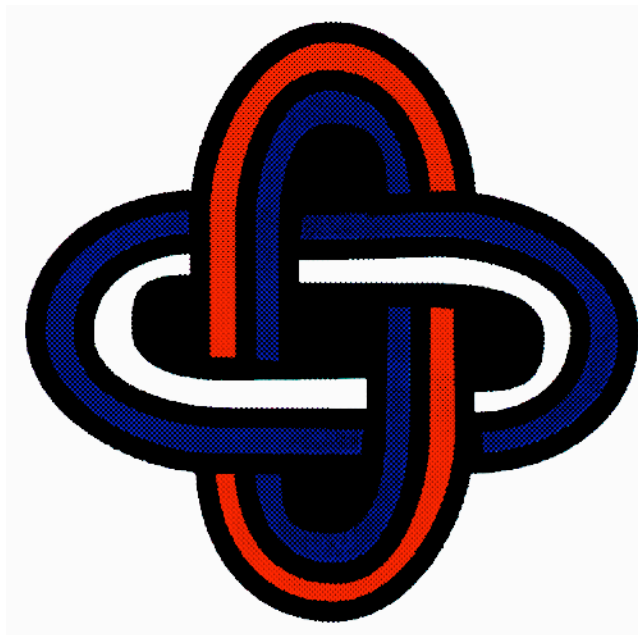


**HAITIAN MINISTRY COMMISSION**  
**DIOCESE OF RICHMOND**



**PARTICIPANT'S ORIENTATION  
MANUAL FOR  
TRIPS TO HAITI**

# Orientation for Trips to Haiti

## Session One

# Orientation Session One

## Agenda

- I. Opening Prayer
- II. Introduction to the retreat: Review the purpose of the orientation and the agenda
- III. What is a retreat to Haiti?
- IV. Introductions of ourselves
- V. Nuts and Bolts
  - Itinerary review
  - What to expect: What to bring
  - Medical
  - Question and answer
  - Security
  - Code of ethics
  - Journal
  - Support form each other (we will talk more about in a later session)
  - Support from a community of friends, family
- VI. Covenant/closing prayer

# Session One

## Opening Prayer

Call to Prayer: I have called you, you are mine... (pause)

We each have been called here, to this place and time. We come from many places and varying life journey's but here our journey's meet to embark on a new path together. When paths cross and pilgrims gather there is much to celebrate.

Leader: Let us begin by worshiping God, the ground of our being, the source of our life and the Spirit who sets us free.

Let us celebrate, with joyful hearts, knowing that God is present with us and within this gathered community.

Let us pray then, and in the silence of our hearts, hear God speaking to us in love, as we prepare to hear and respond to God's word.

Moment of silence

Reader: Jeremiah 1: 4 - 10

Leader: The harvest is ready. Whom shall I send?

All: Send me, God. I am ready to serve you all the days of my life.

Leader: The world is hungry. Whom shall I send?

All: Send me, God. I am ready to nourish all the days of my life.

Leader: The vineyard is ready. Whom shall I send?

All: Send me, God. I am ready to work for you all the days of my life.

Prayer intentions: Offer any prayer intentions. Response: God, hear our prayer.

All: Holy breathing of God, you call our names and we hear your voice. Stirred by your breath, we are ready for journey. Bind us together in this new direction we are about to take. Fill us with your Spirit, that we might have compassion for those we meet. Fill us with courage, that we might venture out to labor for justice. Fill us with love that we might help create a community of caring believers.

Closing Song:       The Summons

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,  
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?  
Will you let the pris'ners free and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen?  
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,  
Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

## Questions used for Introductions

1. Tell us about yourself:
  - Where were you born and where did you grow up?
  - Where do you live now?
  - Tell us about your family, work, and school.
  - What do you like to do?
  - What is important to you?
2. What brings you here? To this trip to Haiti?
3. What matters to you? What is important to you?

# TOURIST OR PILGRIM?

Paul Robichaud, CSP

*The heart of pilgrimage is conversion, not travel; the journey is only the means to the end.*

Here in Rome, the numbers of visitors expected for Jubilee 2000 have increased continuously as we approach Christmas 1999, when the pope will open the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica. The Eternal City ordinarily welcomes about seven million people each year. Present estimates for the jubilee have now gone above 20 million visitors. Yet behind all the preparation and all the advertisement for the jubilee, there lies a quite troubling question: will the ordinary visitor who comes to Rome have the opportunity to experience the holy? The words pilgrimage and pilgrim are prominently placed in the travel literature and advertising that promote visiting Rome during the jubilee, but will anyone actually make a pilgrimage or be a pilgrim? As someone who for more than a year has been involved in the preparations to welcome Americans to Rome in the Holy Year, I find myself asking, can we rescue the very soul of the jubilee?

The problem is not the Vatican's, nor does it have to do with the good will and efforts of the various bishops' conferences around the world. The Roman Catholic leadership wants the Holy Year to succeed and to be a graced moment in time for all who experience it. The problem is in the very nature of Rome itself as a travel destination and of the tourist industry that has grown up around it. The travel industry has packaged Rome in such a way that comfort, scheduling and simplification are the hallmarks of a visit to the Eternal City. The opportunity truly to engage the holy, to be given the time to open oneself to the transcendent and to be touched or challenged by something outside of ordinary experience is rarely present. Yet these elements are fundamental to an authentic pilgrimage.

## Outside the familiar

It was once possible to distinguish between a tourist and a pilgrim. A tourist was a traveler who sought to replicate in a foreign land much of his or her own world. Guides in the form of persons or books translated what they encountered into the familiar, recognizable food and other creature comforts; and, most importantly, cameras and souvenirs provided the means fondly to remember the trip. These were meant to soften the hardship of travel and make the journey as comfortable as possible. An industry was created around a traveler's needs, and today such names as Hilton, Sheraton, Kodak, McDonald's, Michelin, Visa and American Express are recognizable services that have become identified with tourism. A pilgrim, by distinction, was a traveler in search of something outside of the familiar.

Pilgrimage was and is, at its core, a journey into the unknown. The beginning act of a pilgrimage is to place oneself into the hands of God. Through this act of faith, a pilgrim goes in search of the holy away from the structures of everyday life. This could be dangerous and was often uncomfortable, but the danger and discomfort were a part of the spiritual journey, a discipline taken up for the forgiveness of sin. For early and medieval Christians, to make a single pilgrimage in one's lifetime was considered a great religious accomplishment, as it still is today for Muslims who

journey to Mecca. For Western Christians, the comforts of tourism serve as an obstruction and can obscure or prevent the dynamics of pilgrimage from taking place.

Today there is between tourist and pilgrim a new category of traveler, the religious tourist. This is someone who comes to Rome for a religious purpose, but does not know how to reach that spiritual goal. In the three years I have been in Rome as rector of the American Catholic community, I am always struck by the religious aspirations of visitors. Americans who visit Rome are wondrously open to have God touch their hearts. To be a Catholic and come to the city of the Apostles and to walk in the places of martyrs, mystics and saints, it is quite reasonable to expect to experience something of the holy. While the expectation is authentic, sadly the tools and opportunities for such an experience are few. Surrounded by professional travel consultants, bus schedules, group dinners and frozen itineraries, many Americans during the Holy Year will be quickly hurried past the spiritual richness of Rome. While their trip may be called a pilgrimage, they will be little more than religious tourists with great expectations and little spiritual direction. This is not meant as a polemic against professionals in the travel business. I work with several Catholic travel services that are excellent. The true challenge in Catholic travel is to move people past the creature comforts of their trip and toward the spiritual richness of what they are encountering.

*This article originally appeared in America, December 18-25, 1999, pp. 10-11.*

## BEING ON RETREAT WITH THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

The short time that we will spend with the people of Haiti is an opportunity for us simply and fully to be in solidarity. There is the tendency often to be all engrossed in **doing** as much as possible to relieve the suffering of peoples. But **presence** is more important than doing. Therefore, we need to prepare ourselves to enter into the experience in a deep, reflective manner, to consider it a retreat. We need to remember that the Haitian people can do much more for us than we can for them. Are we ready to receive? The face of God is in every encounter. Will we see?

This retreat will be **from** the First World (often called the "rich North"). We will be going to a place very different from our own country. The difference is beyond the minor difficulties and inconveniences we will encounter. It is even beyond the insecurity we will encounter by landing in a place where we can't speak the language or read the signs. The people we will meet are people whose very complex history has been affected, during two centuries before us, by a US foreign policy that profited from the continuing poverty of the people. We will visit a country where the gap between the very rich and very poor is dramatic. Ninety percent of the Haitians are very, very poor. We will experience a beautiful people, who are our close neighbors, who do not know the incredible freedoms, educational opportunities, conveniences, and luxuries we know. We will also see that they do not know the burdens and addictions we carry. We will experience their freedom, and perhaps be graced to encounter the Spirit within them teaching us something about our lives in our world. Though we may be shocked or angered by some of what we see, certainly deeply touched, we will be there not as tourists but as humble people seeking to learn and understand, as pilgrims passing through Haiti, walking on Holy Ground in the spirit of the Penitents of long ago. If we go that way, we need not be embarrassed or apologetic for having the freedom and luxury to drop into Haiti for a brief visit.

This retreat will be a retreat to a place where we can reflect on deeper questions, personal issues, and ask for special graces. It will be a time to "decompress" and reflectively sort out our priorities. It will be an experience of powerlessness. In the experience of "I don't know how to put this together" we will come to a moment of asking for help. Intimacy with Jesus comes when we feel loved and called beyond our needs, called to further intimacy and communion with Jesus' mandate to love others as we love ourselves.

This is the time to begin asking for graces. Certainly, we will end up with gifts more than we have asked or imagined. Each of us will come back, not only telling about what we have seen, but telling about what God was able to do within us. As we are touched by God in Haiti and experience God in one another, we will return with a gift for our families, friends, church, community and the world at large far greater than our pictures or our stories.

God, I begin this journey in faith and trust that you will bless it and bless us beyond our imaginings. Calm my fears and open my heart to experience every poverty, every handicap, and every unfreedom I bear. Bless my companions on



## TWO WOMEN

Look closely at the drawing. Do you see an old woman or a young woman? Study the picture until you find both.

be

also

You

This exercise shows that the same picture may

viewed in different ways, just as the same situation may be viewed in different ways. It

shows that it may be difficult to see something differently once you see it in a certain way.

may require assistance from another person to see the other view.

"Significant change occurs when people stop believing in what may once have been true, but has now become false; when they withdraw support from institutions which may once have served them, but no longer do; when they refuse to submit to what may once have been fair terms, but which are no longer. Such changes, when they occur, are the produce of true education."

—*Everett Reimer*

# WHAT TO BRING: A CHECKLIST

We strongly encourage you to have at least one carry on bag with toilet articles and a few changes in clothes. All medications should be carried with you.

## Clothing

- Cotton clothing is best for keeping cool
- Dress neatly and respectfully
- Comfortable clothing - shorts, casual pants, skirts or dresses
- One set of clothes suitable for church (no jacket or tie necessary for men)
- Comfortable walking shoes - sneakers, sandals, thongs or flip flops for baths
- Bathing suit (optional)
- Bandana or handkerchief

## Toiletries:

- Shampoo, soap, deodorant (small container)
- Toothpaste, toothbrush, and mouthwash
- Personal hygiene products and tissues or toilet paper
- Packets of Wash n' Dry to carry in purse or pocket

## Medical:

- Anti-diarrhea and anti-constipation medicine (the food may cause your North American stomach problems)
- Pepto Bismol tablets
- Chloroquine (anti-malaria medication - consult your physician)
- Prescription medicines
- Band-Aids
- Dramamine (if you are apt to get motion sickness - plane or car)
- Rhoule gel or antiseptic

## Other:

- PASSPORT (Don't forget!) and identification--e.g., driver's license**
- Record of vaccinations
- Prescription glasses (if contacts are used, be prepared for dust)
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Ear plugs
- Water container (about 2 quarts)
- A few zip-lock bags
- Sun-block, sun hat, sunglasses
- Insect repellent with DEET (e.g., Deep Forest Off, Rainbow or Cutters)
- Camera (extra film and batteries)
- Small cassette recorder (1 or 2 per group is plenty)
- Journaling materials
- Towel and wash cloth
- Snack food that doesn't melt (e.g. granola bars, raisins, peanut butter crackers)
- Knapsack/overnight bag

## If you wish:

- Pictures of your family, map or post card of your city, a sample of what you do (to share with Haitian people)
- Small gifts are sometimes appropriate (crayons, school notebooks, colorful fabrics for clothes, soccer balls (with pin for inflation), pocketknife, baseball caps, tee-shirts, #AA batteries, hard candy)

*Though there is a lot on this list, we would encourage you to pack as lightly as possible.*

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAVEL TO HAITI**

We suggest that you discuss this issue with your family physician, since opinions about prevention vary among providers. The following are recommended. In addition, Kathleen Kenney of the diocesan Office of Justice and Peace (kkenney@richmonddiocese.org) has available to groups a first-aid kit put together by a nurse for a previous trip. Groups are welcome to borrow it.

**Hepatitis-A vaccine\***: two shots, six months apart, protect the liver. Protection begins after the first shot, and the complete series provides lifetime protection.

**Hepatitis-B vaccine\***: three shots; the first two are given thirty days apart, the third, six months after the first. The vaccine protects the liver and gives lifetime protection.

**Vivotif Berna\***: anti-typhoid capsules. A total of four tablets are taken, one every other day, starting eight days before travel. The protection is good for up to five years. [Typhoid vaccine injections may be substituted, but Vivotif Berna is preferred.]

**Flu shot**: recommended for all overseas travelers each year.

**Chloroquine or Lariam**: anti-malarial tablets. Dosage: one tablet the week before travel, then one each week during travel, and one each week for four weeks after return [should be repeated for each trip].

**Lomotil**: anti-diarrhea (Lonox is generic). For use if needed (and one supply is enough for the group). The dosage is one tablet every four hours until relief occurs.

**Cipro**: anti-diarrhea antibiotic. It may be used when fever or blood is present. The dosage is one tablet twice a day for a maximum of three days (one prescription for the group is sufficient.)

**Tetanus**: Booster required every 5-10 years (usually combined with diphtheria vaccine in one shot).

**PPD (Tine) Test** for exposure to tuberculosis: recommended one to two months after return from Haiti.

**Insurance**: several companies provide group low-cost insurance for overseas medical care and even med-evac coverage in case of emergencies requiring immediate medical evacuation to the US:

Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Co. (800-876-4994) \*\*

Cigna (check with a local representative)

Seabury and Smith (800-282-4495) \*\*

\*Recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). A good source of advice is their

## SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *Do I need a passport?* Yes. The application may be obtained and submitted in person at your nearest Passport Office, US District Court, and sometimes at the Post Office. Check "United States Government Offices" section of your phone book or call the post office. All adult US passports are valid for ten years. Passports normally take two to four weeks to be issued. Apply as soon as possible. By law you can obtain a passport within a few days if it is urgent.
2. *Do I need a visa?* No.
3. *Is it safe?* Haiti is a country having a history of political and economic turmoil. We will explore some of the reasons for this prior to the trip. However, Haitians love to show hospitality to visitors and North Americans are generally safe in Haiti (especially when we consider Haiti in light of the violence found in our own streets in the US). The Catholic Diocese remains in contact with knowledgeable people in Haiti before and during trips and will take every precaution to assure the safety of our group members. In certain rare cases we will postpone a trip. Numerous groups have visited Haiti with the Catholic Diocese of Richmond over the past seventeen years and there have been no incidents of violence threatening any group. See the Security section of this booklet.
4. *How much luggage can I take?* We recommend that you pack only the necessities and travel lightly. One suitcase and a carry-on piece of luggage (ideally a small backpack) should be enough. However, international airline regulations usually allow two check-in pieces of luggage of up to 50 lbs. each.
5. *What about laundry?* All is done by hand. We will find you assistance if you need to do laundry during your stay in Haiti.
6. *What are the accommodations like?* We will be staying in a guest house in Port-au-Prince. Sheets, pillows, blankets, and towels are provided. Normally this is true of where we stay in the countryside.
7. *What is the voltage in Haiti?* 120 volts, but we will only occasionally have electricity. Mostly we use kerosene to light our lamps.
8. *What will we eat?* Your meals while you are in Haiti will be provided. Some meals will be simple while others festive. Rice and beans are a staple, but things like

bread, peanut butter and fresh fruit are always available. Filtered drinking water will always be available.

