

Haiti: Christianity, Voodoo, and Children with Disabilities

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[0 : 00] I always get a little bit nervous when I get that introduction because after you read that, it really just sounds like I can't keep a job. I just keep moving around and around and around and around.

One of the things I was going to ask when I started out, has anybody here been to Haiti? And you obviously have. You were there for a long time? Thank you. Okay, so I've been there for four weeks.

And, yeah, I need to be careful what I say because I have no stretch of the imagination. I don't have any expertise whatsoever in Haiti.

And if you look at the handout that I presented, these are sort of, if you want to follow them, you can. They're kind of my speaking notes. And, you know, there are some pieces of information that might be helpful. I'm not a theologian.

I'm not a real biblical scholar. I work with kids with disabilities. And I want to tell you sort of the story of how it came to be that we were asked to go down to Haiti and what we did there.

[0 : 59] I pretend no expertise in Haiti and would have that expertise. You know, what I know is based on two weeks going down, followed a year later by another two weeks going down with Sharon and spending a lot of time during those two weeks working with children but being billeted around in Haiti.

So I ended up staying in the home of the director of the program who had been there for 16 years, staying with Dutch missionaries who'd been down there for 21 years and really listening carefully to what they had to say.

What I saw was my reaction to Haiti, which is a short-term kind of thing, and they were able to put a context around what I was seeing. So again, as I go through this, I pretend no expertise, but I do want to share with you the experience and some of the things that I think that God showed us in terms of our time in Haiti.

And then at the end, most of this is factual, but toward the end, I want to throw out an observation that I think may be applicable to the Canadian situation in terms of the way the church reacts to the culture around it.

I need to tell you the story of how we were called, and I'm careful with words like that. People say, oh, you've been a missionary. That's a very high and lofty and important title unknown.

[2 : 10] We were short-term volunteers. But the way that we ended up going, to me, was one of those events in my life where you really clearly see God's operation behind the curtains on things.

And that happens. God's behind the curtains. He's in front of the curtains. He's around us all the time. But in my own life as a Christian, and I didn't become a Christian until I was 25, in my own life, there are times when you look and you see clearly what he was up to, how he did it.

And so I'd like to share with you how he did it, how he got me to go to Haiti. A number of years ago, about a year before I went down to Haiti, the first time on my own, we were going to the church that we attended in the White Rock area, a large evangelical church.

And that church had a very strong relationship with another church in Uganda. And that was a very positive relationship. Our church was sending financial and other kinds of support to Uganda.

The pastor of the Ugandan church several times came to our church and preached. And so there was a very tight connection. And we had given something toward that and enjoyed the stories that were coming back.

[3 : 15] But one Sunday morning, we were sitting in row 52, seats 11 and 12. And the young youth pastor who was in charge of the connection to Uganda was speaking.

And he said, we're going to send a team next summer. And we're looking for 12 to 14 volunteers who are willing to either pay their own way or raise the funds and go to Uganda for two or three weeks and help out.

And this is just after the point where I had taken early retirement. And we had never thought about really going into the field like that. That was a new idea to us. But we both sort of, as he said that, our heads swiveled and we looked at each other and kind of wiggled our eyebrows and thought, oh, that's interesting.

So I remember getting in the car in the parking lot and we live in Cloverdale driving back home and getting into the discussion right away that, you know, we've got the time now. I can travel. I'm not, you know, I don't have to go 9 to 5 anymore.

You know, maybe God would like us to go to Uganda. And plus it sounded kind of exciting. You know, if I'm going to Africa, it would be an adventure. Well, we thought about that and I contacted the pastor and said, you know, that we were interested.

[4 : 22] And he made some suggestions back and forth. And then finally we asked to meet with him. And when we met with him, he was very nice to us. But I think he seemed a little bit skeptical in that he said a few things like, you know, most of the people going are young.

I said, yes, yes. So what am I? Like, okay. That didn't fizz too much. And then he said, by the way, a lot of you, you will be sleeping on the ground in tents.

I think he thought that would push me off a little bit further. And I said, tents. Well, I don't, okay. Well, tents, yeah. I mean, I could maybe roll up a foamy and get it on the plane. You know, that would work out. And then he said, and this is how much you'll have to provide in terms of funds to go.

