



ORIENTATION MANUAL FOR TRIPS TO HAITI

Table of Contents

Opening Prayer	3
CDC Health Information for Travelers to Haiti	4
What to Bring - Checklist	5
(Additional) Medical Information for Travelers to Haiti	6
Some Questions & Answers	8
Emergency Contact Procedure for Delegations to Haiti	10
Security - Some Common Sense Rules	11
A Code of Ethics for Tourists	12
Haiti Fact Sheet	13
Historical Chronology	14
Being on Retreat with the Haitian People	20
Reflection Questions for Journaling & Group Sharing	21
Basic Creole	22
Closing Prayer	23
Additional Reading	
We See from Where We Stand	30
Understanding Haitian Culture	34



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, 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 of 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.

Health Information for Travelers to Haiti

From Centers for Disease Control

Staying Healthy, Vaccinations, Malaria and Cholera (food and water precautions, symptoms, treatment, medications and oral rehydration)

Please visit: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/haiti.htm>

To review up to date Travel Advisories from the CDC prior to your trip.

WHAT TO BRING: A CHECKLIST

We strongly encourage you to have at least one carryon bag with toilet articles and a few changes in clothes. All personal 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 plus shower shoes or flip flops for showers. To avoid fungal and parasitic infections, do not go barefoot anywhere animals may have defecated (closed shoes are safer than sandals or flip flops when walking in questionable areas).

Toiletries:

- Shampoo, soap, deodorant (small containers)
- Toothpaste, toothbrush (with an extra) and mouthwash
- Personal hygiene products and tissues or toilet paper
- Anti-bacterial hand wipes and/or 62% alcohol based hand sanitizer

Medical: (Check Medical Information page for additional details)

- Anti-diarrhea and anti-constipation medicine (the food may cause your North American digestive problems)
- Pepto Bismol tablets
- Chloroquine (anti-malaria medication – check current CDC recommendations and consult your physician). Recommended dosage can be found on Medical Information page.
- Prescription medicines
- Band-Aids
- Dramamine (if you are apt to get motion sickness – plane or car)
- Anti-itch cream and a topical antiseptic and/or antibiotic cream
- Consider bringing water purification tablets. (Chlorine Dioxide based tablets preferred over iodine based as they eliminate Cryptosporidium and don't have disagreeable taste) Available in some stores that sell camping equipment such as REI and Blue Ridge Mountain Sports – or look online for Chlorine Dioxide Water Purification Tablets or for individually wrapped Katadyn Micropur tablets, available at: <http://www.rei.com/product/695229>)
- Rehydration packets and an empty 1 quart water bottle or container to reconstitute

(check Medical Information page for more details) Other:

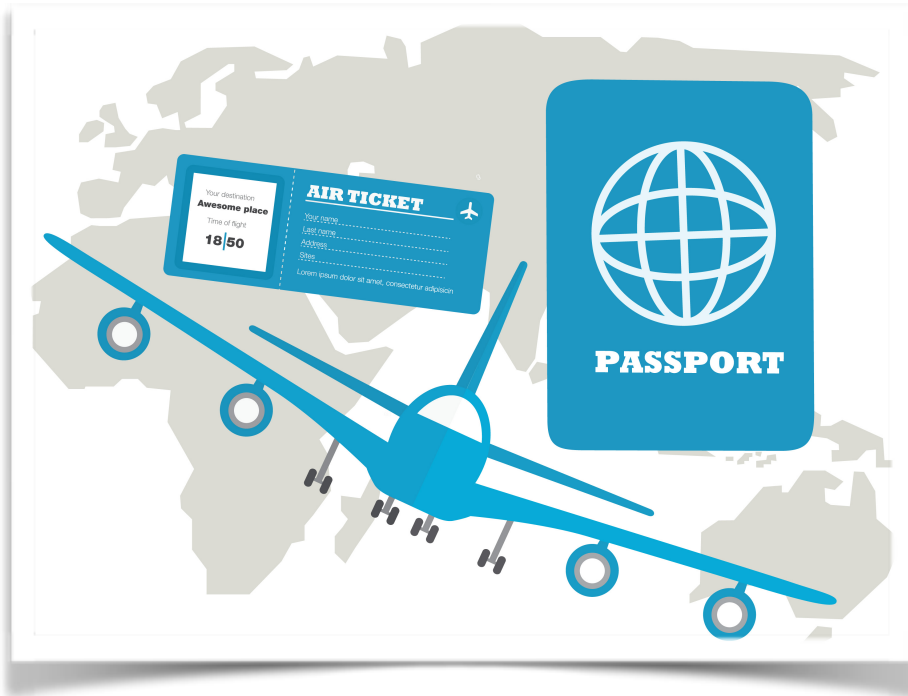
- PASSPORT (Don't forget!) and identification--e.g., driver's license
- Record of vaccinations (optional)
- Prescription glasses (if contacts are used, be prepared for dust)