9. *What is the weather like?* Haiti is in the tropics, and it is very hot in the summer and warm the rest of the year. There are two rainy seasons (spring and late fall usually) when it may rain in the afternoons. Nights may be cool in the winter.
10. *Should I bring valuables?* NO. Visitors stand out as people having valuables and the Diocese of Richmond cannot be responsible for any items that are lost or stolen at any time during the retreat.

Cameras are an exception. Haiti has much beauty and you may want to take pictures. Bring plenty of film and extra batteries as it is hard to find these items in most parts of Haiti. We will teach you how to ask people in Creole if you can take their picture.

You will also want to bring some money along with you. Unfortunately, travelers checks are not very useful. US cash will be. You will need at least \$30.00 to cover the exit fee (this is included in the fees paid for the diocesan trips), and enough cash for any Haitian crafts or art you may want to buy (anywhere from \$40 to \$150 total will do). Credit cards are accepted at very few places.

11. *Do I need insurance?* You may want to check with your current insurance policies (renters, health, life) to see what restrictions there are on international travel. If you want, you can purchase supplemental travel insurance (e.g., suggestions on companies which provide emergency medical evacuation, see p. 5).
12. *What if my family needs to contact me?* Your family can contact the Catholic Diocese in the case of any emergency, and they will assist your family in contacting you in Haiti. Unfortunately, phone lines to Haiti do not always work efficiently, but every effort will be made to contact the group in the case of an emergency.

## SECURITY: COMMON SENSE RULES

When moving about in Haiti everyone should observe strict caution as follows:

- Always follow the instructions and guidance of your group leader on site and any special guidance received at orientation. If you leave the group at any time, inform the group leader.
- Keep your money belt with you at all times but concealed under your clothing - not dangling from the midriff. When not needed, leave your money at the house of hospitality.
- Never access your money belt or fumble with money in public. Anticipate tipping amounts ahead so that the money is easily and readily available. Preferable - leave tipping to your group leader or assign to one person in the group.
- Never, never go into a bank under any circumstances, or loiter near a bank. Money should be dealt with or exchanged only at your house of hospitality.
- Do not wear any gold or silver jewelry or watch. Wear a cheap watch. Do not carry anything ostentatious such as electronic gadgets or big camera.
- Do not carry your passport when traveling throughout the city or country. Leave it in a safe place at the house of hospitality. Carry a copy of the front page of your passport.
- Be very cautious, observant, and aware, and alert when walking around Port-au-Prince or in any other city or town. Never go out alone and never walk outside anywhere at night.
- Learn about and respect local customs.
- Do not take pictures without asking permission: May I take your picture: "*Pran foto?*"
- Do not make promises to people you cannot keep!

Crime exists in all countries of the world. The US has one of the highest crime rates in the world for serious crime such as armed robbery and murder. In the 90s The Disaster Center reported the risk of being a victim of crime in the US as 5.1% and of a violent crime .63%. Security is not only a matter of reality and safety but is also a state of mind.

The crime rate in Haiti is relatively low but does exist and tends to be sensationalized by the US press. Crime has been on the rise in the last couple of years because of elections and political infighting but also because of austerity measures imposed on Haiti by the World Bank the IMF and the international community, adding to the already-critical living conditions of all Haitians.

## A CODE OF ETHICS FOR TOURISTS

1. Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to learn more about the people of your host country.
2. Be sensitively aware of the feelings of other people, preventing what might be offensive behavior on your part. This applies very much to photography.
3. Cultivate the habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.
4. Realize that often the people in the country you visit have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own; this does not make them inferior, only different.
5. Instead of looking for that "beach paradise," discover the enrichment of seeing a different way of life through other eyes.
6. Acquaint yourself with local customs – people will be happy to help you.
7. Instead of the Western practice knowing all the answers, cultivate the habit of listening.
8. Remember that you are only one of the thousands of tourists visiting this country and so do not expect special privileges.
9. If you really want your experience to be "a home away from home," it is foolish to waste money on traveling.
10. When you are shopping, remember that the "bargain" you obtained was only possible because of the low wages paid to the maker.
11. Do not make promises to people in your host country unless you are certain you can carry them through.
12. Spend time reflecting on your daily experiences in an attempt to deepen your understanding. It has been said that what enriches you may rob and violate others.

–*The Challenge of Tourism: Learning Resources for Study and Action*, edited by Alison O'Grady for the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism.

# PERSONAL REFLECTIONS-JOURNAL JOTTINGS

*"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, things beyond imagination prepared for those who love God." (I Cor.2:9)*

*"After sending the crowds away Jesus went up into the hills by himself to pray."  
(Mt. 14:23)*

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To pray or reflect in Haiti is a new experience. Fatigue, distractions such as mosquitoes, heat and noise, the lack of electricity by which to read or write, concerns about health, food and water, all combine to create a challenging environment in which to pray.

On the reverse of this page are some questions for reflection which incorporate the sights, sounds and reality of Haiti.

Journaling around these questions, and coming together each evening with your companions to "gather the fragments" of the day will help you to decompress and remain open to the experience of Haiti.

Carrying a small Bible, using familiar scriptures and songs can help create the mood for prayer.

Scriptures that lend themselves to a pilgrimage in Haiti are:

Mt. 10: 1-16 ~ Mission of the Twelve  
Mt. 5: 1-12 ~ Beatitudes  
Mt. 14: 13-21 ~ Miracle of loaves and fishes  
Luke 10: 1-10 ~ Sending forth of the 72 disciples  
I John 4: 7-8 ~ God is Love

Hosea 2: 16-24 ~ Betrothal with Yahweh  
Luke 24: 13-35 ~ Road to Emmaus  
Mt. 5: 13-16 ~ Salt of the Earth  
Ex. 3: 1-6 ~ Burning Bush  
Mt. 25: 31-46 ~ Last Judgment  
Is. 43: 1-7 ~ Liberation of Israel  
Many of the Psalms

Some songs that many know by heart:

Holy Ground  
The Cry of the Poor  
O Lespri Sen  
Ubi Caritas...

Amazing Grace  
How Great Thou Art  
Papa Nou  
Here I Am Lord

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR JOURNALING AND GROUP SHARING

- 1) Your trip from the airport, partly on the airport road, put you very close to the corrugated roof shacks and barely livable dwellings, unfinished buildings, open drainage ditches, children playing and bathing in muddy water, the odor of diesel fumes, crowded tap taps, women with burdens on their heads, men pulling heavy loads, the sting of dust in your eyes, and strange smells.

What else did you see and what were your feelings enroute?

- 2) Water! Have you seen the spigots at which residents draw water when it is available? Have you noted how neat many Haitians look although water is so scarce? Describe your feelings as you reflect on these facts.
- 3) A house to live in! Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home. Could you apply these verses to the dwellings you are seeing in Haiti? What do you feel makes a "home" in Haiti?
- 4) What is your experience of the faith of the Haitian people as evident in their prayer and worship? Are there any similarities in your prayer? Did any scripture passage take on more meaning for you because of this experience?
- 5) You have experiences about what the lack of access to health care means to Haitian. What thoughts and feelings does this stir within you?
- 6) No doubt you expected some improved conditions somewhere along the way to Hinche. Did you find any? The six-hour trip from Port-au-Prince to Hinche left you shaken in more ways than physical. What is the Spirit saying to you?
- 7) With what spirit are you leaving Haiti? Can you name any special grace or insight that you received? How will this experience in Haiti enrich your spiritual life, your community life, your relationships with family and friends, and your ministry?
- 8) You have landed in Miami. What are your feelings?
- 9) You are met at the airport by your family or friends. They ask: "How was it?" You say...

## Entering into Covenant

Covenant is a biblical concept whereby people freely enter into a relationship of mutuality, care respect and support.

As a community traveling to Haiti together we enter into covenant with each other. In doing this we commit to:

- Pray with and for each other before, during and after the retreat.
- Read and reflect on the pre-trip materials.
- Be committed to the group to fully participate in the group process and contribute positively to the group.
- Provide nurturance and assistance to group members.
- Challenge fellow group members to focus on the goals of the trip.
- Discern ways I am being called to transformation.
- Be committed to respect Haitian hosts and to foster relationships of mutuality.
- Discern ways when I return on how to work with others to transform the structures which perpetuate the poverty in Haiti.

## Session One Closing Prayer

God, we begin this journey in Faith and trust that you will bless it and bless us beyond our imaginings. Calm my fears and open my heart to experience every poverty, every handicap, and every unfreedom I bear. Bless my companions on this retreat and bless our journey together. Draw us together so that the gifts you give each of us might be the gifts for the common good. Bless those we leave behind and those we will meet. Amen

# Orientation for Trips to Haiti

## Session Two

## Orientation Session Two Agenda

- I. Check in/ how feeling  
Share insights/ thoughts
  - II. Overview of Haiti  
Participants share what they were each asked to share participant will share for 5 - 7 minutes. Or use Video on Haiti. Or leader share on Haiti.  
History  
Economy  
Culture  
Religion  
Health  
“We See From Where We Stand”  
Video (viewing a video which gives an overview of Haiti can be used instead of having the group preparing presentation).
  - III. Discuss what was learned about Haiti
- Break
- IV. The ART process ACT - REFLECT - TRANSFORM  
Learn the ART process, social analysis and theological reflection.
  - V. Hand out Gospel of Mark Reading and reflection questions to prepare for Session 3

# HAITI FACT SHEET

**LOCATION:** Haiti is located 700 miles southeast of Miami, just 100 minutes air travel time, occupying the western third of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. Haiti is only 60 miles from Cuba.

**SIZE:** 10,714 square miles, or 1/4 the size of Virginia (about the size of Maryland).

**POPULATION:** Approximately 8.2 million people. Over 1.5 million live abroad, mostly in the U.S. and Canada, with an estimated additional number (varying between 450,000 to 750,000) living in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent Republic since 1804. Since then there has been instability in the government with many factions vying for power. Before the first democratic elections were held in December 1990, Francois Duvalier and then his son, Jean-Claude, ran a brutal dictatorship. When the elections occurred in 1990 the turnout of eligible voters exceeded 60% and Jean Bertrand Aristide was elected President. A nonviolent transfer of power from President Aristide to newly elected Rene Preval took place Feb. 7, 1996. Aristide was re-elected President Nov. 26, 2000. The Parliament of 83 Delegates and 27 Senators was elected in May 2000 (with term extending to Feb. 7, 2006). President Aristide was removed from Haiti in February 2004. An interim Government stayed in power until spring of 2006 when Rene Preval was elected as President of Haiti.

**RELIGION:** 80% Roman Catholic; 10% various Protestant mainline churches. Evangelical Christians are increasingly becoming evident. Vodou remains a part of Haitian culture stemming from African roots and the government officially recognizes the Vodouist Federation.

**LANGUAGE:** Creole and French are official but everyone speaks Creole. All of Haitian law is in French. Some grassroots groups and the clergy are learning English.

**EDUCATION:** Free public education is sporadic and non-existent in many rural areas. Only 5-10% of rural children ever complete elementary school. 80% of the population is illiterate. President Aristide was able to set up one literacy school in each of the 565 districts in Haiti.

**LIVING CONDITIONS:** Only 15% of the rural population has access to safe water. Most families do not have electricity or running water. Sanitary facilities as we know them, sewage disposal, flush toilets, etc., are almost nonexistent. 2.4 million people live in urban slums. In 1999 the UN designated Haiti the 3<sup>rd</sup> hungriest nation in the world behind Somalia and Afghanistan.

**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** 54 years. For some labor activities such as pulling *bourets*, 45 years.

**ECONOMY:** Average per capita income is less than \$400, closer to \$150 in the rural areas. Less than 1% of the population controls the majority of the wealth. Fewer than 200 families control the entire economy. There is little trade between Haiti and other countries. Much of the food for survival, such as rice, is imported at low prices because of subsidies to US farmers by the U.S. government.

# HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

In 1804, Haitians achieved a sweeping transformation, setting colonialist Europe on its heels. The revolution of Saint Domingue combined political and philosophical aspects of the North American and French revolutions. Like the North American revolution, it was anti-colonial; like the French revolution, it was propelled by ideals of social and political justice.

This extraordinary event stands as the only successful slave revolution in modern history. It took place in what was then the richest colony in the world, giving birth to the second independent state of the Americas, with the resources to stand, sovereign and meritorious, in the international community of nations.

Once the most prosperous colony in the Americas, Haiti is now the poorest country of the hemisphere. One Haitian child dies every five minutes from malnutrition, dehydration or diarrhea, and 27% of the nation's children die before the age of five. More than 50% of the population is illiterate, and only 3% of Haitian rural children finish primary school. In 1985, 90% of the population earned less than \$150 per year. Life expectancy is 54 years.

With the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, two hundred years after the first slave revolts, Haitians rekindled their fight for democracy and social justice. *What follows is a brief chronology of Haitian history.*

## Colonial period

### 1492

Christopher Columbus lands on the island called Hayti/Quisqueya/Bohio and changes its name to "Hispaniola." The native Taino Arawak population is virtually destroyed within 50 years.

### 1697

The Treaty of Ryswick grants French sovereignty over Saint Domingue, the area known today as Haiti.

### 1791

A slave revolt against French colonialism begins under the leadership of Boukman and Toussaint Louverture. Over the next ten years, Toussaint manages to defeat the island's French settlers, Spanish colonists, a British expeditionary force, and a mulatto coup and win control of the colony.

### 1801

Toussaint is proclaimed Governor-General of Saint Domingue. Napoleon Bonaparte dispatches an expeditionary force of 22,000 troops - the largest force ever to cross the Atlantic - to recover the colony from black control. Toussaint is quickly captured through French trickery and dies in exile.

### 1804

Napoleon's forces are defeated under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Independence is declared and the name "Haiti" is reclaimed. Haiti becomes the world's first independent black republic and the second independent state in the Americas.

### **US occupation: 1915 - 1934**

*Haiti's strategic importance to the U.S. increased with the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914. 800 miles from Florida, the 60-mile Windward Passage between Haiti and Cuba remains a key U. S. security interest.*

#### **1915**

Following the assassination of the Haitian president, 2,000 U.S. Marines invade Haiti, invoking the Monroe Doctrine.

#### **1918**

U.S. troops defeat a peasant uprising of local militias or "cacos" led by Charlemagne Peralte. Peralte is shot by U.S. troops, the caco resistance to the invasion continues sporadically. The ban on foreign ownership of land and property in Haiti is revoked and Haiti's dependence on the U.S. increased. U.S. investment in Haiti triples between 1915 and 1930.

#### **1934**

U.S. Marines leave Haiti after 19 years, leaving behind a U.S. trained army to maintain control. The U.S. exercises indirect rule through a series of puppet governments.

### **The Duvalier dictatorships: 1957-1986**

#### **1957**

Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier is installed as President through Army-controlled elections. The army is reorganized and elite units are placed under his direct command. Duvalier creates a private presidential militia -- the *Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale*, better known as the *Tontons Macoutes* -- which grows to outnumber the army. Duvalier crushes political opposition, arresting or forcing into exile political rivals, dissolving trade unions, repressing student political activities and banning or attacking opposition newspapers.

