haiti. Fr. Mews deserves a lot of credit for working so tirelessly during these past twenty years. Both Fr. David and I feel very encouraged by all that we experienced and saw during our visit.

It is simply amazing how much more there is to tell after such a short visit. Some tales are hilarious, some bizarre, some make my heart stop beating as I choke back a sob. But the takeaway for me, and I pray for you, is that our great and wondrous God is pouring out his Holy Spirit in Haiti and he is using us in a small but effective way to bring the hope of the Gospel to the beautiful people of Haiti. I encourage everyone to get involved in what God is doing in Haiti through our Church, the Anglican Province of America.

Fr. Bradley S. Cunningham⁺