- Flash light and extra batteries (LED flashlights are recommended as batteries last much longer than incandescent and bulbs are unlikely to burn out.)
- Ear plugs
- Water container
- A few zip-lock bags
- Sun-block, Sun hat, Sun glasses
- Insect repellent with DEET (e.g., Deep Forest Off, Cutters, or REI)
- Camera (extra batteries or charger and plenty of free memory)
- Journaling materials
- Towel and wash cloth
- Snack food that doesn't melt (e.g. granola bars, raisins, peanut butter crackers)

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.



FORMATION FOR TRAVEL TO HAITI

MEDICAL IN-

It is suggested that you check the current CDC website before each trip for updates on all medical information at: cdc.gov/travel and www.cdc.gov/haiticholera for current information on cholera. In addition, discuss the information below with your family physician, since opinions about prevention vary among providers. Another option would be to go to a travel clinic. Contact your local health department to find one nearest you.

The following are recommended:

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.] Note: the capsules must be stored in refrigerator throughout dosage.

Flu shot: recommended for all overseas travelers each year.

Chloroquine or Lariam: anti-malarial tablets. Dosage: one tablet each week for one or two weeks before travel, then one each week during travel, and one each week for four weeks after return [should be repeated for each trip]. If fever or chills develop after stopping medication, seek prompt medical care.

Anti-diarrheal such as Loperamide for use if needed: Can be purchased over the counter. Follow instructions on box.

Cipro: Prescription is required. It may be used for traveler's diarrhea when fever or blood is present. The dosage is one tablet every 12 hours for a minimum of five days and continue for three days after diarrhea stops (at least 10 tablets and may need additional tabs on return). Check with your physician.

Oral Rehydration Packets: CeraLyte "70" (50 gm) packets. Take for moderate or severe diarrhea to prevent dehydration. Reconstitute according to directions on packet (using clean water). To order, call 1-888-CERALYTE or check website: www.ceraproductsinc.com

Diarrhea/cholera: If moderate or severe diarrhea, immediately start CeraLyte "70" Oral Rehydration Solution (see above) and go immediately to nearest hospital. Prepare "CeraLyte 70" per instructions on packet and drink in sufficient volume to replace fluid lost. See CDC website for more information: www.cdc.gov/haiticholera

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 (See below). (Be aware that in developing countries such as Haiti, a medical-evacuation may not always be possible, even if covered by insurance).

Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Co. (800-876-4994) ** Cigna (check with a local representative) Seabury and Smith (800-282-4495) **

Also check the CDC travel insurance site and/or the US State Department site [before trip](#) for important information about serious illness and medical emergencies in a foreign country. Info available at:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/chapter-2/travel-insurance-evacuation-insurance.htm>

Another source of advice is the CDC International Traveler's Information Hotline (404)332-4559. **

These have been used by some of our groups.

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 twenty 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, but most airlines now charge for all checked luggage.
5. What about laundry? All is done by hand. Your contacts can find you assistance if you need to do laundry during your stay in Haiti.
6. What are the accommodations like? You will be staying at a guest house while in Port-au-Prince. Sheets, pillows, blankets, and towels are provided. Normally this is true of where you stay in the countryside.
7. What is the voltage in Haiti? 120 volts, but often you will not have electricity and flashlights are needed. LED flashlights are recommended as the batteries last much longer than incandescent and the bulbs are very unlikely to burn out.
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, and things like bread and peanut butter are always available, but two good rules for food safety from the CDC are: “Boil it, Cook it, Peel it, or Leave it” and “Avoid raw foods other than fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself”. Foods prepared at Mathew 25 House are safe to eat.
9. Is the water safe to drink? Drink only bottled (and sealed), boiled or chemically treated water and bottled or canned carbonated beverages. Ice and Water in bags should be avoided and tap water should not be used to drink or brush your teeth. Safe drinking water should be available most places you will be going, but bringing water purification tablets should be considered as a precaution. See “What to Bring Checklist” for details on brands and where to purchase.
10. 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.

11. 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.

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 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.