#### **1964**

Duvalier suspends elections and declares himself "President for Life."

#### **1966**

Duvalier renegotiates the concordat (official agreement between the government and the Vatican) with the Holy See and nominates his own bishops.

#### **1971**

Francois Duvalier, having amended the constitution to lower the age requirement, dies and names his 19 year-old son, Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, as his successor.

#### **1985**

The killing of four students in Gonaives sparks a national protest movement against Jean-Claude Duvalier.

**Feb 7, 1986**

Sustained popular mobilization forces Jean-Claude Duvalier to flee into exile in France on a U.S. jet.

**Post-Duvalier period**

*A provisional government, the National Council of Government (CNG), assumed control after Duvalier fled. Every CNG member save one had served as high-ranking officer in Duvalier's military or as a senior minister in Duvalier's government. General Henri Namphy, who governed the CNG, was among the most senior officers in the Haitian Armed Forces. While political unrest continued, public discourse, stifled for 30 years under the Duvaliers, burst out into the open.*

**March 29, 1987**

A new constitution is adopted in a national referendum.

**November 29, 1987**

Elections are aborted after the military execute a campaign of violence. At a polling place in Port-au-Prince, armed men attack citizens waiting in line to vote and kill approximately 30. A new Provisional Electoral Council is hand-picked by the National Council of Government to set new elections.

**January 17, 1988**

Leslie Manigat is declared the winner of a presidential election marked by massive abstention and fraud. The government was civilian in name only. The military's involvement in drug trafficking and contraband grow unabated during Manigat's tenure.

**June 20, 1988**

After 135 days in power, Manigat is forced from office after attempting to assert civilian control over the military. General Henri Namphy, the original leader of the National Council of Government, declares himself leader of a second Provisional Governing Council (CNG II), places Haiti under strict military control and suspends the 1987 Constitution.

**September 11, 1988**

As Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a harsh critic of Namphy, is leading Sunday mass at the Church of St. Jean Bosco in Port-au-Prince, a group of armed men bursts into the packed church. Armed with military weapons and machetes, the attackers shoot and slash worshippers. Twelve people are killed and dozens are wounded in the attack.

**September 17, 1988**

Namphy is overthrown in a coup d'etat. Lt. General Prosper Avril, a former Duvalier advisor, declares himself President.

### **January 1990 General**

Avril's government declares a state of emergency and suspends key provisions of the Constitution. Numerous human rights workers and political opponents of the military government are seized, beaten, tortured and deported.

### **March 5, 1990**

Soldiers fire on demonstrators and kill an 11 year-old girl in the southern city of Petit-Goave. This death galvanizes the political opposition. Schools and shops close as demonstrators fill the streets despite the army's violent attempts to repress them.

### **March 10, 1990**

General Avril resigns after the popular movement takes to the streets in nationwide protest. Supreme Court justice Ertha Pascal-Trouillot is installed as interim President.

### **October 18, 1990**

Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide announces his candidacy for president under the auspices of the National Front for Change and Democracy (FNCD).

### **The first Aristide presidency and the coup d'etat**

### **December 16, 1990**

Haiti successfully holds its first democratic election. Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide wins 67% of the popular vote.

### **January 7, 1991**

Roger Lafontant, Tonton Macoute leader and defeated presidential candidate, attempts a coup by "kidnapping" outgoing-president Pascal-Trouillot. Millions protest in the streets; the coup is suppressed.

### **February 7, 1991**

Jean-Bertrand Aristide is inaugurated President.

### **September 30, 1991**

General Raoul Cedras orchestrates a coup d'etat against President Aristide. Hundreds are killed in the first week of the coup.

Aristide resides in Washington DC during most of his exile.

### **October 2, 1991**

OAS condemns the coup and calls for a trade embargo. U.S. Sec. of State James Baker states, "it is imperative that we agree, for the sake of Haitian democracy and the cause of democracy throughout the hemisphere, to act collectively to defend the legitimate government of President Aristide."

### **October 7, 1991**

In a rapid change of course, White House Spokesman Marlin Fitzwater states, "We don't know [if Aristide will return to power] in the sense that the government in his country is changing and considering any number of different possibilities."

### **February 1992**

Bush administration unilaterally relaxes embargo to allow U.S. assembly plants to operate in Haiti.

**February 24, 1992**

Washington Protocols are signed between President Aristide and the Haitian Parliament in which Aristide agrees to replace his Prime Minister with a compromise candidate.

**May 24, 1992**

President Bush orders the U.S. Coast Guard to intercept all Haitians leaving the island in boats and return them to Haiti, without hearing their claims for political asylum.

**June 10, 1992**

Marc Bazin is ratified by coup leaders as the *de facto* prime minister. Bazin had been the U.S.-favored presidential candidate in the 1990 elections.

**September 30, 1992**

On the anniversary of the coup, people all over the country hand out leaflets and attend masses and small meetings. Soldiers and paramilitary forces increase their roadblocks and illegal arrests, beatings and killings take place in the last days of September.

**January 1993**

President Clinton imposes a naval blockade to prevent Haitian refugees from fleeing to the U.S.

**January 18, 1993**

The Haitian population unanimously boycotts illegally-held elections.

**February 1993**

US/OAS mission is deployed throughout Haiti to monitor human rights violations.

**April 15, 1993**

Paramilitary forces storm the cathedral in Port-au-Prince where Bishop Willy Romelus is saying mass to commemorate victims of a ferry disaster. Troops beat Romelus and other parishioners before the eyes of UN/OAS observers.

**June 1993**

De Facto Prime Minister Marc Bazin resigns. U.S. steps up pressure on President Aristide to negotiate with coup leaders to form a new government.

**July 3, 1993**

The Governors Island Accord is signed by President Aristide and coup leader Gen. Raoul Cedras. Cedras agrees to step down by Oct. 15, and President Aristide is scheduled to return on October 30. The agreement was made under UN/OAS auspices with intense international pressure on President Aristide. It provides that the military hold power through a period of transition.

**August 1993**

As called for in the Governor's Island Accord, a new "government of consensus" is installed with business leader Robert Malval as Prime Minister.

**September 8, 1993**

Soldiers and attaches fire on a crowd of about 1,000 as they watch the constitutional mayor of Port-au-Prince, Evans Paul, enter his office for the first time in almost two years. At least four are killed and another two dozen wounded.

**September 11, 1993**

Antoine Izmary, prominent businessman and staunch backer of President Aristide, is dragged from a church service and assassinated on the street in the presence of UN/OAS human rights observers.

**October 11, 1993**

U.S. troop carrier, the USS Harlan County, carrying 200 U.S. and Canadian soldiers, turns back from landing when about 100 attaches demonstrate at the port.

**October 14, 1993**

Guy Malary, President Aristide's Minister of Justice, is assassinated.

**October 15, 1993**

General Cedras refuses to step down as required by the Governor's Island Accord.

**October 30, 1993**

President Aristide does not return to Haiti as scheduled in the Governor's Island Accord.

**December 15, 1993**

Prime Minister Malval resigns.

**January 14, 1994**

The Aristide government convenes the Miami Conference with the original objectives of exploring means for advancing the restoration of democracy in Haiti and resolving the refugee crisis. The Clinton administration presses Aristide to change the agenda to focus more on a power-sharing agreement with promilitary and opposition forces.

**Aristide's return up to present-day Haiti****July 31, 1994**

Resolution 940 is adopted by the UN Security Council. This allows for the formation of a 6,000 multinational force to "use all necessary means" to aid in the removal of the military regime.

**September 19, 1994**

U.S. troops begin to occupy Haiti.

**October 15, 1994**

Accompanied by 6,000 U.S. troops, later to be replaced by 6,000 UN troops, Aristide returns to power to serve what remains of his term. General Cedras and General Philippe Biamby (chief-of-staff) go into exile in Panama. Michel François (police chief) retreated to the Dominican Republic.

#### **April 1995**

Constant disruptions of law and order result from Haiti's ineffective justice system and lack of sufficiently-trained police force.

#### **June & July 1995**

Local and legislative elections take place. Lavalas wins a landslide victory in the Senate and Lower House. Voter turnout is scarce, however, and election results are contested. Of the 27 participating parties, 23 refuse to recognize the results.

#### **November 1995**

Prime Minister Smarck Michel resigns and is replaced by the Foreign Minister Claudette Werleigh.

#### **December 17, 1995**

Presidential elections take place, but only 25% of the voters participate. The race is won by former Prime Minister Rene Preval, and for the first time in Haitian history, power is yielded from one elected leader to another.

#### **February 7, 1996**

Preval is inaugurated and Rosny Smarth later becomes Prime Minister.

#### **December 1996**

Divisions within the Lavalas Political Organization are manifested by Aristide's formation of the *Fanmi Lavalas* (Lavalas Family).

#### **April 1997**

Elections take place for 9 senators, two deputies, members of 564 local assemblies and 133 municipal representatives. Popularly considered fraudulent elections, voter turnout is extremely low, with less than a 10% presence at the polls.

#### **June 1997**

Prime Minister Rosny Smarth resigns.

#### **November 1997**

1,200 UN troops withdraw. 300 police instructors and 400 U.S. troops remain.

#### **January 1999**

President Preval appoints Education Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis as Prime Minister. Due to its expired term, President Preval refuses to recognize parliament.

#### **March 1999**

A new government and provisional electoral board are sworn in.

*The following dated information is given in more detail to help present the context of events around this controversial time.*

### **26 May 99**

FL joins the OPL in a protest against Preval's appointments on the CEP. The contentious issue of the FL senators from 1997 elections is non-negotiable according to FL. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) has not set a date for elections, but says they will cost \$17 million. Several seats on the new CEP went to members of the *Espace*. (HP, 5/21)

### **11 June 99 CEP**

announces decision to annul the elections of April 6, 1997. This is considered a long delayed victory for OPL Prime Minister Smarth. Elections are scheduled for November. FL and OPL still refuse to work with CEP. (CEP)

### **28 June 99**

The Proposed Electoral Law contains two contentious articles: Article 50 provides in part that "the voter card must be duly numbered and must reserve a space for a photo of the voter, in the event necessary." Article 154 describes as "valid and to be accounted for blank ballots as found in the ballot box, bearing no indication of a vote on the part of the voter."

### **16 July 99**

President Preval signed the Provisional Electoral Law, nullifying the 1997 elections and preparing for the fall elections. The law became official when published in *Le Moniteur*. Lays out the elections to occur in November and December. (AP, Reuters)

### **22 July 99**

US says it will withhold \$10 million in election aid because it is dissatisfied with the new law. The signatures of Preval and the CEP were not published with the law. Also, the US was concerned that the law doesn't specifically state how many senate seats will be contested. (AP)

The CEP scheduled elections for 28 Nov, and runoffs for 19 Dec, if necessary. (Reuters)

### **3 August 99**

According to USAID \$750,000 US election aid had been released. Another \$9 million would be turned over soon. USAID funds will pay for approximately 4 million voter ID cards. Even though there was a bid by Haitian agencies to produce these cards, the bid went to Code Inc, Canada through a process guided by IFES. (Reuters)

### **7 September 99**

The CEP proposes 19 Dec as a new date for local and legislative elections with a runoff on 16 Jan. (Reuters) FL officially announces that it will participate in the elections. (Reuters)

### **6 October 99**

CEP announces new election dates: 19 Mar with 30 Apr for runoffs. Officials state the postponement is due to delays in rewriting election bylaws and hiring election officials. (AP)

#### **22 December 99**

Aristide unveiled the FL party platform, a 182 page document. (Reuters)

#### **4 January 00**

The Government of Haiti chose Imprimerie Deschamps, a Haitian company, to print the ballots for the March elections. The money for printing had been pledged by the EU, but upon hearing the government's choice, the EU withdrew the funding and suggested the government consider a lower bid from an EU based company or apply EU funding to another part of the process. The government rejected both of these ideas, and decided to do without the assistance of the EU. (Reuters)

#### **7 January 00**

Voter registration, which should have begun on 10 Jan, is now expected to begin on 24 Jan. The delay was due to electoral staff not yet being trained. (Reuters)

#### **23 January 00**

On the eve of voter registration widespread reports of vandalism and theft at electoral bureaus (BI) was reported. (AP)

#### **24 January 00**

Voter registration was postponed in several areas. (Reuters)

#### **9 February 00**

Protests took place throughout the country by people demanding voter registration materials adequate to register everyone. There are 3500 voting places, but the CEP has plans to add 1000 more. (Reuters)

#### **10 February 00**

900,000 people have received their voting cards so far. There are enough materials to cover all voters, but BECs will have to carefully manage the material distribution. The candidate registration list now includes 29,306 candidates. The period for registration may need to be extended 2-3 weeks to allow the full 30 days at locations that opened behind schedule. (IFES)

#### **3 March 00**

CEP postpones the elections and extends voter registration to 15 Mar. The CEP states that 2.9 million people are registered now. (AP)

#### **15 March 00**

Preval officially declares the elections are postponed without giving a new date. 9 Apr is in question. (Reuters)

**27 March 00** The US calls the date of 12 Jun the line in the sand for the new Haitian parliament to be seated. According to Article 152 of the Haitian Constitution, the

parliament is seated for its second session after a recess on the second Sunday in June. Sanctions against Haiti are mentioned, at both the bilateral and multilateral level, including economic and diplomatic isolation and the denial of US visas to those seen obstructing the democratic process. (MH)

Protesters in Port-au-Prince call for the resignation of the CEP. (AP) 3 April 00 Radio journalist Jean Leopold Dominique is assassinated in the parking lot of his radio station, Radio Haiti International, on Delmas. (NYT)

### **19 April 00**

Preval officially set the dates for elections on 21 May and 25 Jun for the first and second rounds. (Reuters)

### **21 May 00**

Voters demonstrated in the streets of Cite Soleil where materials had not arrived at mid-day for most of the polling sites. (AP)

### **22 May 00**

International observers praised Haiti's elections as largely peaceful, free and fair. President of the CEP estimated that 90% of the 11,235 polling places nationwide opened on Sunday. (Reuters)

Due to political challenges, voting on the island of Lagonav was postponed. The CEP announced that more than 60% of the registered voters participated, the largest turnout since Dec 1990. (HP)

A group of political parties now calling themselves the Group de Convergence (including OPL, RDNP, MOCHRENA and the *Espace*) held a press conference in which they claimed electoral irregularities. Their principle claim is that one million ballots were stolen, unobserved by national and international observers. This was denied by the CEP. (AHP)

### **27 May 00**

The opposition unanimously condemned the elections. In a move to ensure "that sore losers do not create problems", the Government of Haiti arrested prominent opposition leaders and two militant Aristide supporters. The opposition said it would boycott run off elections scheduled for 25 Jun. (AP)

### **1 June 00**

The CEP released election results stating that of the eight departments that had held the vote FL won 16 out of 17 seats in the senate in the first round. Of the 83 seats in the House of Deputies, FL won 28 outright. (AHP)

### **2 June 00**

The OAS EOM notes that according to the provisions of the Electoral Law the methodology used to calculate the vote percentages for Senate candidates is not correct. (OAS)

#### **5 June 00**

Hundreds protest the statement of the OAS and its letter to the CEP. President of the CEP, Leon Manus, responded in a five page letter defending the calculation method. He went on to say that the head of the OAS mission's letter, and the fact that it was printed in the Haitian press, was an act of interference. (HP)

#### **15 June 00**

Two of three CEP members originally chosen by the *Espace* officially resigned. In their letters of resignation they stated they were resigning at the request of their party. (TNH)

#### **18 June 00**

President of the CEP, Manus, sought asylum in a foreign mission on 16 Jun, and crossed the border to the Dominican Republic en route to the US. He claims he was facing death threats because he refused to sign election results. (AP)

#### **19 June 00**

On the 16th and the 19th protesters in Port-au-Prince called for the immediate publication of results from the May 21 elections, and denounced what they called attempts by sectors of the international community to change the results of the elections. (AHP)

#### **20 June 00**

Pressured by protests in Haiti's three biggest cities, the CEP released election results. The CEP also postponed the runoffs scheduled for 25 Jun but did not give a new date. (AP)

#### **26 June 00**

President Preval announced 9 Jul as the new date for runoff elections. (Reuters) 30 Jun 00 CEP releases a statement of clarification regarding the calculations' controversy. (CEP)

#### **7 July 00**

The OAS issued a statement saying that the "final percentages proclaimed by the CEP constitute a serious error that could and should have been corrected." (OAS)

#### **9 July 00**

Second round voting was held peacefully. Voter turn out was generally low as had been expected. CEP estimated the turn out at 10%, which they noted was higher than for elections in 1990 or in 1995. (Radio Quisqueya)

#### **10 July 00**

Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, criticized the voting procedure, stating that authorities should have resolved irregularities in the first round of voting before holding the run off vote. (Reuters)

The US State Department called the runoff elections "incomplete and inappropriate." (AP)

### **13 July 00**

The US warned that Haiti risked losing international aid if it did not quickly correct the flaws in its recent elections.