And I said, that's fine. We're prepared to do that. That's not a problem. We'd love to do that. And then finally he said, and the job that you'll have is you'll be passing out blankets to people in Uganda.

Blankets. Now, there is absolutely nothing wrong about passing out blankets. That's a noble thing to do. It's a wonderful thing to do. But we left that meeting and we thought about that a little bit. And I thought, tents.

[5 : 25] Handing out blankets. This much money. And I sort of began to think, you know, I would imagine there's probably some more young people who'd love to go. We'll give them the money. They can sleep in the tent and hand out the blankets.

Or we could buy a lot of blankets for the amount of money it would cost us to go to Africa. Now, again, that was in no way a criticism. It was just, so we met with the pastor again. I said, you know, the idea of going to hand out blankets, that's a really good idea.

I'm not opposed to that. We'd like to support that in some way. But I've spent a whole lifetime doing my job and I'm wondering, is there some way that my work could be used in Uganda?

And he said, well, what do you do? So I said, well, I'm an educational psychologist. And he said, what's that? I explained to him about that, that I specialize in autism and mental challenges.

And I went through a little bit of that and measurement and evaluation of learning. And he said, I don't know anything about that. That's a new idea. I've never heard of a school psychologist before.

[6 : 24] That's new. And he said, to be quite honest with you, I can't think of anybody who might be looking for one of those. I'm sorry, but, you know, blankets? Yeah. So I said, oh, we were really feeling we'd like to do something.

And he said, well, you know, when all else fails, why don't you pray about it? He said, I can't suggest even who you could phone at this point. But you just pray about it. So we went home and we sat at our kitchen table and we prayed about it.

And we said, Lord, you know, I've been a school psychologist all these years and love to do something overseas if you'd like that in your service. But apparently they don't need anybody like me. This is where I get a little quivery because the Lord works in such mysterious and bold ways sometimes.

Two days later, our phone rang. And it had nothing to do with the pastor. He hadn't called anybody. And it was a friend of mine, a professor at Trinity Western University where I taught while I was doing my doctorate, a guy named Ken Padlas.

And he phoned and said, can we get together for coffee? I said, sure. I'd love to get together. I've known Ken for years and sat having coffee and he said, how would you like to go to Haiti with me? I said, Haiti?

[7 : 31] Haiti, Haiti. South of Cuba. Caribbean. I think I know where that is. I said, doing what? He said, well, they need help with special ed. I said, they don't speak English in Haiti. He said, no, they speak French and they speak Creole.

But he said, this is an English language school. It's a Christian missionary work. Been there since the 60s. Christian Reformed Church is running the school. It's a big school and they need somebody. So, you know, push came to shove back and forth.

It turned out that the time they needed somebody, he wasn't available. So by default, you know, I went. But we had just prayed about it. Two days later, the answer came. I went home and I said to Sharon, you'll never guess what Ken wanted to talk to me about.

And I told her and then she looked at me with her wisdom. But she asked so much of it. She said, we prayed about that. Two days later, you got the call. You better go. You better go. And so I thought, yeah, that's good.

And in the hand that I quoted a verse that really hit me at that point. It's Matthew 6. It says, this is the confidence we have in approaching God. That if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

[8 : 30] And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we will have what we ask of him. Now, after I got in contact by internet with the folks in Port-au-Prince at Kiskeia School, I found out the way God was organizing this little thing for me.

Because it was only a week or so previously we had heard about Uganda and that prompted us to want to volunteer, but not the blankets bit. And talking to a pastor who said, no, we don't need, we really don't need you in Uganda, but maybe you should pray about that.

So that's about a week in length. Six months previously, Kiskeia School had finished six months of advertising in their newsletters that go worldwide through Christian Reformed Missions, asking for a school psychologist with papers who would be willing to volunteer to come to Port-au-Prince. And after six months, they had found nobody. There had been no single replies, nothing. So they had then contacted an organization with Christian Reformed World Missions in Toronto called Service Link.

They said, do you know a school psychologist? They said, no, we have no. So they phoned somebody in Winnipeg that they knew who said, I don't know of a school psychologist who's a Christian who would be appropriate for this, who called Trinity Western and the switchboard put the call through to my friend Dr. Publis for phoning.