12. 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 wish, you can purchase supplemental travel insurance. For suggestions on companies which provide emergency medical evacuation, see the Medical Information section and/or the CDC website section).

13. 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. (Also see Emergency Contact Procedure for Delegations to Haiti --on following page).



The Haitian Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond has developed the following procedure to ensure that Parish Delegations in Haiti may be in contact with their parishes should a natural disaster or crisis occur during their travel. We ask that all parish delegations implement this simple procedure so that parishes and family members can maintain a minimum level of communication through natural or other disasters.

For Travelers:

1. Register your trip and all participants with the US Embassy no less than one week (7 days) prior to leaving the United States.
 - a. Register online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/home.asp>
 - b. Compile a list of all travelers, their passport numbers, and contact information in Haiti and an emergency contact in the United States
 - i. Fax a list of all travelers to the American Citizens Services (ACS) at (509)-2-229-8028
 - ii. Leave the list with an identified Emergency Contact within your parish's ministry along with a detailed itinerary and contact information of your partners in Haiti.
 - iii. Email the list, itinerary, and name/contact information of the Emergency Contact at your parish to the Office of Social Ministries: osm@richmonddiocese.org

In the Event of an Emergency: Travelers:

1. In the event of an Emergency, travelers from the Diocese of Richmond in Haiti should contact ACS of the US Consulate as soon as possible.
 - a. Call (509) 2-229-8000 to be connected with the US Marine Guard who will connect you with the US Embassy Duty Officer
 - b. Provide ACS with information on your location and safety.
 - c. Follow all instructions provided by ACS.

Parish Emergency Contact:

1. In the event of an Emergency, contact ACS who will provide known information or work to secure information on your group in Haiti.
 - a. Call one of the following numbers:
 - i. (509) 2-229-8942
 - ii. (509) 2-229-8089
 - iii. (509) 2-229-8322
 - iv. (509) 2-229-8672
 - b. Provide the full name, passport information, contact information (if known), address or approximate location and your contact information.

The Embassy task force will relay information on the safety of your group as soon as possible. OSM Staff will work with the Emergency Contact at your Parish to gather information on your safety to relay to the Parish.

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 money is easily and readily available. Do not allow locals to assist you unless you need the assistance (such as at the airport) and are planning to pay (tip) for it. Whatever bill you show, they will expect you to give to them, so don't expect change. Preferable – leave tipping to your group leader or assign to one person in the group. A suggested tip at the airport for carrying luggage is \$2 per suitcase.

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, especially in Port au Prince and other larger cities in the last several years because of elections, political infighting, the earthquake, tent camps, and cholera, 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.

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 3rd 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 10 years, Toussaint manages to defeat the island's French settlers, Spanish colonists, a British expeditionary force, and a mulatto coup to win control of the colony.

1801 Toussaint is proclaimed Governor-General of Saint Domingue. Napoleon Bonaparte dispatches an expeditionary force of 22,000 troops to recover the colony from black control. Toussaint is quickly captured through French trickery and dies in exile.

1804 Jean-Jacques Dessalines defeats Napoleon's forces and independence is declared with the name "Haiti" being reclaimed. Haiti becomes the world's first independent black republic and the second independent state in the Americas.

U.S. Occupation 1915 – 1934

1915 Following the assassination of the Haitian president, 2,000 U.S. Marines invade Haiti, invoking the Monroe Doctrine.

1934 U.S. Marines leave Haiti after 19 years, leaving behind a U.S. trained army to maintain control. But the U.S. still exercises indirect control 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 Tonton Macoutes – which grows to outnumber the army. Duvalier crushes any political opposition, arresting and 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.”

1971 Papa Doc Duvalier, having amended the constitution to lower the age requirement, dies leaving 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 Baby Doc Duvalier.

1986 Sustained popular mobilization forces Baby Doc 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. The governor of the CNG was General Henri Namphy who was among the most senior officers in the Haitian Armed Forces. While political unrest continued, public discourse, which had been stifled for 30 years under the Duvaliers, burst out into the open. 1987 A new constitution is adopted in a national referendum

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 only 135 days in power, Manigat is forced from office after attempting to assert civilian control over the military. General Henri Namphy declares himself the leader of a second Provisional Governing Council (CNG II). He 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 John Bosco in Port au Prince, a group of armed men bursts into the packed church. Armed with guns and machetes, the attackers murder twelve people and wound dozens more.

September 17, 1988 Namphy is overthrown in a coup d’etat. Lt General Prosper Avril, a former Duvalier advisor, declares himself President. He resigns within two years.