### **19 July 00**

Former St. Lucia Prime Minister Sir John Compton headed two fact-finding missions to Haiti to examine the conduct of recent elections. (CANA)

### **24 July 00**

Despite a party boycott, a cartel of delegates elected on May 21 under the banner of the *Espace de Concertation* were sworn into office at the courthouse in Petit Goave. (AHP)

### **8 August 00**

The CEP announced results from the final run-off in the election process, confirming that Fanmi Lavalas had won a majority of the legislature. The latest results mean that FL now holds 75 of the 83 seats in the lower Chamber of Deputies and 18 of 27 seats in the Senate. The party also won 80% of city halls and a majority of urban and rural assemblies. (AP)

### **11 August 00**

By presidential decree the date of November 26 was set for partial senate and presidential elections. (Reuters)

### **16 August 00**

Results of the parliamentary elections were made official by publication. Official results: FL has 18 seats in upper house and 72 in the lower. (AP)

### **28 August 00**

Haiti's newly elected parliament convened. FL spokesman Yvon Neptune was appointed president of the Senate. (Reuters)

### **30 August 00**

State Dept: "It is our view that Haiti's parliament has been prematurely seated, which calls into question the legitimacy of the new legislature." (Reuters)

### **6 September 00**

The Clinton Administration vowed to impose economic sanctions against Haiti unless it strengthens democratic procedures in advance of presidential and legislative elections. Canada and the EU have also raised the possibility of imposing sanctions. (AP)

Luis Lauredo, US ambassador to the OAS, said, "Absent new concrete steps to end the impasse, the US will not be able to conduct 'business as usual' with Haiti." (MH)

### **22 September 00**

Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Luigi Einaudi, went to Haiti to try to broker a national dialogue on the controversy. His visit came at the request of the Haitian government. (MH)

### **5 October 00**

Jean-Bertrand Aristide officially registered as a candidate for the presidency. (AHP)

### **22 October 00**

After a third failed attempt at negotiations, OAS's Luigi Einaudi left Haiti. He left behind a six-point draft document entitled, "Elements of Reflection for a National Accord," which reflects the agenda of the negotiations. (MH)

### **26 November 00**

Elections are held for president and eight senate seats. The CEP reports 60% voter turn out with Aristide winning 92% of the votes cast.

### **7 February 01**

Jean-Bertrand Aristide is inaugurated as President of the Republic of Haiti.

In early 2004, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was forced out of Haiti and 7,000 elected officials were forced from office as well. Many people working for or sympathetic to Aristide's government fled the country or went into hiding.

An Interim Haitian Government was appointed to run Haiti. After two years, and many postponements, presidential and legislative elections were held and former President Rene Preval was overwhelmingly elected president despite lots of maneuvers to prevent a fair ballot count or participation.

After a lengthy delay, President Preval was finally inaugurated in mid-May 2006 and began to reorganize the government.

## UNDERSTANDING HAITIAN CULTURE

Br. Francklin Armand, P.F.I.

*The following is excerpted from an article that was written by Br. Francklin Armand, founder of the Little Brothers of the Incarnation, based in Pandiassou, Haiti and translated by Br. John Mahoney, CFX. It deals with the Haitian culture from the perspective of one who lives daily in it.*

To understand an individual is difficult enough; a family more so; and a culture even more. There is a mysterious, untranslatable side to a culture that escapes the understanding of even the most intelligent, perspicacious native. The passage from one culture to another is not only a change in geography, language, mentality, and way of living; but, also, and especially, it involves the passage from life to death.

It isn't easy to grasp a people like the Haitians people who have experienced deportation, three centuries of slavery, nineteen years of foreign occupation, and more than thirty years of inhuman, barbarous dictatorship. To really understand the materially poorest people of the Americas, the third poorest in the world, is a challenge.

### **The country and the people**

Still close to the African reality as far as customs, traditions, certain points in the culture and mentality are concerned, the peasants represent 80% of the present population. While providing food for everyone, it is this population, from the beginning, that has borne the country on its back; built itself; has profited little from social services; hardly ever participates in politics; and lives on the edges of the

country's economic activity. This peasant is called *moun andeyò* (that is, people from the back country).

It is modern slavery. A mass of more than 80% illiterates which works for the well-being of 20% of the "literate" in revolting, sub-human conditions, and the upper class leads a Westernized existence in the manner of pirates. For this group, Haiti is a large field which it has been cultivating for years without fertilizing, without crop rotation or culture rotation, with the resulting fallout: a country in complete bankruptcy and on the road to extinction. But the majority wants to rise to the challenge; it doesn't want to die; it wants to live, to build a country with its own hands, its courage, its dynamism, and its determination.

### Haitian men and women

Haiti, a reserve of intelligence, is a county formed by a gathering of men and women snatched from diverse horizons, notably from Black Africa; and transplanted like some herd on one of the most beautiful of the Antilles, situated only 90 km. from Cuba. The French colonists, at the time, called this country the "Pearl of the Antilles".

Having arrived in the colony, our forbearers, having come from Africa, could have chosen an attitude of assimilation, of rejection, or of integration. They opted for the third choice, creating an original language spoken by the majority of the Haitians, *Creole* (French vocabulary and African grammar); also creating *vodou* (traditional religion of Haiti, different from Catholicism and the African religions); as well as *placage* (a man having more than one family).

The Haitian loves to share. He is hospitable, happy, accepting, loveable, sensitive, family and community oriented; he is open, kind, tolerant, patient, obliging, untiring in physical effort, etc. He loves life. He is an extrovert; has a sense of confidence; of the joy of living; is aware of his dignity and freedom. He accepts and respects the poor; has a capacity for contemplative prayer. He has a sense of religious law and mercy; he accepts heroically the will of God, loves the Virgin Mary, the Way of the Cross, pilgrimages, and feast days. He is easy to meet. He is tender and affectionate. He loves song, dance, and music while he can drown his problems, his sufferings, and his heartaches in laughter.

A victim of his past and his educational system, poorly adapted to his needs, the Haitian has developed a system of personal self-defense. He shows himself as jealous, demagogic, a megalomaniac, ambitious, sentimental, talkative, lacking perseverance, negligent. He is afraid of responsibility and lacks confidence in his own possibilities; the source of his lack of initiative and the short duration of many of his development projects. He loves great discourses (an inheritance from French politicians) all the while knowing that they will hardly ever become reality. He is not very logical in his actions and comes up short in his ideas. Nature, long dictatorships, and lack of means haven't taught him foresight or serious planning. He prefers to trust in *Bondye bon* (the Good God) or the *loas* (spirits of vodou). As in all tradition-oriented societies he looks for the causes of his problems outside of himself, his family, his Church. He constantly looks for scapegoats: God and others.

The Haitian considers intellectual activity as being nobler than manual labor; believes he can get ahead without any preparation or effort; it is the source of the abundance of beautiful in a speech and that at all levels. He is even capable of pedantry, dropping a Latin phrase or two from ancient writers or from the Bible, etc. He can be upset, get excited and break everything in his path when he gets angry; yet, he has a tendency to bring everything to the same level and returns constantly to mythical heroes to resolves problems.

In the face of a situation which is beyond him, the Haitian takes an attitude of correct or hyper-religious faith. Changing religion, or indeed, reverting to *vodou*, he takes his chances to have more protection. After having changed religion several times, without ever finding his good luck, he may even return to his original religion. In all, he expresses his desire to change, to improve his material position, and to find greater security and protection.

### **Attempts at independence and oligarchy**

The Papal States were the first to recognize the independence of Haiti after the country had been banished, ignored, and put under embargo for some decades by the great slave-owning powers of the time. Haiti was a magnet for the other Black States of the world, still under tutelage and it represented a symbol of freedom and resistance. It is the first independent Black republic in the world. It gave assistance in arms and munitions to Miranda and Bolivar, Latin American heroes, in their struggles for liberation which ended in the independence of several Latin American countries, among others Venezuela.

But I must recognize that in place of independence we have known a transfer of classes and people. The emancipated, the native officers, and some foreigners who survived the war quite simply took the place of the colonizers, continuing in their own way the slavery system. The mass of barefoot peasant began again their struggle for a place in the sun, for land to cultivate in order to live. The struggle has lasted many, many years and the oligarchy, seeing their interests being threatened, have ended up repressing and subduing the insistent majority. They also decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican with the aim of civilizing and evangelizing. The oligarchy has always considered the Church as a means it can use to manipulate as it wishes, and, as a result, the Church enters into politics in Haiti when what it denounces isn't heard or when others attack its petty interests. The preferential option for the poor, adopted by the Church at Medellin, Puebla, and Santo Domingo, is followed by one part of the People of God that option bothers and annoys the oligarchy. At one time the oligarchy frequented certain churches rather than others; yet, when the poor burst in, they chose another place, and so on. Now, many would like their own home Masses or they quite simply leave the Church that they accuse of all of the sins of Israel.

We must recognize that despite certain negative effects of international aid received by the Church of Haiti, the Church has been able to maintain autonomy vis-s-vis the oligarchy. This should not be underestimated; because of its great poverty, the Haitian Church needs foreign funding to function.

## The Haitians and foreigners

Very often foreigners think that we do not know their language and say disparaging things about Haitians thinking that we don't understand them. Disparaging things that are verified soon after in behavior, to wit: Black people are lazy, emotional, superstitious, thieving liars, pretentious, sensual, crude; they lack hygiene; they aren't serious; they are deceitful, lying, dishonest, murderers, backward, disorganized, etc.

Some foreigners wear themselves out working to free us from our poverty and hunger that they no longer have time for prayer. Now, as you know, it is precisely prayer and union with God which have kept us alive in the midst of all our poverty.

We also admire the dedication of the missionaries, their love and the risks they take for Haiti; we admire, likewise, their spirit of service and availability; their love of God, for the Gospel, and God's reign; their knowledge, sense of the serious; of responsibility and generosity. They willingly accept going to the most backward and inaccessible corners of the country. The first missionaries deserve a lot of credit especially because of malaria and yellow fever, but also for other reasons. Most of them died within two years after their arrival in the country. However, that did not discourage the young missionaries. The most respected among them haven't necessarily done great deeds, rather they have left the memory of true men and women of God.

## *Vodou*

Another example is that throughout the country on public transportation like the "tap-taps" (jitneys), you can read *Map tann Bondye* (I am waiting for God) or even Biblical quotes or the names of saints. But, at the same time, the Haitian practices *vodou*, which yokes religion and syncretism, magic and superstition. God is unique, distant, seen as outside the system, easy going; God can be calmed or cajoled by gifts. This God delegates His power to intermediaries which are the *loa* who, up to a point, replace Christ. It is for that reason that Christ is completely unknown in *vodou*. The image of the Sacred Heart is seen as *leglen sou basen san* (vampires around a basin of blood) and the Cross as *ayizan velekete* (palm branch having the power to ward off evil, borne by the initiates of the god Velekete).

In the very evolution of *vodou* the "black magic" dimension has always been exaggerated because the State doesn't render justice; the privileged class is always right. The Catholic Church doesn't make available the means for justice to reign either. So in *vodou* one constantly reverts to magic to resolve problems, frustrations, concerns, and receive reparations, etc.

However, among Haitians there are distinctions between those adept in *vodou* from the occasional *vodou* worshippers and Christians engaged in following Jesus Christ. There is great ambiguity in all this but that doesn't prevent the Church of Haiti from being dynamic, committed, full of hope in God and life.

## **A Church committed and divided**

Colonial Catholicism is the twin of the *conquista* (conquest). I weep as I tell of all the misdeeds that our ancestors from Africa suffered, those who were baptized, according to the Black Code, a week after their arrival in the colony. Certainly, it must be recognized that many missionaries took up their cause while others, like the defrocked priests, simply chose the side of the colonists, keeping slaves totally ignorant, they themselves owning "black persons", about whom they didn't know whether they had a soul or if grace would be efficacious in them. Let's not be snivelers; let's go on.

Thanks to the dedication of many committed lay persons, notably the directors of the chapels; thanks, too, to movements of lay persons, priest, and religious for the past twenty-five the Roman Catholic Church has burst upon the social and political scene through an authentic evangelization of the poor but also through the Catholic base communities, the hope of the Church of tomorrow. It is that, moreover, which make it (the Church) more sympathetic and now more than ever closer to the masses of the poor. However, it is now shaken and frightened by internal divisions. Rightly or wrongly, it is equally strongly criticized in its hierarchy. Many people forget that the problems of the Church are settled according to tradition and the Gospels, in charity, truth, and dialog. Many Church people want to make use of means employed by the Haitian civil society to resolve conflicts in such a way that the strongest argument wins, that machismo and overthrows prevail along with a lack of respect for others and dialog, lack of tolerance and pardon. Without knowing it, we are playing the enemy's game.

## **Conclusion**

Every culture has its values. It is always necessary to relativize one's own in relation to others at the risk of a cultural shock. If Haiti is materially poor, each Haitian is a millionaire in human values. It must be said that Christian values are human values Christianized. The Haitian, male and female, is already almost Christian. It is an honor to be Haitian.

# The Values Americans Live By

by L. Robert Kohls

Most Americans would have a difficult time telling you, specifically, what the values are that Americans live by. They have never given the matter much thought.

Even if Americans had considered this question, they would probably, in the end, decide not to answer in terms of a definitive list of values. The reason for this decision is itself one very American value—their belief that every individual is so unique that the same list of values could never be applied to all, or even most, of their fellow citizens.

Although Americans may think of themselves as being more varied and unpredictable than they actually are, it is significant that they think they are. Americans tend to think they have been only slightly influenced by family, church or schools. In the end, each believes, "I personally chose which values I want to live my own life by."

Despite this self-evaluation, a foreign anthropologist could observe Americans and produce a list of common values that would fit most Americans. The list of typically American values would stand in sharp contrast to the values commonly held by the people of many other countries.

We, the staff of the Washington International Center, have been introducing thousands of international visitors to life in the United States for more than a third of a century. This has caused us to try to look at Americans through the eyes of our visitors. We feel confident that the values listed here describe most (but not all) Americans.

Furthermore, we can say that if the foreign visitor really understood how deeply ingrained these 13 values are in Americans, he or she would then be able to understand 95% of American actions—action that might otherwise appear strange or unbelievable when evaluated from the perspective of the foreigner's own society and its values.