[9 : 41] And that may not seem miraculous to you, but it does to me in that there were a pile of parents and staff in Port-au-Prince who were praying for a school psychologist, couldn't find one. And that then cycles up, you know, advertised around the world.

It cycles up to Toronto. And as that message is crossing Canada, God is beginning to speak to me to get me ready for that phone call. So I wouldn't say no. And again, those are the things that in my life I found so reassuring that God's always present.

He's always listening. He was listening to their prayers. And I'm sure he was saying from the beginning, I had somebody in mind. And when the time came, it was time to speak to us to get us ready for that phone call.

There was an interesting glitch. If you follow it, I'm on point number three on my little handout. And that's the service thing, Toronto. There was a little bit of a glitch. I mentioned the Missions Agency. That's Christian Reform World Missions.

And the school was originally a Dutch school with funding coming out of Holland. They contacted me. I said I would be willing to go. They said, are you certified?

[10 : 44] Do you have your papers? Yes, I do. Can you afford to go? We'll do it. Don't worry about it. I said, okay, now we have to do more paperwork. You have to do a criminal records check. That's normal.

Good. I can do that. You have to fill in these forms. I can do that. Can you provide references? Yes, I can do that. Can you send us your curriculum vitae? Yes, I can do that. And then there was a glitch.

Because within my application, I had to give my personal confession of faith. And somebody on their board said, he's an Anabaptist. I said, I don't know if we should be sending an Anabaptist school psychologist to a reform, Christian reform school.

And the lady in service, who has been so kind to us, she took the bull by the horns. And she said, look, you gave us a task, which was to find a Christian man, a confessing Christian, who is willing to go to Port-au-Prince, who is a certified school psychologist.

You did not ask us to put in brackets at the bottom. Anabaptists need not apply. So I think we better take him. And it was kind of fun because when I arrived there, the second place I was billeted, was with a family named the Van Dams.

[11 : 52] And he's in charge of the pastoral mission for all of Haiti. And he's been there for many, many years and welcomed us into his home, the most beautiful, loving Christian home. Just four gorgeous kids, just born and raised in Haiti.

And I remember the first time I arrived, we were sitting to have our first meal. And just before we sat down to say, Grace, he said, you know we're reformed? I said, yes. He said, you know what that means? I said, yes.

He said, good. We have a lot of work for you. So just get on with it. Let's not worry about those little details. Now, when I got the call to go to Haiti, I got very excited because, as I said, I'm not trying to spiritualize things excessively, but I really felt about Anne.

Like, this is just too clear. I've got to do this, as my wife said. But then, as I began to try to learn a little bit about Haiti, and I'm looking at Anne because I'm sure she knows this, I went to the Government of Canada website, and I looked at what it said about Haiti.

And the first sentence, in red, it's still there, it says, Canadians living in Haiti are advised to leave immediately. Canadians that are thinking of going to Haiti probably shouldn't go to Haiti, because there's been, if you follow the news, a lot of trouble in Haiti for a long time.

[13 : 01] And I was a little nervous, so I started talking to the director of the program by email saying, Steve, my family are worried about me traveling to Haiti. It's a lie. And we went back and forth, and he said, is Haiti dangerous?

Yes, Haiti's dangerous. Things are much better. The UN is here now, and there's 8,000 Brazilian troops in Port-au-Prince, and we haven't had gunfire in the night for months. Some of our staff were evacuated six months ago over the border into the Dominican Republic.

They're back. The school has reopened. Please come. We know where to go. We know where not to go. I speak the language fluently. Don't be concerned. At that point, I was still, I think he sensed my hesitancy, being that I'm a bit of a coward at the best of times.

And he said, you're in Vancouver. Well, sorry, close enough. You're in Vancouver. And he's been to Vancouver. And he said, Dave, I imagine there are places in Vancouver where you would not go right now.

Well, that's true. Especially, I wouldn't go with my family. And he said, it's the same in Port-au-Prince. There are just more places like that. And we know this place. I can't guarantee your safety, but I can guarantee you, we'll take good care of you.