1990 Haiti successfully holds its first democratic election. Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide wins 67% of the popular vote.

February 7, 1991 Jean-Bertrand Aristide is inaugurated President.

September 30, 1991 General Raoul Cedras orchestrates a coup d'état against President Aristide. Hundreds are killed in the first week of the coup. Aristide resides in Washington DC during most of his exile.

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.

June 10, 1992 Marc Bazin is ratified by coup leaders as the de facto prime minister. Bazin had been the U.S. favored candidate in the 1990 elections.

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 General Raoul Cedras. Cedras agrees to step down by October 15 and President Aristide is scheduled to return on October 30 but neither of these come to pass.

September 11, 1993 Antoine Izmerly, 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 14, 1993 Guy Malary, President Aristide's Minister of Justice is assassinated.

January 14, 1994 The Aristide government convenes the Miami Conference with the original objectives of exploring means by which to restore democracy in Haiti and to resolve the refugee crisis. The Clinton administration presses Aristide to change the agenda to focus more on a power sharing agreement with pro military and opposition forces.

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.

April 1995 Constant disruptions of law and order result from Haiti's ineffective justice system and lack of sufficiently trained police force.

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 Rene Preval is inaugurated President 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)

November 1997 1,200 UN troops withdraw, 300 police instructors and 400 U.S. troops remain.

March 1999 A new government and provisional electoral board are sworn in.

May 26, 1999 Fanmi Lavalas (FL) joins the Lavalas Political Organization (OPL) in a protest against Preval's appointments on the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). The contentious issue is FL senators from the 1997 elections.

July 16, 1999 President Preval signed the Provisional Electoral Law nullifying the 1997 elections.

July 22, 1999 U.S. is dissatisfied with the new law and plans to withhold \$10 million in election aid. The signatures of Preval and the CEP were not published with the law and the U.S. was also concerned about the fact that the law doesn't specifically state how many senate seats will be contested. The CEP schedules elections for November 28, 1999.

September 7, 1999 The CEP proposes a new date for elections. December 19 will be the new date for elections with a runoff date (if necessary) of January 16.

October 6, 1999 Elections postponed again by the CEP. Officials state that this is due to delays in rewriting bylaws and hiring election officials.

January 23, 2000 on the eve of voter registration, widespread reports of vandalism and theft at electoral bureaus was reported with registration being postponed in several areas.

March 27, 2000 the U.S. calls for June 12 to be the "line in the sand" for the new Haitian parliament to be seated. Protesters in Port au Prince call for the resignation of the CEP.

April 3, 2000 Radio journalist Jean Leopold Dominique is assassinated in the parking lot of his radio station, Radio Haiti International, on Delmas.

May 22, 2000 Elections occur with international observers praising the elections as largely peaceful, free, and fair. President of the CEP estimated that 90% of the 11,235 polling places nationwide opened on Sunday.

May 27, 2000 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 runoff elections scheduled for June 25, 2000.

June 1, 2000 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. Of the 83 seats in the House of Deputies, FL won 28 outright.

June 5, 2000 Charges had been made by the OAS that the methodology used to calculate vote percentages for Senate candidates was not correct. Hundreds protest the statement by the OAS and the President of the CEP, Leon Manus, responded with a 5page letter defending the calculation method.

June 18, 2000 CEP President Manus sought asylum in a foreign mission and crossed the border into the Dominican Republic en route to the U.S. He claimed he was getting death threats for refusing to sign the election results.

July 7, 2000 The OAS continues to believe that the final percentages proclaimed by the CEP constitute a serious error that could and should have been corrected.

July 9, 2000 Nevertheless, the second round of voting was held peacefully. Voter turnout was generally low as has been expected.

July 10, 2000 Sec General of the UN, Kofi Annan, criticized the voting procedure stating that authorities should have resolved irregularities in the first round before holding the runoff vote. The U.S. State Department called the runoff elections “incomplete and inappropriate.”

July 13, 2000 The U.S. warns that Haiti risks losing international aid unless it quickly corrects the flaws in the recent elections.

August 8, 2000 The CEP announced results from the final runoff election confirming that Fanmi Lavalas had won a majority of the legislature. FL now holds 75 of 83 seats in the lower Chamber of Deputies and 18 of 27 seats in the Senate.

August 30, 2000 The U.S. State Department issued this statement: “It is our view that Haiti’s parliament has been prematurely seated, which calls into question the legitimacy of the new legislature.”

