

Rory's family has supported VOHM for years. They are personal friends of missionary Henoc Lucien's. Their interest in Haiti began when a member of the family spent some time in Gonaives with the Peace Corps several years ago.

He arrived in Haiti October 1st, and will be in Haiti until the first of December. He spent some time in India earlier this year.

October 1st, 2009
Cap-Haitien, Haiti

Wow...I still can't believe that I'm actually in Haiti. Yeah, as in poverty-stricken, voodoo-ridden Haiti.

The flights to Florida went smoothly and without any issues. However, I have already seen proof that God is watching over me on this trip. I spend almost the entire second leg of my trip talking to my seat-mates about my trip to Haiti. I explained what I was doing and gave them a little background information about Vision of Hope Ministries. Then, when I was waiting to claim my baggage in the terminal, a couple came up to me and said that they had been sitting in the row in front of me. They told me that they wanted to support my trip and handed me some cash. Unbelievable! God truly works in the ways that you least expect it. Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Webb for this extremely generous gift.

The flight to Haiti this morning was incredible. For starters, the pilot of the plane picked me up at the hotel at 4:45 in the morning. Needless to say, I was a little groggy during the trip to the airport. Upon reaching the Missionary Flights International hangar, I proceeded to fall asleep under a huge cargo plane that they use routinely.

After a few short stops in the Bahamas, I was the last passenger on-board the plane. The two pilots offered to let me ride in the cockpit for the rest of the flight, which was an amazing experience. I even got to wear one of the head-sets, which allowed me to communicate with the two pilots effortlessly. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

When we got to Haiti, I was instantly struck by the heat. I knew that it was going to be hot in Haiti, but not THIS hot. When I arrived at 11:30 a.m., it was already 94 degrees with 95% humidity. I was wearing shorts and a polo shirt, and felt like I was going to melt – I can't imagine what the Haitians wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants feel like.

I spend the afternoon at College Susan Schuenke, the K-13 Christian school that Vision of Hope runs. I am working with a 23 year-old girl named Brittany who has already been down here a month. She showed me around the school and introduced me to some of the kids and teachers. She really knows what she is doing (and her Creole is way better than mine!)

When we got home, and after a run with Brittany and Wendes, one of the children here, there was a massive thunderstorm! It was definitely one of the largest storms that I have ever seen in person—a storm like we rarely get at home in Vermont. Amid the crashing thunder and constant lightning, the storm dropped over two inches of rain in an hour threatened to topple several large trees near Henoc's house.

I spent the evening playing with all the kids. They are closet Domino masters, and I proceeded to lose eight straight games before giving up and watching. They also

have extremely quick reflexes, as I painfully learned trying to play Slap-Hands with them (or I guess that it's possible that I just have very slow reflexes!)

Please continue to pray that God keeps me healthy, works through me for his glory, and helps me learn the language.

Rory

October 6th, 2009

Cap Haitien and Berard, Haiti

Eureka! I could be a millionaire! I've discovered the secret to slowing down, warping, bending, and all together stopping time! In fact, it's actually very simple – just come to Haiti, the country where nothing ever runs according to schedule.

I got the pleasure of experiencing this “Haitian Time” for the first time yesterday. Henoc told us that we were going to eat breakfast at a small restaurant near the school instead of eating at home. However, traffic was so bad in Cap Haitien that by the time we reached the restaurant it was 7:55 and Brittany had to teach at 8:00. Henoc promised that he would be there at nine to pick us up and go get breakfast. Well, I guess that he upheld part of the promise – he did return to the school shortly after nine. However, he began talking to several of the teachers, and before long he had disappeared into one of the classrooms. By the time he re-emerged and asked if we were ready to go, it was 10:45 and Brittany and I were starving!

Another thing that is drastically different from America is the roadway system. There are basically no “rules of the road” in Haiti. People drive at any speeds, on whatever side of the road they want, without being buckled in and in un-inspected vehicles. Well, I don't know if un-inspected is the right term, seeing as I don't think there is such a thing as vehicle inspection in Haiti. And while there are far fewer accidents than one might expect, they still do occur. Three days ago, about a mile down the road from Henoc's house, two large trucks were driving toward each other on the same side of the road – vehicles often travel in the smoothest part of the road, regardless of whether it's on the left or the right – and collided head-on. Sadly, the driver of one truck died in the accident.