[14 : 10] And then, in talking with my wife and my kids about that, who were concerned as well, we came back to the concept that the will of God will never lead you with a grace that God can't keep you. So, you know, plucked up my courage for all of two weeks.

And down I went. I had some reactions immediately. And again, especially in the presence of somebody who's lived there for so many years. All I can do is tell you how I reacted when I arrived. We booked our tickets. I booked my tickets. I went to Lone the first time. I flew to Montreal, stayed overnight. There was a connecting flight from Montreal into Port-au-Prince. Three airlines fly in. And I went to Gate 51, which is where the Haitian flights always leave.

It's a high security gate. They always have security dogs there because of the drug traffic and back and forth for Haiti. Big 767, packed. And again, you know, Mr. Narrow Life Experiences, I was sitting in the boarding lounge with about 250 passengers waiting to get on.

And I realized right away, I'm going somewhere different. Because there were, you know, 240 black people and 10 white people. And four of them were nuns and two were priests.

[15 : 13] And I was sitting at the corner by myself. And I know that sounds really petty when I say it, but that was fizzing on me. Like, okay, this is going to be different. Uneventful flight, landed in Port-au-Prince.

The airport has nothing to write home about. As the plane was taxiing up to Mays Gate Airport, looking out the window, and I thought, those are tanks. Those are tanks lined up. And they're painted white. And they see you in on the side. And there's guys with blue helmets on the roof with machine guns. And I thought, this is not Vancouver International. This is a little bit different. And I got through the security.

There's multiple levels of security. You get off the plane. My luggage arrived. Everything was fine. And I had been told in an email how to get out of the airport. And I had been told by the director, Steve, that when you step outside of the airport, bedlam will occur.

There will be about 100 people who want to sell you something, talk to you about something, carry your suitcases. They're all going to be speaking Creole. Your high school French is going to help you. And I, sort of dragging all my testing equipment with me, stepped out onto the street.

[16:13] And it was true. It was just mobbed. Nobody touching or hurting me. Just mobbed. And I couldn't understand the word they were saying. And suddenly, I heard a voice farther back in the crowd going, Hey, are you Carter?

I looked, and there was Steve. And I'm, yes, help me. Come here. And Steve stepped in, and he said about two sentences in a very soft voice, and utter order was established. We got in the land cruise and began to head over to the school.

And I said, What did you say? And he said, Not very much. But he said, I speak fluent Creole. And that I'm a Caucasian man who can speak fluent Creole means I've been around this place for a while.

They understand that I understand how things work. Whereas you obviously don't look like you knew what you were doing at all. And as we were bouncing up the streets, I was surprised at how broken down everything was.

The streets are absolutely ruined. The concrete's smashed to pieces. It's washed out. Potholes in the main streets two and three feet deep. The land crew goes down and up the other side. People everywhere.

[17:13] Garbage everywhere. Dogs scavenging. Thousands of people. People selling stuff on the side of the street. And I'm kind of gazing out, and first caution was, Don't point that camera at anybody, because there's a very strong voodoo belief around pointing cameras at people.

But he gave me several pieces of advice. And if you're following, I'm at number six. The first piece of advice he gave me, and it really has stuck in my head, because I was looking at all this activity, and I didn't have a cultural set to examine it in.

It was like people were doing stuff, and I really didn't get it. I have been around in other places in the world, but nothing quite like this. And he said, Dave, it doesn't make any sense to you right now, but remember, all human behavior is purposeful.

This will make sense over the days. It will make more and more sense to you. And it did. And more and more, you realize people aren't engaged in random activities. They're holding on to life. They're surviving. And the things they're doing are all done for a purpose.

Second piece of advice he gave me was, Dave, this is important. We get a lot of short-time people coming through here. Sometimes they don't listen. I hope you will listen. I said, I'll listen. He said, Don't drink the water unless we give it to you.

[18:20] I said, Okay. I've been to Mexico. I know about that one. He said, No, no. Don't drink the water unless we give it to you. I said, Got it. I said, Dave, I'm going to tell you for a third and final time, do not drink the water unless we give it to you.