September 6, 2000 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 same possibility. Luis Lauredo, U.S. ambassador to the OAS said “Absent new concrete steps to end the impasse, the U.S. will not be able to conduct ‘business as usual’ with Haiti.”

October 22, 2000 After a third failed attempt to reach an agreement, the 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.

November 26, 2000 Elections are held for president and eight senate seats. The CEP reports 60% voter turnout with Jean-Bertrand Aristide winning 92% of the votes cast. Aristide is reelected for a second five-year term with 92% of the vote in elections boycotted by the opposition. The last UN peacekeeping forces withdraw from Haiti. For the next two years, and with Washington support, Aristide’s opponents use the OAS challenge to the 2000 elections to increase economic and political instability. Former Haitian soldiers carry out guerrilla attacks, primarily along the Dominican border and in the capital.

2001 Aristide begins to develop a partnership with Cuba and Venezuela which would result in 800 Cuban healthcare workers in Haiti and reduced oil prices from Venezuela.

2003 Aristide demands that France pay Haiti reparations to the tune of \$21 billion (the modern-day value of the 90 million francs that Haiti originally paid as an indemnity to France).

January 2004 Haiti’s 200th anniversary of independence

February 29, 2004 Following political unrest instigated by critics of Aristide and the uprising of a rebel group funded and trained by the U.S., Aristide is forced to leave Haiti aboard a U.S. military aircraft bound for South Africa. 7,000 elected officials were forced from office and many went into hiding. Boniface Alexandre is inaugurated as interim president.

September 2004 Hurricane Jeanne kills over 1,900 people

February 2006 Rene Preval is elected president, defeating U.S. backed and other candidates in an election overseen by UN peacekeepers. An agreement had to be reached due to controversy over spoiled ballots.

Aug – Nov 2008 Haitians take to the streets in desperation, impacted by economic policies that have created worldwide food shortages. Tropical storms and hurricanes strike within a month leaving nearly 800 dead and wiping out a quarter of the economy. Both the Petionville School and the Grace Divine School collapse.

May 2009 Former U.S. President [Bill Clinton](#) is appointed U.N. special envoy to Haiti. He is tasked with reinvigorating the country's moribund economy after the 2008 storms.

12 January 2010 A 7.0 magnitude earthquake hits Haiti near the capital of Port-au-Prince killing more than 200,000 people, rendering countless others wounded and homeless, destroying homes, businesses, hospitals, schools, government buildings and other infrastructure.

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 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 this retreat and bless our journey together. Draw us together so that the gifts you give each of us might be gifts for the common good. Bless those we leave behind and those we will meet. Amen.

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...

Basic Creole

Good morning Good evening How are you? I'm not too bad. Great! And you? Good Bye What is your name?

My name is...

I am happy to know you. This is my wife. This is my husband. What are you doing? Yes No Thank you (a lot) Help me! Excuse me Please You're welcome. I'm sorry. I'm tired. It is hot today. I do not speak Creole. I do not understand. I need to go to the bathroom. Where is the bathroom, please?

Haiti is pretty. May I take your photo? How much does that cost? Dollar God bless you. One Two Three Four Five Six Seven Eight Nine Ten

Bonjour Bonswa Ki jan ou ye? (or) Kouman ou ye? Mwen pa pi mal Anfòm! E ou menm?

Orevwa (or) m 'ale

Ki jan ou rele?

Mwen rele...

Mwen kontan rekonèt ou. Se madanm mwen. Se mari mwen Ki sa wap fè? Wi Non Mèsi (anpil) Anmwe! Eskize m Souple (or) Silvouplè Ou merite. Mwen regret sa. Mwen fatigue Le fè cho jodi a Mwen pa pale Kreyòl Mwen pa konprann. Mwen bezwen pipi. Kote twalèt la, souple? Ayiti bèl. Eske mwen met pran foto ou? Konbyen sa koute? Dola Bonde a Beni ou En De Twa Kat Senk Sis Set Wit Nèf Dis

Closing Prayer

All: God, we begin this journey in Faith and trust that you will bless it and bless us beyond our imaginings. Calm our fears and open our hearts to experience every poverty, every handicap, and every unfreedom we witness. Bless our 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

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

All: 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.

Leader: Please light a votive candle from our common prayer candle.

All: 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 impoverished 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 throughout 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. Amen.

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 called "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. 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 personal computer,

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/cellphone.

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):

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 one's 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.

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.

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 an deyò* (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 resolve 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 velelete (palm branch having the power to ward off evil, borne by the initiates of the god Velelete).

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.