The different behaviors of a people or a culture make sense only when seen through the basic beliefs, assumptions and values of that particular group. When you encounter an action, or hear a statement in the United States that surprises you, try to see it as an expression of one or more of the values listed here. For example, when you ask Americans for directions to get to a particular address in their own city, they may explain, in great detail, how you can get there on your own, but may never even consider walking two city blocks with you to lead you to the place. Some foreign visitors have interpreted this sort of action as showing Americans' "unfriendliness." We would suggest, instead, that the self-help concept (value number 6 on our list), is so strong in Americans that they firmly believe that no adult would ever want, even temporarily, to be dependent on another. Also, their future orientation (value 8) makes Americans think it is better to prepare you to find other addresses on your own in the future.

Before proceeding to the list itself, we should also point out that Americans see all of these values as very positive ones. They are not aware, for example, that the people in many Third World countries view change (value 2) as negative or threatening. In fact, all 13 of these American values are judged by many of the world's citizens as negative and undesirable. Therefore, it is not enough simply to familiarize yourself with these values. You must also, so far as possible, consider them without the negative or derogatory connotation that they might have for you, based on your own experience and cultural identity.

It is important to state emphatically that our purpose in providing you with this list of the most important American values is not to convert you, the foreign visitor, to our values. We couldn't achieve that goal even if we wanted to, and we don't want to. We simply want to help you understand the Americans with whom you will be relating—from their own value system rather than from yours.

L. Robert Kohls, Executive Director  
The Washington International Center  
Washington, D.C.  
April 1984

## 1. PERSONAL CONTROL OVER THE ENVIRONMENT

Americans no longer believe in the power of Fate, and they have come to look at people who do as being backward, primitive, or hopelessly naïve. To be call "fatalistic" is one of the worst criticisms one can receive in the American context; to an American, it means one is superstitious and lazy, unwilling to take any initiative in bringing about improvement.

In the United States, people consider it normal and right that Man should control Nature, rather than the other way around. More specifically, people believe every single individual should have control over whatever in the environment might potentially affect him or her. The problems of one's life are not seen as having resulted from bad luck as much as having come from one's laziness in pursuing a better life. Furthermore, it is considered normal that anyone should look out for his or her own self-interests first and foremost.

Most Americans find it impossible to accept that there are some things that lie beyond the power of humans to achieve. And Americans have literally gone to the moon, because they refused to accept earthly limitations.

Americans seem to be challenged, even compelled, to do, by one means or another (and often at great cost) what seven-eighths of the world is certain cannot be done.

## **2. CHANGE**

In the American mind, change is seen as an indisputably good condition. Change is strongly linked to development, improvement, progress, and growth. Many older, more traditional cultures consider change as a disruptive, destructive force, to be avoided if at all possible. Instead of change, such societies value stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage—none of which are valued very much in the United States.

These first two values—the belief that we can do anything and the belief that any change is good—together with an American belief in the virtue of hard work and the belief that each individual has a responsibility to do the best he or she can do have helped Americans achieve some great accomplishments. So whether these beliefs are true is really irrelevant; what is important is that Americans have considered them to be true and have acted as if they were, thus, in effect, causing them to happen.

## **3. TIME AND ITS CONTROL**

Time is, for the average American, of utmost importance. To the foreign visitor, Americans seem to be more concerned with getting things accomplished on time (according to a predetermined schedule) than they are with developing deep interpersonal relations. Schedules, for the American, are meant to be planned and then followed in the smallest detail.

It may seem to you that most Americans are completely controlled by the little machines they wear on their wrists, cutting their discussions off abruptly to make it to their next appointment on time.

Americans' language is filled with references to time, giving a clear indication of how much it is valued. Time is something to be "on," to be "kept," "filled," "saved," "used," "spent," "wasted," "lost," "gained," "planned," "given," "made the most of," even "killed."

The international visitor soon learns that it is considered very rude to be late—even by 10 minutes—for an appointment in the United States. (Whenever it is absolutely impossible to be on time, you should phone ahead and tell the person you have been unavoidably detained and will be a half hour—or whatever—late.)

Time is so valued in America, because by considering time to be important one can clearly accomplish more than if one "wastes" time and does not keep busy. This philosophy has proven its worth. It has enabled Americans to be extremely productive, and productivity itself is highly valued in the United States. Many American proverbs stress the value in guarding our time, using it wisely, setting and working toward specific goals, and even expending our time and energy today so that the fruits of our labor may be enjoyed at a later time. (This latter concept is called "delayed gratification.")

## **4. EQUALITY/EGALITARIANISM**

Equality is, for Americans, one of their most cherished values. This concept is so important for Americans that they have even given it a religious basis. They say all people have been "created equal." Most Americans believe that God views all humans alike without regard to intelligence, physical condition or economic status. In secular terms this belief is translated into the assertion that all people have an equal opportunity to succeed in life. Americans differ in opinion about how to make this ideal into a reality. Yet virtually all agree that equality is an important civic and

social goal.

The equality concept often makes Americans seem strange to foreign visitors. Seven-eighths of the world feels quite differently. To them, rank and status and authority are seen as much more desirable considerations—even if they personally happen to find themselves near the bottom of the social order. Class and authority seem to give people in those other societies a sense of security and certainty. People outside the United States consider it reassuring to know, from birth, who they are and where they fit into the complex system called "society".

Many highly-placed foreign visitors to the United States are insulted by the way they are treated by service personnel (such as waiters in restaurants, clerks in stores, taxi drivers, etc.). Americans have an aversion to treating people of high position in a deferential manner, and, conversely often treat lower class people as if they were very important. Newcomers to the United States should realize that no insult or personal indignity is intended by this lack of deference to rank or position in society. A foreigner should be prepared to be considered "just like anybody else" while in the country.

## **5. INDIVIDUAL AND PRIVACY**

The individualism that has been developed in the Western world since the Renaissance, beginning in the late 15th century, has taken its most exaggerated form in 20th century United States. Here, each individual is seen as completely and marvelously unique, that is, totally different from all other individuals and, therefore, particularly precious and wonderful.

Americans think they are more individualist in their thoughts and actions than, in fact, they are. They resist being thought of as representatives of a homogenous group, whatever the group. They may, and do, join groups—in fact many groups—but somehow believe they're just a little different, just a little unique, just a little special, from other members of the same group. And they tend to leave groups as easily as they enter them.

Privacy, the ultimate result of individualism is perhaps even more difficult for the foreigner to comprehend. The word "privacy" does not even exist in many languages. If it does, it is likely to have a strongly negative connotation, suggesting loneliness or isolation from the group. In the United States, privacy is not only seen as a very positive condition, but it is also viewed as a requirement that all humans would find equally necessary, desirable and satisfying. It is not uncommon for Americans to say—and believe—such statements as "If I don't have at least half an hour a day to myself, I will go stark raving mad."

Individualism, as it exists in the United States, does mean that you will find a much greater variety of opinions (along with the absolute freedom to express them anywhere and anytime) here. Yet, in spite of this wide range of personal opinion, almost all Americans will ultimately vote for one of the two major political parties. That is what was meant by the statement made earlier that Americans take pride in crediting themselves with claiming more individualism than, in fact, they really have.

## **6. SELF-HELP CONTROL**

In the United States, a person can take credit only for what he or she has accomplished by himself or herself. Americans get no credit whatsoever for having been born into a rich family. (In the United States, that would be considered "an accident of birth.") Americans pride themselves in having been born poor and, through their own sacrifice and hard work, having climbed the difficult ladder of success to whatever level they have achieved—all by themselves. The American social system has, of course, made it possible for Americans to move, relatively easily, up the social ladder.

Take a look in an English-language dictionary at the composite words that have "self" as a prefix. In the average desk dictionary, there will be more than 100 such words, words like self-confidence, self-conscious, self-control, self-criticism, self-deception, self-defeating, self-denial, self-discipline, self-esteem, self-expression, self-importance, self-improvement, self-interest, self-reliance, self-respect, self-restraint, self-sacrifice—the list goes on and on. The equivalent of these words cannot be found in most other languages. The list is perhaps the best indication of how seriously Americans take doing things for one's self. The "self-made man or woman" is still very much the ideal in 20th-century America.

## **7. COMPETITION AND FREE ENTERPRISE**

Americans believe that competition brings out the best in any individual. They assert that it challenges or forces each person to produce the very best that is humanly possible.

Consequently, the foreign visitor will see competition being fostered in the American home and in the American classroom, even on the youngest age level. Very young children, for instance, are encouraged to answer questions for which their classmates do not know the answer.

You may find the competitive value disagreeable, especially if you come from a society that promotes cooperation rather than competition. But many U.S. Peace Corps volunteers teaching in Third World countries found the lack of competitiveness in a classroom situation equally distressing. They soon learned that what they thought to be one of the universal human characteristics represented only a peculiarly American (or Western) value.

Americans, valuing competition, have devised an economic system to go with it—free enterprise. Americans feel strongly that a highly competitive economy will bring out the best in its people and, ultimately, that the society that fosters competition will progress most rapidly. If you look for it, you will see evidence in all areas—even in fields as diverse as medicine, the arts, education, and sports—that free enterprise is the approach most often preferred in America.

## **8. FUTURE ORIENTATION**

Valuing the future and the improvements Americans are sure the future will bring means that they devalue that past and are, to a large extent, unconscious of the present. Even a happy present goes largely unnoticed because, happy as it may be, Americans have traditionally been hopeful that the future would bring even greater happiness. Almost all energy is directed toward realizing that better future. At best, the present condition is seen as preparatory to a latter and greater event, which will eventually culminate in something even more worthwhile.

Since Americans have been taught (in value 1) to believe that Man, and not Fate, can and should be the one who controls the environment, this has made them very good at planning and executing short-term projects. This ability, in turn, has caused Americans to be invited to all corners of the earth to plan and achieve the miracles that their goal-setting can produce.

If you come from a culture such as those in the traditional Moslem world, where talking about or actively planning the future is felt to be a futile, even sinful, activity, you will have not only philosophical problems with this very American characteristic but religious objections as well. Yet it is something you will have to learn to live with, for all around you Americans will be looking toward the future and what it will bring.

## **9. ACTION/WORK ORIENTATION**

"Don't just stand there," goes a typical bit of American advice, "do something!" This expression is normally used in a crisis situation, yet, in a sense, it describes most American's entire waking life, where action—any action—is seen to be superior to inaction.

Americans routinely plan and schedule an extremely active day. Any relaxation must be limited in time, pre-planned, and aimed at "recreating" their ability to work harder and more productively once the recreation is over. Americans believe leisure activities should assume a relatively small portion of one's total life. People think that it is "sinful" to "waste one's time," "to sit around doing nothing," or just to "daydream."

Such a "no nonsense" attitude toward life has created many people who have come to be known as "workaholics," or people who are addicted to their work, who think constantly about their jobs and who are frustrated if they are kept away from them, even during their evening hours and weekends.

The workaholic syndrome, in turn, causes Americans to identify themselves wholly with their professions. The first question one American will ask another American when meeting for the first time is related to his or her work: "Where do you work?," or "Who (what company) are you with?"

And when such a person finally goes on vacation, even the vacation will be carefully planned, very busy and active.

America may be one of the few countries in the world where it seems reasonable to speak about the "dignity of human labor," meaning by that, hard, physical labor. In America, even corporation presidents will engage in physical labor from time to time and gain, rather than lose, respect from others for such action.

## **10. INFORMALITY**

If you come from a more formal society, you will likely find Americans to be extremely informal, and will probably feel that they are even disrespectful of those in authority. Americans are one of the most informal and casual people in the world, even when compared to their near

relative—the Western European.

As one example of this informality, American bosses often urge their employees to call them by their first names and even feel uncomfortable if they are called by the title "Mr." or "Mrs."

Dress is another area where American informality will be most noticeable, perhaps even shocking. One can go to a symphony performance, for example, in any large American city nowadays and find some people in the audience dressed in blue jeans and tieless, short-sleeved shirts.

xxx Informality is also apparent in American's greetings. The more formal "How are you?" has largely been replaced with an informal "Hi." This is as likely to be used to one's superior as to one's best friend.

If you are a highly placed official in your own country, you will probably, at first, find such informality to be very unsettling. American, on the other hand, would consider such informality as a compliment! Certainly it is not intended as an insult and should not be taken as such.

## **11. DIRECTNESS, OPENNESS AND HONESTY**

Many other countries have developed subtle, sometimes highly ritualistic, ways of informing other people of unpleasant information. Americans, however, have always preferred the first approach. They are likely to be completely honest in delivering their negative evaluations. If you come from a society that uses the indirect manner of conveying bad news or uncomplimentary evaluations, you will be shocked at Americans' bluntness.

If you come from a country where saving face is important, be assured that Americans are not trying to make you lose face with their directness. It is important to realize that an American would not, in such case, lose face. The burden of adjustment, in all cases while you are in this country, will be on you. There is no way to soften the blow of such directness and openness if you are not used to it except to tell you that the rules have changed while you are here. Indeed, Americans are trying to urge their fellow countrymen to become even more open and direct. The large number of "assertiveness" training courses that appeared in the United States in the late 1970s reflects such a commitment.

Americans consider anything other than the most direct and open approach to be dishonest and insincere and will quickly lose confidence in and distrust anyone who hints at what is intended rather than saying it outright.

Anyone who, in the United States, chooses to use an intermediary to deliver that message will also be considered manipulative and untrustworthy.

## **12. PRACTICALITY AND EFFICIENCY**

Americans have a reputation of being an extremely realistic, practical and efficient people. The practical consideration is likely to be given highest priority in making any important decision in the United States. Americans pride themselves in not being very philosophically or theoretically oriented. If Americans would even admit to having a philosophy, it would probably be that of pragmatism.

Will it make any money? Will it "pay its own way?" What can I gain from this activity? These are the kinds of questions that Americans are likely to ask in their practical pursuit, not such questions as: Is it aesthetically pleasing? Will it be enjoyable?, or Will it advance the cause of knowledge?

This practical, pragmatic orientation has caused Americans to contribute more inventions to the world than any other country in human history. The love of "practicality" has also caused Americans to view some professions more favorably than others. Management and economics, for example, are much more popular in the United States than philosophy or anthropology, law and medicine more valued than the arts.

Another way in which this favoring of the practical makes itself felt in the United States, is a belittling of "emotional" and "subjective" evaluations in favor of "rational" and "objective" assessments. Americans try to avoid being too sentimental in making their decisions. They judge every situation "on its merits." The popular American "trail-and-error" approach to problem solving also reflects the practical. The approach suggests listing several possible solutions to any given problem, then trying them out, one-by-one, to see which is most effective.

## **13. MATERIALISM/ACQUISITIVENESS**

Foreigners generally consider Americans much more materialistic than Americans are likely to consider themselves. Americans would like to think that their material objects are just the

natural benefits that always result from hard work and serious intent—a reward, they think, that all people could enjoy were they as industrious and hard-working as Americans.

But by any standard, Americans are materialistic. This means that they value and collect more material objects than most people would ever dream of owning. It also means they give higher priority to obtaining, maintaining and protecting their material objects than they do in developing and enjoying interpersonal relationships.

The modern American typically owns:

- one or more color television sets,
- an electric hair dryer,
- an electronic calculator,
- a tape recorder and a record player,
- a clothes-washer and dryer,
- a vacuum cleaner,
- a powered lawn mower (for cutting grass),
- a refrigerator, a stove, and a dishwasher,
- one or more automobiles,
- and a telephone. Many also own a personal computer.

Since Americans value newness and innovation, they sell or throw away their possessions frequently and replace them with newer ones. A car may be kept for only two or three years, a house for five or six before trading it in for another one.