And then when we got to his house, he turned on the tap out of the root cistern and showed what was coming through and said, You see those little black things? That's fly larva. If you drink that, you're going to get really sick. And it's not just that we don't want you getting sick.

We have 14 children for you to see. And the parents in this school have formed a prayer chain around you. And they're going to be praying for you 24 hours a day while you're here that you don't get sick. So don't drink the water.

And I didn't drink the water and I got the instructions on how to shower safely and all the rest of it.

And I'm so thankful I did not get sick. The other thing that he told me about, and this is going to seem an odd thing to mention, but when I come into how I assess kids there, it'll take on a context.

And that was, after he told me not to drink the water, he said, if you look off to your right, you'll see a sort of beat-up pickup truck with a blue painted door on it and two fellows in uniform slouching against that with AK-47s on their shoulders.

[19 : 25] Those are Haitian policemen. And he said, now, if you ever get separated from us, and that's not going to happen because other than when you're sleeping, you're going to be with somebody. We're not going to let you loose. But he said, if you ever do get loose, and you won't, but if you ever do, you know, try to fade back into the woodwork, wait for a UN vehicle to go by.

Haitians are generally very, very friendly people. They'll see that you're lost. They'll help you. But under no circumstances look at or approach a Haitian policeman. I said, why?

And he said, because he will see that you're lost, that you don't fit, that you don't know what you're doing. And he said, based on what's been happening recently, he will arrest you. And he will take you downtown.

Downtown is not a good place to go to the police station. And he said, well, they won't hurt you, but he said, we'll get a phone call that you've broken some laws and that the fine is four or five thousand US dollars. That's the current rate for police kidnapping in Port-au-Prince.

And he said, then we're going to phone your family. Will they send four or five thousand dollars to get you back? I said, I don't want to test that to see whether they were. My youngest son is here as well. He would have coughed up something.

[20 : 31] Now, as I said, the Haitian policeman thing will come back in a second. A little bit of a general impression about Haiti. And this was confirmed when Sharon went down the second time because I told her about the roads and trying to get around inside the city and how difficult it is within gridlock traffic.

And all the pictures I took of the city and all the video I shot as well, I did shoot some discrete video, was an underestimate. It didn't really show how difficult it is where in a city designed for about a million and a half, with three and a half million people living in it, where the infrastructure is completely broken down.

I mean, the power comes on occasionally for those who can afford it. Diesel generators running everywhere. No sewer system. No water system. No police force that's reliable.

It's just broken down so, so badly. My first impression off the bat was firearms. I've never seen so many guns in my life. The UN are everywhere.

8,000 Brazilian soldiers, so you're in traffic and there are jeeps with .50 caliber machine guns with the belts in. There are, you know, armored cars running around. That's the UN president. Then on top of that, there's the Haitian police presidents who are all carrying rifles.

[21 : 40] You go to the gas station to get some gasoline and there's a man with a shotgun protecting the gas station, private guard. You go to the bakery and there are two men with shotguns standing outside the bakery with their shotguns to protect the bakery from kidnapping and from robbery.

The one that hit me the most was I got to go to different churches while I was there and I went to a church called Kiskeia Chapel. About 300 people in the church. It's got its own wall and protective wire around it and all the rest of it had a wonderful time worshipping with the people and it was really great but I'm sitting, you know, toward the front of the church and looking over my shoulder and at the back of the church there's a gentleman, I think he was a deacon, he's sitting there and he's got a shotgun in his lap.

I'm just not used to it. They may be sorting the bulletins in the back but sitting there with a shotgun was a little bit of a surprise and I said to the Van Dams, why is there a man at the back of the church with a shotgun? He said, in case kidnappers come into the church because there had been a lot of kidnapping taking people, you know, from locations and taking them away.

So firearms everywhere. The other impression I think it hit Sharon really hard too was being locked in. The home that we stayed, the homes and the orphanages that we stayed at are all behind large walls with barbed wire on the top.

All the buildings are like that. Anybody who can afford a home has a wall with barbed wire. Steel gates, not the ones you see through there, they're steel gates. So when the homes that we stayed at, you open the gate, you drive the vehicle and you close the gate and then at night you put the heavy bars on all the doors and windows.