Church on Sunday was an amazing experience. Henoc is the official pastor of three different churches, but most Sundays he only preaches at one or two. Last Sunday, I went to the church in Cap Haitien. It was very hard to be at a church service given entirely in a different language, but it was amazing to watch the believers sing. They sing the same verse of each song over and over and over – some songs go on for ten or fifteen minutes! Henoc is a very captivating speaker as well, even if you don't understand what he is saying.

The kids in Haiti are incredible soccer players. Since many of them have nothing else to do, they simply spend their time messing around with a soccer ball...whatever they can find. I've seen a husked coconut being used as a ball, along with several other variations. The children play in bare feet on any surface, including the sharp stones of Henoc's driveway, without complaining at all. Their ball skills are amazing...most of these kids could dribble circles around Vermont varsity soccer players without even really trying.

An extremely exciting scenario has come up with Vision of Hope Ministries. They are trying to buy a property to build a church on close to Henoc's, but they must have all the money (\$16,000) pledged by Friday if they want to close the deal. An anonymous donor has agreed to match dollar-for-dollar, up to \$4000, the amount donated between Monday morning and Friday morning. If you feel led to donate toward the purchase of property for a church in Haiti, the address is: Vision of Hope Ministries, PO Box 681, Eagle River, WI, 54521.

Thank you for all the support and prayers. It is an extraordinary encouragement.

Sincerely,
Rory McEathron

October 10th, 2009
Cap-Haitien and Berard, Haiti

You know, it's really strange – I'm having trouble remembering the last time that a fully-armed tank drove past my house in the U.S. I mean, I'm sure that it has happened recently, but I can't remember when. However, here in Haiti it's turning out to be a fairly common occurrence.

There is a United Nations base in Cap-Haitien, and the UN makes its presence well-known. Almost every day we see UN Jeeps and police vehicles in the city "patrolling," although I am yet to see one make a traffic stop or deal with a security issue. The UN barracks are extremely impressive, though. They run along both sides of the road as you enter Cap-Haitien. A white-washed concrete wall which stands about 15 feet tall, topped with coils of barbed wire and guard towers, warning by-passers not to attempt anything foolish.

Brittany, Wendes and I have seen UN tanks several times on our runs. They look like an American tank, minus the treads and big cannon on the front...they almost resemble amphibious craft – vehicles that can drive on land and float like boats in water. Whenever they go by, the soldiers on top always wave at us; I think that they do it because they're so excited to see other white-skinned people. Regardless, it's a touch intimidating to have a soldier holding a huge machine gun waving at you.

The first full day that I was in Haiti, we were going to school in the morning when we saw a huge plume of dust billowing up from the dirt road 500 yards in front of us. As we got closer, I was surprised to see that it was a convoy of UN jeeps, going extremely fast in the other direction. As the 17th raced by, I asked Henoc where they would be going, but he said that he had no idea. We found out later that Bill Clinton had been 50 kilometers south of Cap-Haitien that day, so I suspect that they were going to meet him.

Wednesday, I got to help repaint one of the churches that Henoc oversees. We scraped the outside first – they use hoes to get the hard-to-reach areas – and then we painted the entire front. It was amazingly hot – 100 degrees and humid around lunch – but it was still a cool experience to work with some of the Haitians. I think that I got the short end of the stick though – I went up and down the ladder with the paint roller and painted for two hours while the two Haitians that I was working with chatted and "held the ladder." Around noon, a UN helicopter came over, maybe 75 feet off the ground and

50 feet away from the church. It was amazing! I could feel the wash from the rotors and could easily see the people inside the chopper.

Then, on Thursday, Brittany, Henoc and I met with a few members of the US Embassy. All the American citizens in Cap-Haitien were invited, and there were about 10 counting us there. We went over procedures to follow in an emergency, such as a large storm or uprising. The American Citizen Services Unit Chief, Paul Cantrell, talked about what the US Embassy does in Haiti, which was pretty interesting. Then we all got to mingle and talk to the people – some of the Embassy people have really cool stories! For instance, one of the International Police guys talked about flying in a helicopter with Clinton...pretty amazing!

I would ask you to continue to **pray for me** as I work in Haiti.

I have been struggling with health a little bit – I'm not sure if it's the Haitian food or something else, but I just haven't been quite myself.

Thanks,

Rory