**SUMMARY**

Now that we have discussed each of these 13 values separately, if all too briefly, let us look at them in list form (on the left) and then consider them paired with the counterpart values from a more traditional country (on the right):

U.S. Values	Some Other Countries' Values
Personal Control over the Environment	Fate
Change	Tradition
Time & Its Control	Human Interaction
Equality	Hierarchy/Rank/Status
Individualism/Privacy	Group's Welfare
Self-Help	Birtright Inheritance
Competition	Cooperation
Future Orientation	Past Orientation
Action/Work Orientation	"Being" Orientation
Informality	Formality
Directness/Openness/Honesty	Indirectness/Ritual/"Face"
Practicality/Efficiency	Idealism
Materialism/Acquisitiveness	Spiritualism/Detachment

Which list more nearly represents the values of your native country?

**APPLICATION**

Before leaving this discussion of the values Americans live by, consider how knowledge of these values explains many things about Americans.

One can, for example, see America's impressive record of scientific and technological achievement as a natural result of these 13 values.

First of all, it was necessary to believe (1) these things could be achieved, that Man does not

have to simply sit and wait for Fate to bestow them or not to bestow them, and that Man does have control over his own environment, if he is willing to take it. Other values that have contributed to this record of achievement include (2) an expectation of positive results to come from change (and the acceptance of an ever-faster rate of change as "normal"); (3) the necessity to schedule and plan ones' time; (6) the self-help concept; (7) competition; (8) future orientation; (9) action work orientation; (12) practicality; and (13) materialism.

You can do the same sort of exercise as you consider other aspects of American society and analyze them to see which of the 13 values described here apply. By using this approach you will soon begin to understand Americans and their actions. And as you come to understand them, they will seem less "strange" than they did at first.

# VODOU: A HAITIAN PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Leslie G. Desmangles

Popular novels, films, and spurious travel accounts by tourists have identified Vodou (or its derivative, Voodoo or Hoodoo) incorrectly with evil spells cast by witches who make images of other persons, and perforate these images with pins. Other popular notions have related it to cannibalism and zombification. These characterizations could not be farther from the truth. They derive undoubtedly from many foreigners' racist attitudes, as well as fears caused by the slave rebellions that freed Haiti from French rule in 1804, and the guerrilla rebellions that liberated Haiti from the United States' Marine occupation in 1934. The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) followed a period of civil disorders, and was inspired by the Monroe Doctrine to protect American interests abroad.

Whatever the motives may have been in popularizing such derisive notions of Vodou, a serious examination of it reveals that none of its rituals confirms these popular views about it. Voodoo is a deterioration of the Dahomean term vodu or vodum, meaning deity or spirit. Hence, Vodou is a religion that, through a complex system of myths and rituals, relates the life of the devotee to hundreds of incommensurable spirits called lwas (from a Yoruba word for spirit), who govern all of life as well as the entire cosmos. These lwas (pronounced loa) are believed to manifest themselves not only in all of nature but specifically through the bodies of their devotees in spirit or trance possessions, a non-material achievement that allows these devotees to embody divine powers whom they believe free from scarcity and anguish. Moreover, like many other religions of the world, Vodou is a system of beliefs and practices that gives meaning to life: it instills in its devotees a need for solace and self-examination, provides an explanation for death, which is treated as a spiritual transformation, a portal to the sacred world beyond, where productive and morally upright individuals, perceived by devotees to be powerful ancestral figures, can exercise significant influences on their progeny by possessing them. In short, it is an expression of a people's longing for meaning and purpose in their lives. By extension, the use of the term Vodou in Haiti is also generic, referring to a whole assortment of cultural elements: personal creeds and practices, including an elaborate system of folk medical practices; a system of ethics transmitted across generations, which encompass numerous proverbs and stories, songs and folklore; and various other forms of artistic expressions including painting, music, dance and sculpture.

Despite its various manifestations, Vodou is more than belief; it is a way of life. It is practiced primarily in the home, and maintains a religious calendar with special feast days that require of its devotees their attendance at special ceremonies in the temples or *ounfo's* (pronounced *unfo*), and at pilgrimages in sacred places throughout Haiti. These ceremonies are officiated by priests or *oungans* (pronounced *unga*) and priestesses or *mambos* who constitute a loosely organized, but powerful local religious hierarchies. Vodou maintains neither theological nor ecumenical centers; hence, its religious specialists are trained informally by other practitioners, either through inheritance or through social contacts.

The focus of Vodou's theology is the spirits whom Vodouisants revere and who, they believe, are active in their lives. Vodouisants regard their devotion to these lwas as a "service" to them, and see themselves as these lwas' servants. They also conceive of them in practical terms, expecting them, not only to be the fount of wisdom in coping with life's problems but to attend to their daily needs; the lwas must provide food, guard their devotees against disease, and offer their assistance in practical matters of life in general.

### **African influence**

The theology of Vodou was born on the sugar plantations of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was called during the French colonial period (1697-1804). Little is known about the slave communities that composed Haitian society during that period, but it is evident that they were critical in preserving African religious traditions on the island. Glimpses from the colonial writings that survive note that the slaves' rituals were held in secret and at night, presumably to avoid their interference by the police. Colonial masters feared the slaves' religious meetings, for they often incited slave insurrections that were not only bloody, but threatened the political and social stability of the tiny colony.

Moreover, the brutal treatment of slaves caused thousands to flee the plantations, joining others in the interior of the island, congregating them to form what many scholars have called the maroon republics (Roger Bastide *African Civilizations in the New World*, New York: Harper and Row, 1971). Marronnage has had a far-reaching impact on Haitian history, for it was not only instrumental in fostering the slave rebellions that liberated Haiti from French rule in 1804, but also contributed to the preservation of many African religious traditions from different ethnic nations that blended with each other with time to shape Vodou's theology today. These included among others many of the people of Dahomey (presently known as Benin), Kongo, Ango and Nigeria. No one knows how many of these maroon republics existed in Saint-Domingue, but it can be estimated that their numbers multiplied to several hundreds by the end of the eighteenth century. They also varied widely politically, socially, and theologically, and their organizational form depended on the numbers of African ethnic nations (or tribes) represented in each of them. Hence, the degree to which Vodou in colonial Haiti incorporated particular tribal or ethnic beliefs and practices in its theology depended upon the demographic composition of these republics. This religious diversity in the republics has left an indelible mark on Vodou, and has contributed to the striking geographical divergence in beliefs and practices found in Vodou theology throughout Haiti today.

Most of the Africans imported into the colony were agricultural and pastoral peoples whose mythologies functioned as a means of establishing an intimate, mystic relationship with the land. Saint-Domingue's economic history of social oppression altered African religious traditions on Haitian soil permanently, making Vodou a New World religion. Many of the African spirits were adapted to the new milieu in the New World. Ogun for instance, the Nigerian spirit of ironsmiths and other activities associated with metals such as hunting and warfare, took a new persona in colonial Saint-Domingue. He became Ogou, the military leader who has led phalanxes into

battle against oppression. In Haiti today, Ogou inspires many political revolutions that oust oppressive regimes.

### **Catholic influence**

The majority of Europeans who came to Saint-Domingue were Roman Catholics who regarded Vodou as an aberration, and sought to extricate it from colonial society. They were quick to enact a number of edicts that regulated the religious lives of the slaves throughout the colony. One such edict, the Code Noir of 1685, made it illegal for the slaves to practice their African religious openly and, under stiff penalties to the contrary, ordered all masters to have their slaves converted to Christianity within eight days after their arrival to the colony.

The severity of such laws drove African rituals underground. To circumvent the officious interference in their rituals by their masters, the slaves held religious ceremonies in secret, and learned to overlay their African practices with the veneer of Roman Catholic symbols and rituals. They used the Catholic symbols in their rituals as "white masks over black faces", veils behind which they concealed their African practices, and succeeded in achieving a blending of African and European religious traditions. This blending in Vodou's theology can be seen in the use of Catholic prayers and symbols in Vodou rituals and in the correspondences between the African spirits and the Roman Catholic saints. These correspondences continue to exist in Vodou today, and consist of a system of reinterpretations by which particular symbols associated with the saints in Catholic hagiology. Thus for example, the Dahomean snake spirit Damballah was made to correspond with Saint Patrick because of the Catholic legend about Saint Patrick and the snakes of Ireland. Likewise Ezili, the Dahomean and Vodou water spirit who is the symbol of love, was identified with the Virgin Mary, not only because of her beauty but because of the colors blue and pink as well as many other symbols with which both Ezili and Mary are associated.

Like Santeria in Cuba and Candomblé in Brazil, the blending of African and Catholic beliefs and practices has caused Vodou to incorporate both religious traditions in its theology. Hence, Vodou devotees practice two religions simultaneously, and maintain their allegiance to them in parallel ways. An often quoted Haitian proverb is that one must be Catholic to serve the Vodou lwas. The truth of that statement illustrates the distinct roles that both religions play in Haitian society. It also illustrates what seems logical to Vodouisants (Vodou devotees, pronounced Vodouizan) that the world is governed by the Godhead and the lwas (and by extension the Catholic saints) who can be represented in two ways. For them, the priest in his celebration of the mass functions as a point of contact with an impersonal Godhead (Bondye) who rules the universe. They regard him as the conduit through which they can gain access to the sacred world; in his role as the sole dispenser of grace, he stands at the crossroads between the sacred and the profane worlds. By contrast the Vodou priests (male or female) establish contact with personal, yet mysterious spirits who reveal themselves to their servants in trance possession. Moreover, unlike the Catholic priest, they do not control their flocks' contact with the world of the lwas, but they allow each believer in the Vodou ceremonies to gain direct access to the spirit world through trance possession, an altered state of consciousness during which a person's body is said to be invaded by a spirit. This intrusion of one's person by a lwa results in the

temporary displacement of one's persona by that of the invading spirits. In short, Vodou devotees believe that they go to Catholic Mass to worship God, but go to a Vodou ritual to become God.

### **Vodou in the Diaspora**

Unfavorable political and economic circumstances in Haiti since the 1970s have caused substantial numbers of Haitians to immigrate into many parts of the world. Living in the Diaspora, as many Haitians living abroad refer to themselves, they inhabit many of the world's largest cities (namely New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Miami, Québec, Montréal, or Paris). Despite the stresses of urban life and the lingering suspicions by outsiders of Vodou as mere superstition and devil worship, Haitians in the Diaspora have managed to maintain their religious beliefs and practices.

Forced to adapt themselves new cultures, Haitians in the Diaspora have brought many changes to Vodou. One significant change since the 1970s is that it has become for the most part an urban phenomenon in the Diaspora. This new trait makes it different from the largely rural milieu in which it has existed in Haiti. But it has adapted well to the city. Its rituals have attracted members of other cultural and ethnic groups, and the abundance of goods in these cities make it possible for devotees to find most of the paraphernalia that they need for the rituals. Even pilgrimages are reproduced. For instance, All Souls' Day in the Christian liturgical calendar (November 1) corresponds to Halloween in North America, the day consecrated to the souls of the dead in the Catholic liturgical calendar. Similarly July 16, the day devoted to the Virgin Mary in the Catholic liturgical calendar, is reserved for Ezili, the Vodou spirit of love. On that day, many Vodou devotees in Eastern Canada make a pilgrimage to Sainte Anne de Beaupré near the city of Quebec.

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# We See from Where We Stand

David Diggs

When I was new to Haiti, half of what I saw made no sense, and the most important things I couldn't see at all.

One thing that made no sense was the fortress-like structure that stood outside the rural community where I lived. Most people lived in two-room mud huts. So this massive concrete edifice seemed conspicuously out of place. Its walls stood 15 or 20 feet high, and it had a single metal gate that was always locked when I passed by.

But then one day, while out visiting some neighbors, I noticed that the gate was left slightly open. I knocked, poked my head in, and announced myself. The only response was the echo of my voice bouncing off the walls. Inside it looked like an abandoned prison with the bars missing. The inner walls were lined with concrete cells that opened onto a central courtyard.

As I peered inside, a man who had been walking on the road behind me stopped to watch. As a foreigner, I was as much a curiosity to him as this building was to me. I turned and greeted him and asked him what this building was.

“Oh, that thing?” He seemed a little surprised, either by my question or by the fact that I was addressing him in Creole. “It’s an orphanage,” he replied.

“But where are the children?” I asked.

He responded with a hint of irony in his voice, “Oh, the children are here, but they never stay long.” I nodded as if this made total sense to me. He smiled broadly, turned, and went on his way.

The next time I saw Toto, I asked him about this building and the man’s enigmatic answer. Toto was a neighbor and friend, and I had grown to trust his explanations. He was helping me begin to see the world through Haitian eyes. He had explained why our neighbor’s twin boys were so revered in the community, why there were often bits of food and half-burnt candles sitting at the foot of a tree near my house, and why I should never tell a Haitian mother that her baby is beautiful.

Toto explained that what the man had told me at the gate was essentially true. The building was an orphanage of sorts, but children were only occasionally there. The building belonged to a Haitian pastor who had a church up in the mountains above our community. The pastor spoke English and would host short-term mission groups from North America. A few days before a group’s arrival, the pastor would fill the orphanage with children belonging to families in his community. The group then came for a few days to paint, build, or give things to the “orphans.” When the group left, the children would return to their families. Toto said that the pastor had grown rich off money the foreigners sent each month for the orphanage.

“But why do people in his community allow him to get rich off of their children?” I asked.

Toto explained that the pastor was a powerful person in his community. Some people might be jealous, but they wouldn't risk offending him. They were probably trying to stay on his good side so he would help them out if they had a problem or needed a loan. The parents were probably happy enough just to know that their children were well fed while at the orphanage.

I was still new to Haiti but had already heard similar stories. There were always three ingredients to these stories: well-meaning foreigners, people in need, and some clever intermediary who was supposedly serving his community.

Friends had told me of a Haitian pastor in a town in the north who owned a private school. He also owned another building that had the same layout as the school, but the walls weren't complete and the building lacked a roof. Visiting church groups would come for a few days and work on the incomplete school building, and leave the country eager to fund the remaining construction. The pastor would pocket the money they sent and send them photos of the already-complete school, full of smiling students. The foreigners were happy to have helped. And the pastor was happy too.

My friends, who had been in Haiti much longer than I, cynically described it as a "win-win situation." Initially when I heard these stories, it wasn't so clear to me what damage was being done. Certainly the pastors were greedy and the visitors gullible, but what real harm had been done?

Over time it became clearer. I began to see that the wealth and power these charlatans accumulated allowed them to build little fiefdoms. They kept the people in their communities almost like vassals. Any attempt the people made to improve their lives by organizing things like agricultural cooperatives, credit unions, or literacy projects was a threat to the feudal lord's control. These individuals, who were supposed to be helping their people, often worked to undermine the people's efforts to improve their lives. It was especially painful when the local lords bore the title of 'pastor.' They were a discredit to the Gospel and gave honest pastors a bad name.

My work brought me into contact with a lot of these visiting work groups. I always tried to be gracious, but I began to see these visiting groups and the money they sent to Haiti as a corrupting influence. I knew what Haiti looked like through their eyes. It had looked the same to me when I first arrived.

To most first-time visitors from North America, Haiti feels extremely foreign, and the material poverty is disturbing and disorienting. The visitors depend on their hosts to make sense of this new world for them.

As the visitors sweat and labor and pour themselves into the project, people from the community often come and watch. When no one from the community but the paid help is working along with the visitors, some group members conclude that the Haitian people are simply lazy. Their lack of involvement is usually a sign that they don't feel that the project belongs to them. They didn't initiate it, and it probably won't benefit them much. The work is being done *for* them rather than *with* them.

Half of what these visitors see makes no sense, and the most important things they can't see at all. The important things are invisible to eyes that have not adjusted to the Haitian reality, and it isn't always in the interest of the hosts to help them see more clearly. To the visitors, almost everyone in the community looks uniformly poor. The visitors don't see who calls the shots or how power is distributed. They don't see who is literate and who isn't, or who is in debt and who isn't. They don't see who just lost all her land because of fraudulent papers, and who just paid a big bribe to have a cooperative grain silo destroyed and its leaders arrested.