[23 : 07] You lock yourself into the house and you let the dog out and the instructions are don't put your fingers through the bars because it's a barbed dog. Again, because of kidnappings, missionaries being kidnapped, teachers being kidnapped, being robbed, being raped.

Things have settled down a great deal because of the presence of the UN but they've had some very, very difficult times. In the morning you get in that vehicle occasionally we got to walk which was nice but you drive to the school and Kiskeia School is about a half a city block in size and it has an eight foot wall and it has barbed wire and it has three gates and at each gate there are two men with shotguns to protect the children.

And we didn't hear a shot fired either time. There had been a lot of bloodshed about six months before I went the first time and there were dead bodies in front of the school but thank God I was there, that wasn't occurring.

But that ever presence of people with guns, I found that very, very unsettling. being locked in and then the other thing that struck me and it'll come up a little later was the notion of voodoo images. They don't have a regular bus service, they have a lot of buses running around but they have things called tap-taps and the little tap-taps are usually old Japanese pickup trucks with extensions on them and boxes piled up on top and people pile in.

[24 : 22] They get 20, they pack them in like sardines and they're just running along everywhere over these broken roads and if you need a ride you stand at the edge of the road and you make this motion with your finger which is tap-tap and the thing pulls over and you get on and it drives an established route and when you want to get off you tap-tap on the side to get off.

But many of these buses are fantastically decorated just covered in drawings and buildings are covered with drawings and one of the first things I noticed there was the number of biblical pictures and the number of biblical phrases, scripture references and things written out and I remember asking the missionaries it seemed like a very religious country to me and he said you have to understand there's a difference between religious belief and a superstitious religious belief so that you get the strangest combinations of things and I'll mention those a little bit later on.

Let me come to the school, Kiskeia School and it's a wonderful school. It's been there since the mid-1960s. There are 280 children in that school from pre-kindergarten to grade 12.

I'm not bilingual but because it's an English language instruction school I was able to do my work sometimes with problems but being careful I was able to do my work and a lot of the work I did was not unlike when I was assessing children one-on-one and watching them in the classroom trying to figure out what was going on with them.

A lot of it was like working in Surrey with the ESL population or Vancouver, Richmond with an ESL population although in some cases a little more complex. English is the language of instruction.

[25 : 50] They use the United States curriculum. There are three major groups of children in the school. The first large group are missionary and other non-Haitian born children. There are a lot of missionaries and non-governmental organizations in Haiti and many are there with their families and they want a place where they can have their children educated.

There is no public school system in Haiti as we would understand it. There are lots of little schools here and there where somebody with a grade 3 education is permitted to teach up to grade 2 and for a few pennies you can send your children there.

But in all of Haiti with its 8.5 million population there are precisely two schools that can produce grade 12 graduation diplomas that are recognized off the island and Qiskaya is one of them and their graduating class is about 25 children per year.

So it's very restricted and very difficult to get at a good quality education. So the reason Qiskaya was originally founded was to provide the children and missionaries with a solid education so that missionaries could bring their children onto the field with them.

That's then fanned out and you get United Nations children some of them coming there and other non-governmental organizations if someone's there with the Red Cross or Médecine Sans Frontier.

[27 : 02] The second group of children are Haitian nationals adopted by foreign workers. Many of the teachers working at the school have adopted Haitian children. They've gone into the orphanages and selected children and adopted them and are now raising them and of course they get to attend the school.

So those are children who probably were not adopted until age 3, 4, 5 and they're now attending this school. And the third group which surprised me are the children of well-to-do Haitians.

And given that I was volunteering to go down there and we were paying our own way down I was sort of slightly at first taken aback and I said well-to-do Haitians and he pointed up in the mountains over the Port-au-Prince and said yeah those big houses up there some of them they can afford it they send their children here to charge them and I thought I'm volunteering to do this and he said I

remember the staff there being very clear about that and said you know this country is struggling to change and if this country is ever going to get out of the hole that it's in it's going to have to be led by those people and those people are choosing to send their children here where the word of God is proclaimed and we have that direct contact with them to try to influence them and many of them are Christians but we've got that ability to contact them so we would like it very much if you would test the ones that we give you as well I said of course I mean I don't understand the context I'm happy to do that what they wanted me to do and it's the last bullet under number 8 was to do psychoeducational assessments and I won't get into details of what that is it's the basics you have a child who's not learning properly looking at their cognitive ability their intellect looking at the receptive vocabulary carefully measuring their reading their math their spelling looking for soft neurological signs it's what school psychologists do here all the time every school in Vancouver has that service available to it and I was basically doing the same work there that I would do here but just in a very different cultural environment

Haiti is so short of services you know when I arrived they said you know Haiti has one qualified school psychologist and when you leave there'll be zero again there's none while I was there for example there was a child in the kindergarten they asked me to look at and they said we think she's profoundly deaf and I said well deafness is not my specialty I'm a general special educator I'm used to being around I don't do American sign language a few signs like toilet other than that I don't have a lot of signs and they said please look at her nobody else can look at her and I ended up going down to see her you'll see her pictures this beautiful little Haitian girl whose behavior was just falling to pieces because she couldn't communicate and they believed she was profoundly deaf and the miracle of internet because we had a satellite set up my son my oldest son happens to be doing his masters in audiology and speech pathology at UBC and so I was able to contact him and then he contacted a professor and then we started an exchange back and forth because the first question they asked is well what's the audiogram look like and the answer is there is no audiologist here there's nobody to do that if I can

I can do sweep audiometry I could have brought a machine with me a small portable one and done sweep testing but didn't know that it was needed down there and then ended up doing a diagnosis of profound hearing impairment by a series of questions what's the loudest sound she's been around that she didn't startle to gunfire she's had rifles fired closer and she doesn't startle does she ever respond to instruments music yes she does in church she'll go up to the piano or go to a guitar next question coming back does she put her head against the piano or her hand against the piano she puts her hand against the piano then she's probably profoundly deaf and they were trying to figure out the bone conduction pieces and all the rest of it this time when I was down there's a little girl with a really marked speech impediment a missionary child and what do you make of that it's not my thing but we they recorded a video and an audio track to it and that was sent up to the audiology department at UBC and the professor sat down with my son and went through it and are now as best you can working by email back and forth trying to help them work with that particular child one of the key reasons for coming down is that missionary families could get the psychoeducational assessments done in the past if they wanted a child assessed they had to go to Florida which is only an hour away by air and they can get free flights with mission aviation fellowship to get off the island but they're not covered by their insurance packages it costs them money to have it done and of course we were doing it without charge but it also means they have to come off the field they have to come back for weeks at a time and abandon their work so that was one of the reasons they wanted somebody to come down things I found out as a psychologist there's an effect called kwashiorkor and kwashiorkor has been known about for years it's often called refugee child syndrome and I'll make a connection to voodoo here in just a minute but in kwashiorkor the child often by age two or three months is no longer fed milk no longer breastfed they discontinue breastfeeding and put the child on the most available source of calories which is sugar water so now you have an infant developing on a high calorie zero protein diet and the effects of kwashiorkor as I said have been looked at since the 1930s it's actually an African word but what's only recently being looked at and I'm one of the few people that actually have a chance to look at it is to say we know the physical effects in terms of blown bellies we know the physical effects in terms of lowered immune systems we know the effects in terms of skin coloring and hair coloring changing going to a reddish tint the physical effects have been well studied but what hasn't been looked at is what's it doing to these children's learning and this is not a research project it was doing but finding that when I looked at children who had kwashiorkor

[32 : 38] I was finding mild mental challenges learning disabilities attention deficit disorder which makes perfect sense the child's been denied protein when they're in that rapid developmental phase another problem late diagnosed learning disabilities I picked up probably one of the most profound learning disabilities you've met young lady that I've ever found in my entire career and I've seen a lot of kids in my career and she's the child of a missionary family but they had no services available there's nobody at the school trained in special education at all that's changing next September they're getting somebody in special education so some of the children who are missionary or families who have lived there their whole lives have not had access to the service so when we're picking it up we're picking it really late this young girl is in high school and has been failing in high school and realize she is bright but she has a very very significant learning disorder surprise children of wealthy homes I found these kids to be the most difficult to test and it's interesting when I came back I got into the literature the same effect that I saw is being seen in California amongst wealthy families in California it takes the shape of we have a very high income family they're living in a very nice neighborhood both mom and dad are professionals they're out of the home working all day long so they hire foreign domestic staff to come in often illiterate and with poor