There is rarely any discussion of the local social and economic structures that keep people poor. Rare, too, is any reference to the international economic and political order that favors wealthier nations and large multinational corporations. No connection is made between the lavishly wasteful lifestyles of many North Americans and the hardships faced by the poor in places like Haiti.

Neither is an effort made to introduce the visitors to the hidden riches of the people. Without guidance, the visitors have no way of seeing the resilience and resourcefulness of the community or to experience their generosity and hospitality. They are blind to the valiant struggle for justice and dignity that is taking place all around them. They are rarely exposed to the people's deep faith in God that results from their struggles. The visitors are the heroes of the moment, and little effort is made to lead them into a spiritual inquiry or self-examination in light of what they are seeing.

As the months went by and my understanding of Haiti increased, I was growing more and more cynical and even found myself arguing that Haiti would be better off if all foreigners left and all aid to Haiti was cut off. It wasn't just money from church groups that caused problems. Some of the greatest damage was done by large projects supported by huge international development agencies. These organizations often seemed to have more resources than they knew what to do with and dumped them almost indiscriminately on hastily designed projects that had little local participation. And anywhere there was easy money, the opportunists would suddenly appear.

I was on the verge of complete despair, but then I had the opportunity to visit several communities in other more remote parts of Haiti. I went to the Central Plateau, where I spent time with a group of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteers. They were living in very simple conditions with the people they were serving. The very efforts that the local feudal lords were trying to crush were the efforts the MCC volunteers supported.

Progress was slow, and there weren't any large buildings to show off. But if you knew what to look for, the results of their work were truly impressive. With remarkably little money, they were undergirding the efforts of several hundred farmers' groups. The farmers were learning techniques that allowed them to produce more food and reduce soil erosion. They were learning how to free themselves from the control of powerful speculators and middlemen who kept them from getting a fair price for their crops, while driving food prices high. The MCC volunteers were clearly working *with* rather than *for* the people.

Shortly after this experience I visited the island of Lagonav and met Kathy Zimmerman, an American with Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). Kathy had lived for several years in a single room in one of the poorest and most remote parts of Haiti. With very limited funds, she was helping members of an association of community organizers develop a literacy program for women and men who had never had the chance to attend school. Kathy helped the instructors find training and materials for their students. No buildings were built for the classes, but what they lacked in facilities, they made up for in dedication. Classes gathered wherever they could—in a church, under a lean-to, beneath a shade tree with the chalkboard propped up against the trunk. The students pitched in to buy chalk for their teachers, and Kathy raised a little money to provide the instructors with more training and a small stipend. Together they were struggling forward on the arduous journey toward literacy and justice.

Unlike the “orphanage” in my community, this literacy initiative clearly belonged to the people of the community. They knew the difference literacy could make in their lives. To them, to become literate was to feel human for the first time. No longer would they be put to shame. No longer would people take advantage of them and fool them with false contracts. They would no longer be ashamed in church when others read from the Bible or sang from their hymnals. Some among them would one day become teachers and even pastors themselves.

I’ve heard it said that a cynic is a frustrated idealist. The simple idealism that had taken me to Haiti had soured into cynicism. But visiting these communities where Haitians and foreigners were living and working together in simple solidarity restored my idealism—an idealism now tempered with the realization that good intentions could never be enough. The desire to help others had to be matched by a desire for ever-greater understanding.

There is a Haitian proverb that says, “We see from where we stand.” Kathy on Lagonav and the MCC volunteers in the Central Plateau were successful while others failed, because they had invested the time and effort needed to begin seeing the world from the perspective of the people they were hoping to help.

The visiting work groups usually came to Haiti with a simple picture of what was happening. The Haitians were in need, and they could help.

The MCC and BVS volunteers I had met had a far more complex view of things. By living in the community with the people, they saw that many of their needs arose out of unjust structures that served the interests of the privileged, not only in Haiti, but in wealthier countries as well. These volunteers could see beyond the neediness of the people in the community and see their many strengths. Perhaps even more important, these volunteers were aware that they came to Haiti with real needs themselves.

Shortly after visiting Lagonav, I saw a quotation hanging on the wall of a Port-au-Prince office. These words, spoken by an anonymous Australian aborigine woman, captured what I was beginning to understand. “If you have come to help me,” she said, “you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

It was this understanding that was so painfully missing from so many of the groups that came to help Haiti. Like me, they had come to Haiti blind to their own poverty and need for liberation. We were trying to remove the speck of sawdust from our Haitian neighbor's eye, while blinded by a plank in our own.

Thinking back to the strange orphanage, I could see that the pastor didn't bear all the blame. Few North Americans would sacrifice a week of vacation to go to a place like Haiti without expecting to be immediately put to work helping. The pastor put them to work on something they could easily understand—an orphanage. The community obviously didn't need an orphanage. But building the orphanage was more about meeting the needs of the visitors than meeting the needs of the community.

The more time I spent with visiting work groups, the more I saw them as rich refugees from the material world who came to Haiti hungering for more meaning in their lives. A week of really being with the poor of Haiti could have awakened them to their neediness and opened them to seeking the deep changes that would bring lasting satisfaction. But they were always so busy “helping” the Haitians, that they never found time to be with them.

Jesus said that “the poor are blessed, for God's Kingdom belongs to them.” (Luke 6:20) Why does it seem so radical to rich Christians that poor people would have something valuable to share with us and teach us?

When we are new to Haiti, half of what we see makes no sense, and the most important things we can't see at all. But the closer we stand with the poor, the more we can see from their perspective. Important things that were once invisible to us become clear.

We see that we are all in need, rich and poor. The poor know they are in need. By contrast, we, the wealthy and powerful of the world, are often oblivious to our needs. We frantically try to fill our emptiness with more and more possessions, more and more activity, but without satisfaction. Our endless pursuit of material wealth is a sign of our spiritual poverty. But being with the poor—as opposed to merely doing things for them—can bring a spiritual awakening and be the beginning of our liberation.

We see from where we stand, and, for many of us, to stand with the poor is to begin to see God for the first time.

## Questions for Reflection on Introduction to Haiti

What stood out for you in these articles and presentations?

How does this information impact our trip?

What do you think about: How we help with out hurting?

How does our Christian faith influence the way we enter and spend time in Haiti?



## Two Women

Look closely at the drawing. Do you see an  
An old woman or a young woman? Study the  
picture until you find both. This exercise shows  
that the  
same picture may be  
viewed in different ways, just as the same  
situation may be viewed in different ways. It also  
shows that it may be difficult to see something  
differently once you see it in a certain way. You  
may require assistance from another person to  
see the other view.

"Significant change occurs when people stop believing in what may once have been true, but has now become false; when they withdraw support from institutions which may once have served them, but no longer do; when they refuse to submit to what may once have been fair terms, but which are no longer. Such changes, when they occur, are the produce of true education."

—*Everett Reimer*

## The A-R-T Reflection Process

The ART process - **Act, Reflect, Transform** - is a methodology of incorporating Catholic Social Teaching into the lives of the faithful. The ART process is a useful tool to use before, during and after the immersion retreat to Haiti. In this context it is used for two related purposes. First, the ART process is used as a reflection tool to help retreat participants process the experience in Haiti through a social analysis and theological reflection. Second, ART is used as guide for participants to identify how to take action in response to their experience in Haiti.



### The following is an explanation of the components of ART as reflective tool

#### A - Act

ACT- Acting to get an experience of a social justice issue or situation. In the case of immersion trips to Haiti, participants have the experience of seeing and learning about Haiti first hand by going there and immersing themselves into the situation.

#### R - Reflect

Reflection- Reflection on the immersion trip to Haiti to understand it and make meaning out of it. The reflection phase of ART has two aspects to it: an analysis of the issue and then an examination of what our tradition has to say about this issue.

The first part – structural analysis – deals with the economic, social, religious, political or cultural structures which are brought to bear on the issue.

- Economic questions: What are the economic forces at play in Haiti? Who owns? Who controls? Who pays? Who gets? Who wins? Who loses in the exchange?
- Social questions: What are the social and societal forces at play in Haiti? Who is included? Who is left out? What is the basis for the inclusion? For the exclusion?
- Religious questions: What religious beliefs or practices support the situation in Haiti? What religious beliefs or practices challenge this situation?
- Political questions: What political forces are at play in Haiti? Who decides? What? How does the deciding get done? Who has the power?
- Cultural questions: What cultural forces are at play in Haiti? What values are evidenced? What do people believe in? What influences what people believe in?

In the second part – theological reflection – the questions can range from the simplest, often-used “What would Jesus do?” to much more complex questions.

Some questions to ask might include the following:

- What consequences does this situation have for the community?
- What scripture passages or Catholic social teachings are relevant to this issue?
- What about this situation reinforces gospel values and our social teachings?
- What about this situation undercuts or destroys these values and teachings?

- Where is Jesus present here?
- What are the signs of the kingdom in this situation?
- What is the grace in the situation, as an opening up to God?
- What is the sin in the situation, as a turning from God?
- What does salvation mean in this situation?
- What is the role of Church, the laity here?
- What is the place of the sacraments?
- What conversion (personal and social transformation) needs to take place?

## T - Transform

The results of acting and reflecting should lead to transformation – a change in participants which should then take the form of some concrete action. There should be some sort of concrete action based on this process.

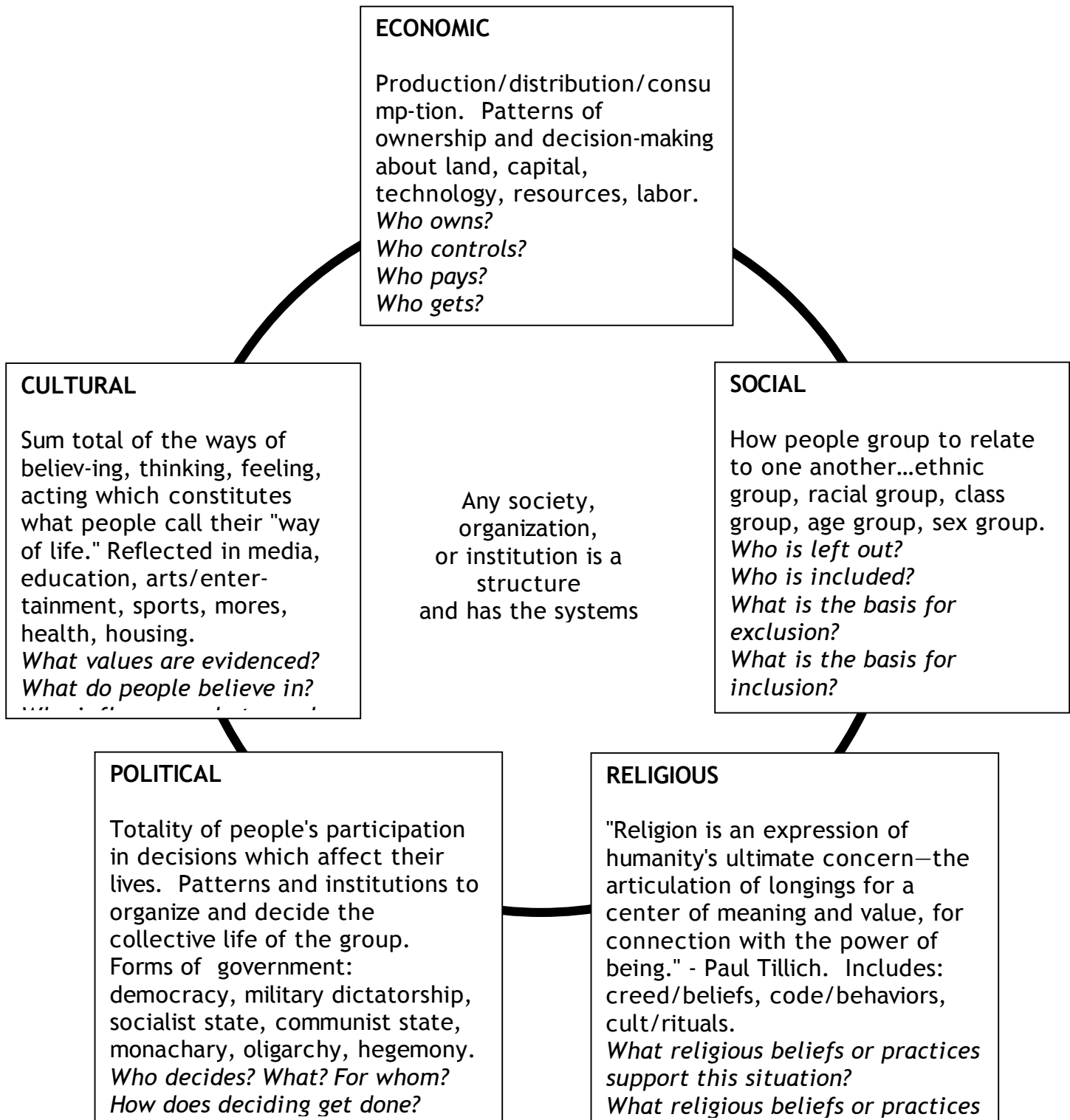
We can look at **TRANSFORM** in three different arenas:

- Personal- This calls for some sort of change in attitude or action on the part of the person. For example, in response to the immersion retreat, the person could resolve to be more conscious about praying for the people of Haiti. The person could decide to honor the reality of the Haitian people and their poverty by not wasting food and living more simply.
- Interpersonal- What can the community do to address the situation? How does this impact our dealings with each other? An example of this might be a parish entering a twinning relationship with a community in Haiti.
- Social/Structural- When we are talking about the social/structural arena, we are talking about the transformation of structures addressing the root causes of the impoverishment and oppression of Haiti. One example would be to write a letter to appropriate legislators about the issue.

The following hand out “The ART of Justice and Peace” is an explanation of the components of ART as it is used to guide and help participants further identify specific action responses to their immersion retreat to Haiti.

# ANALYSIS CIRCLE

Look at this chart showing further information on these five systems. Take time to study it together.



# MAJOR THEMES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

## 1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Every person is created in the image and likeness of God.  
In Christ all are redeemed.

## 2. Call to Family, Community and Participation

We are social beings.  
The family is the basic cell of society; it must be supported.  
Government has the mission of promoting the common good of all.

## 3. Rights and Responsibilities

The right to life is fundamental and includes a right to food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care and essential social services.  
Every person has the right to raise a family and the duty to support them.  
Human dignity demands religious and political freedom and the duty to exercise these rights for the common good of all persons.

## 4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Giving priority concern to the poor and the vulnerable strengthens the health of the whole society.  
The human life and dignity of the poor are most at risk.  
The poor have the first claim on both our personal and social resources.

## 5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

We are created in the image of a “worker God.” Through work we participate in God’s creation, support ourselves and our families and contribute to the common good.  
Workers have rights to decent work, just wages, safe working conditions, forming unions, disability protection, retirement security and economic initiative.  
Labor has priority over capital.

## 6. Solidarity

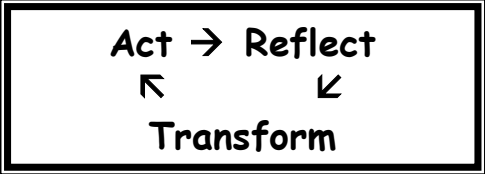
The Church speaks of a “universal” common good that reaches beyond our nation’s borders to the global community.  
Solidarity expresses the Church concerns for international development and world peace.

## 7. Care for God’s Creation

Humans are part of creation itself and whatever we do to the earth we ultimately do to ourselves.  
We respect the Creator by living in harmony with the rest of creation and preserving it for future generations.

For fuller exploration of these principles, see the U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, 1998.

# THE ART OF JUSTICE & PEACE



*Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.*

World Synod of Bishops, 1971

<b>Act in charity</b> to meet immediate & urgent needs.	<b>Reflect</b> on root causes & Catholic social teaching.	<b>Transform in justice</b> the root social causes.
<p><b>Act</b> to alleviate the symptoms of social problems.</p> <p>Examples: Feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, resettle the refugee, reach out to persons in crisis pregnancies, protect the victims of domestic violence, and recycle paper.</p> <p>Come in contact with the issue; it takes on a face.</p> <p>Perform the <b>Corporal Works of Mercy</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to feed the hungry,</li> <li>• to give drink to the thirsty,</li> <li>• to clothe the naked,</li> <li>• to shelter the homeless,</li> <li>• to visit the imprisoned,</li> <li>• to visit the sick,</li> <li>• and to bury the dead.</li> </ul> <p>(See Matthew 25 and Tobit 2.)</p>	<p>Ask <b>why?</b> Why are people hungry, homeless, uprooted, in crisis, battered or discriminated against? <b>Why</b> is our ecosystem deteriorating?</p> <p>Listen to those most directly affected- -the poor and the marginalized.</p> <p>Begin to ask deeper questions that challenge the status quo.</p> <p>Explore the underlying causes of poverty, violence, homelessness, abortion, racism ecological devastation, and other issues.</p> <p><b>What</b> does scripture and Catholic social teaching have to say about these social issues and their causes?</p>	<p><b>Transform</b> the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice.</p> <p>To <b>transform</b> is to take a different kind of action.</p> <p><b>Transformative action</b> gets at the root causes; it does not stop at alleviating the symptoms.</p> <p><b>Transform</b> our communities and our world through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working with empowered low income people,</li> <li>• advocating for just public policies,</li> <li>• creating new social structures, e.g. cooperatives, low-income housing, etc.</li> <li>• consuming and investing in socially responsible ways, etc.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Charity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the needs of individuals, families &amp; creation</li> <li>• Looks at individual situations</li> <li>• Meets an immediate need</li> <li>• Addresses painful individual symptoms of social problems</li> <li>• Relies on the generosity of donors</li> </ul>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the rights of individuals, families &amp; creation</li> <li>• Analyzes social situations or social structures</li> <li>• Works for long-term social change</li> <li>• Addresses the underlying social causes of problems</li> <li>• Relies on just laws and fair social structures</li> </ul>

## A Parable of Good Works

Once upon a time there was a small village on the edge of a river. The people there were good and the life in the village was good. One day a villager noticed a baby floating down the river. The villager quickly jumped into the river and swam out to save the baby from drowning.

The next day this same villager was walking along the river bank and noticed two babies in the river. He called for help, and both babies were rescued from the swift waters. And the following day four babies were seen caught in the turbulent current. And then, eight, then more, and still more.

The villagers organized themselves quickly, setting up watch towers and training teams of swimmers who could resist the swift waters and rescue babies. Rescue squads were soon working 24 hours a day. And each day the number of helpless babies floating down the river increased.

The villagers organized themselves efficiently. The rescue squads were now snatching many children each day. groups were trained to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Others prepared formula and provided clothing for the chilled babies. Many, particularly elderly women, were involved in making clothing and knitting blankets. Still others provided foster homes and placement.

While not all the babies, now very numerous, could be saved, the villagers felt they were doing well to save as many as they could each day. Indeed, the village priest blessed them in their good work. And life in the village continued on that basis.

One day, however, someone raised the question, “But where are all these babies coming from? Who is throwing them into the river? Why? Let’s organize a team to go upstream and see who’s doing this.” The seeming logic of the elders countered: “And if we go upstream who will operate the rescue operations? We need every concerned person here.”

“But don’t you see,” cried the one lone voice, “if we find out who is throwing them in, we can stop the problem and no babies will drown. By going upstream we can eliminate the cause of the problem.”

“It is too risky.”

And so the numbers of babies in the river increased daily. Those saved increase, but those who drown increase even more.

### Reflection Questions:

- a. How effective was the villagers' response to relieve the suffering of the babies?
- b. How effective was the villagers' response to change the situation?
- c. What was the meaning of the message of the "one lone voice"?
- d. What are some differences between dealing with symptoms and causes?

## Reflection Assignment on Gospel of Mark

Read: Mark 4: 35 - 41

Reflect and journal on the following questions:

1. What stands out for you in this reading?
2. What does it mean to go to the “other side”  
In today’s world?  
For our trip to Haiti?  
For you personally?
3. What fears do you have about traveling to Haiti?
4. What do you need our group to know about you? How can the group assist you as we travel to Haiti?
5. Be prepared to share reflections with the group.

# Orientation for trips to Haiti

## Session Three

## Orientation Session Three Agenda

- I. Share reflections on the Gospel reading
- II. Share fears/hopes  
What do you need from the group? What do you need the group to know and what do you need from them to help you during the trip?
- III. Recognizing our gifts and sharing them
- IV. Tasks while on retreat
- V. Set debrief date
- VI. Evaluation
- VII. Sending forth prayer

## Reflection Assignment on Gospel of Mark

Read: Mark 4: 35 - 41

Reflect and journal on the following questions:

6. What stands out for you in this reading?
7. What does it mean to go to the “other side”  
In today’s world?  
For our trip to Haiti?  
For you personally?
8. What fears do you have about traveling to Haiti?
9. What do you need our group to know about you? How can the group assist you as we travel to Haiti?
10. Be prepared to share reflections with the group.

## A Blessing for those Traveling to Haiti

Blessed are you creator God of all people and places in our world. We ask your blessings upon us as we journey together to Haiti. Shelter us with your protection by day; give us the light of your grace by night.

May this journey be a sign of our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Haiti and the developing world. May it deepen our bond of friendships with those we meet and each other. May we be a source of both comfort and challenge as we travel in community.

May the blessing of God be upon us through out our trip and may God's spirit be with us. May we be signs of hope to the people of Haiti just as their love, their hospitality, and their spirit of faith enrich us.

Please light a votive candle from our common prayer candle.

Diocesan Retreat Experience in Haiti  
**Additional Reading**

# THE OPTION FOR THE POOR IN THE FACE OF THE CHALLENGE OF OVERCOMING POVERTY

*An address of Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Caracas, February 2, 1998 [translated and digested by T. Michael McNulty, SJ]*

The plan of God is that this world has been created to be enjoyed by all human beings. Because they are excluded from the benefits of a creation God dreamed for all, God is especially close to the poor and marginalized.

The option for the poor does not have as its immediate and direct object the overcoming of poverty, but rather of the humanization and personalization of the poor. For the option for the poor is above all a relationship, an alliance, a casting of one's lot with them. And it must be said that this lot, from the point of view of the dominant culture, will always be bad luck...

Thus the option for the poor, as an alliance with the losers of history (who are also its victims) is always in a certain way to lose one's life. That is its tremendous price. For that reason there is a tendency to silence or denaturalize it, so that it is not really a relationship; rather, it is only an economic contribution, that does not commit one's person and life project. Nevertheless, only that vital relationship saves both the poor and the one who establishes it.

In what sense is God also God of the poor? We cannot understand this option as an option distinct from the option for humanity, but rather as the road to making the latter effective. In this sense we call it a preferential option: God in Jesus established an alliance with all of humanity and in the first place with the poor.

Why precisely with them? Because their humanity is not recognized since they lack what the established culture considers valuable in human beings. In this way, by opting for those who have no value according to the dominant human paradigm, God makes clear that the option is for humanity, and that condition is inherent in all human beings.

God loves the poor with a tender and respectful love. God is not a mere benefactor who confers gifts on the poor, but rather a father and mother who returns for them, who is pleased with them and who thus claims them.

Whoever lives by faith is capable of taking on reality and relating to others within it. (Jas 2:5) People thus don't just accept their lot. Rather, as an expression of the respect they have for themselves, they take with great patience the road to securing more necessities of life, and the harder road of acquiring the capacity to do so. It is a new dynamism of life that faith in God unleashed: faith in themselves and their brothers and sisters.

Following the dynamism of God's self-giving in grace to the poor, whoever opts for the poor according to the Spirit of Jesus, does not so much give them things; rather, in the first place, one hands over one's very person to the open risk of sharing the life and destiny of the poor. In that decision what is handed over is above all one's own person, although, as a natural expression of that handing over, one also shares one's possessions.

But today a new phenomenon is beginning to appear: the tendency to "suppress" the poor. There is a tendency to organize society in such a way that one may pass one's whole life without having contact with the poor nor let oneself be affected by them. Physical separation leads to the poor's disappearance from consciousness and even more their beginning to form part of the euphemistic concept of "social cost." But if a culture condemns 80% of humanity to a condition subordinate to that it sends forth from itself and that makes it human. In this culture, the poor lack what is most valuable: the power to impose oneself on the rest in the struggle for life.

We live in a unique global period. We have at our disposal statistics and images of all of humanity, to know its exact situation at a single glance. And above all, not only is humanity in its totality present to itself, but its resources can also circulate within it and achieve with growth provision for all of humanity.

Not only are the non-poor indispensable for the poor to opt for them to overcome poverty, that is, to be more productive and have reliable access to vital resources. One who makes this choice must decrease, because if the present historical structure is not changed, the poor will not fit into it. It is not possible to elevate poor people to the level of the developed. If overcoming poverty meant that, it would not be possible to overcome poverty. In order to overcome poverty, it is necessary to redimension what exists. That is to say, those who have must make room for the poor.

We are talking rather about changing the rules of the game and the global direction. To make room is to give, is something active. It is not merely to leave a free field for the other. To make room for the poor means a structural readjustment so profound as to configure a new historical structure.

But to put oneself in a position to overcome poverty implies renouncing many elements of the present system of welfare economics. To renounce first of all the frenetic consumerism that leaves no mental room for longer-term enterprises, and to put an end to the unlimited thirst for riches and power.

But the positive recognition of the poor - which is realized as much in structural relationships of solidarity as in personal relationships - provokes a transformation so deep in one's own life and is such a radical novelty in the dominant historical view that it cannot happen if very deep energies are not put in motion, if highly motivation horizons are not opened.

For us Christians it is an elemental expression of our faith in God: to base one's life in God is to look at the world with God's eyes, be affected by reality like God and take the same determination as God. Even more, it is to be God's hands, so that God's designs may be carried out through us. In the option for the poor, we are the

carriers of the mercy of God. And in giving it we receive it ourselves. In this way the option for the poor is our salvation.

## Basic Creole

Good morning	Bonjou
Good evening	Bonswa
How are you?	Ki jan ou ye? (or) Kouman ou ye?
I'm not too bad.	Mwen pa pi mal
Great!	Anfòm!
And you?	E ou menm?
Good Bye	Orevwa (or) m 'ale
What is your name?	Ki jan ou rele?
My name is...	Mwen rele...
I am happy to know you.	Mwen kontan rekonèt ou.
This is my wife.	Se madanm mwen.
This is my husband.	Se mari mwen
What are you doing?	Ki sa wap fè?
Yes	Wi
No	Non
Thank you (a lot)	Mèsi (anpil)
Help me!	Anmwe!
Excuse me	Eskize m
Please	Souple (or) Silvouplè
You're welcome.	Ou merite.
I'm sorry.	Mwen regret sa.
I'm tired.	Mwen fatige
It is hot today.	Le fè cho jodi a
I do not speak Creole.	Mwen pa pale Kreyòl
I do not understand.	Mwen pa konprann.
I need to go to the bathroom.	Mwen bezwen pipi.
Where is the bathroom, please?	Kote twalèt la, souple?
Haiti is pretty.	Ayiti bèl.
May I take your photo?	Eske mwen met pran foto ou?
How much does that cost?	Konbyen sa koute?
Dollar	Dola
God bless you.	Bonde a Beni ou
One	En
Two	De
Three	Twa
Four	Kat
Five	Senk
Six	Sis
Seven	Set

Eight  
Nine  
Ten

Wit  
Nèf  
Dis

## HAITIAN PROVERBS

The Haitian people are a people of proverbs. Proverbs reflect the wisdom and philosophy of the Haitian way of life. They are memorized and recited at gatherings - one has only to say the first word of a proverb for the rest to chime in! The fact that these proverbs are subject to many interpretations makes them ageless and a lively source of conversation. Below are some favorite proverbs of the Haitian people:

Dèyè mòn gen mòn.  
Behind mountains are more mountains.

Nanpwen lapriyè ki pa gen amèn.  
Every prayer has its "Amen!"

Mennen koulèv la lekòl se youn, fèl chita se de.  
Taking the snake to school is one thing, making it sit is another.

Ou manje piti tig ou pa fèt pou dòmi di.  
Having eaten the tiger's child, you should not sleep too soundly.

Lè w ap manje ak djab fò w kenbe fouchèt ou long  
When you are eating with the devil, you must hold your fork at arms length.

Aprè dans tanbou lou.  
After the dance the drum is heavy.

Men anpil chay pa lou.  
Many hands make the load lighter.

Jou fey la tonbe nan dlo se pa jou a li pouri.  
The leaf does not rot the same day that it falls in water.

Yon sèl dwèt pa ka manje kalalou.  
You can't eat okra with one finger.

Bèl antèman pa di paradi

A beautiful burial does not guarantee heaven.

Nan benyen pa gen kache lonbrit.

There is no hiding one's bellybutton when taking a bath.

Se yon bon katolik ke fè yon bon pwotestan

It is a good Catholic who makes a good Protestant.

Fòk ou pèdi tan pou ka gen tan.

You must spend time to gain time.

# A HAITI RESOURCE GUIDE

## Books:

Aristide, Jean-Bertrand. Eyes of the Heart. Globalization and its effect on Third World Countries. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2000.

Bell, Beverly. Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Farmer, Paul. The Uses of Haiti. Maine: Common Courage Press, Rev. 2003

Kidder, Tracy. Mountains Beyond Mountains: Healing the World: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer Random House, 2003

Paris, Barry. Song of Haiti. The lives of Dr. Larry & Gwen Mellon at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital of Deschapelles. Public Affairs: 2000

**Study Guide available:** Paul Farmer's book The Uses of Haiti has been enriched with a Study Guide prepared by Debbie Stollery. This guide was especially designed for use by Haiti Committees in twinned groups. Available from Patrice Schwermer: (804) 359-5661 Ext. 129  
[pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org)

## Especially for Children:

Turnbull, Elizabeth and Battles, Kristopher, Bel Peyi Mwen: A Children's Coloring Book of Haiti. Durham NC: Light Messages, email the publisher at [books@lightmessages.com](mailto:books@lightmessages.com)

Williams, Karen Lynn. Tap – Tap. NY: Clarion Books, 1994.

Wolkstein, Diane. The Magic Orange Tree and Other Haitian Folktales. NY: Schocken Books, 1997.

## Educational Materials:

<http://www.educavision.com/index.htm>

Creole language study aides <http://www.indiana.edu/~creole>

## Websites:

Catholic Diocese of Richmond: [www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti](http://www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti)

Pax Christi USA: [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org) for PCUSA Haiti Task Force click on Programs & Campaigns. Publication: Our Prayers Rise Like Incense includes Mass for Haiti [info@paxchristiusa.org](mailto:info@paxchristiusa.org)

Beyond Borders: [www.beyondborders.net](http://www.beyondborders.net)

Haiti Reborn (Quixote Center) [www.quixote.org](http://www.quixote.org) "Let Haiti Live" advocacy campaign.

Amnesty International: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

Institute for Justice and democracy in Haiti: <http://www.ijdh.org>

Windows on Haiti: <http://www.windowsonhaiti.com/> An interesting site with editorial comment, descriptions of cultural events, recipes, links to solidarity groups, etc.