English often in California Spanish speaking staff who come in who are not able to give good English language models and as a consequence children spending so much of their time with people who are not highly literate and don't speak English very well the children of those wealthy families are showing language delays because they're getting mixed services I found the same thing true here with these wealthy families because some of the wealthy people I met are government officials I had a nice meeting with the deputy chief of police and we got along really well we prayed we prayed together and after I finished that and he said he liked me he said told the director I really like that fellow he's nice he said I don't think you have to worry about being taken downtown now you'll probably be you'll probably just fine but there's a the parents often business people or government officials are speaking French the children are learning in the school in English but the children all speak Creole on the playground and Creole amongst the domestic staff at home so you've got these three language groups running and I realize those children are actually struggling in learning probably more than the other two groups are because they're jacks of all trades in three languages but haven't sufficiently mastered any one of them culture and assessment at the bottom

I mentioned that story earlier about the police officers don't go near a policeman it was a good lesson in the cultural contamination that so many of our tests have all tests all psychological tests are culturally biased they are that's just taken as a fact but I want to give you one little example do you remember I was told don't go near a Haitian policeman don't look at him well there's a test that we use here if a child is given a psych they'll probably get his particular test it's called the Wexler scale Wexler individual scale for children fourth edition and one of the questions that you ask you do blocks and puzzles but one of the questions that you ask the child here is why do policemen wear uniforms that's what you ask those kids well the answer is so you know who they are you can go to them for help what's the answer in Haiti so you know to stay away from them truly I mean I realize I'm marking that correct I'm marking that correct so what's correct in Canada was not on that one little item my reactions I'm at the top of page two my reactions were delayed

I worked really hard I saw more kids in two weeks than I would in a month and a half back home I worked Saturdays I worked evenings just to get as many kids and they had a list and we managed to jam more kids on at the end because I realized when I'm gone that's it they're not going to get any more services and the parents were really keen to have their children looked at I didn't have any emotional reactions while I was there I had a wonderful time I was so well taken care of the kids were fantastic I got out and they took me up to see Fort Jacques and do a little bit of tourist stuff and that was nice as well I got to worship in several churches but when I was being taken back to the airport Steve said again we get short termers here all the time I need to caution you this is going to hit you when you get home you've been somewhere very different there's a lot of starvation people are dying where we were they were baking mud into little cookies and putting margarine on and eating that to kill the pain of hunger and a lot of families because of food prices rising coming back to a meal every two days I said okay fine I got on the plane

I wrote a little prayer for Haiti which I've got at the end I'll tell you about that later I flew back to Montreal I was just dog tired I just slept on the plane started catching up with me and I got to the

little motel and I phoned home to say that I was safe in Montreal and we had talked by email but no telephone communication and I thought it was a very tough cookie so I phoned and the phone rang and Sharon said hello and I was gone for about a half an hour on that phone and I am so blessed I have a wonderful family one of them one of the youngest this year my kids are great and I kept a journal while I was in Haiti and they were out at the house for about two days running and I had to read my journal back and it was a hard read because the things that I had been writing about I was just observing them while I was there when I thought about them afterward and I had a time to think about what I was watching these people struggling with it really hit me second time I didn't keep a journal and I wasn't as emotional but that's because my wife was in bed with me at night and we could whisper about what we'd seen during the day so that helped Sharon's work when Sharon went down she did a whole bunch of stuff she's very modest about it she doesn't like to speak in public so that's why she worked at the school helping children with reading you help teachers with marking she helped get ready for the

[38 : 29] Christmas craft fair to get the school all set up but while we were there a retired Canadian couple who work at the school she's a retired nurse said that she's developed her own ministry just honoring she once a week she goes down into the deep ravines where people live down in the very bottom under sheets of tin and stuff where tuberculosis is epidemic and it's really bad and said I go down there once a week with another person who's got some medical supplies cashed away in the school visiting medical people bring samples in from the United States and would you like to come and she said yes and I thought wow I'm up in the school I've got one of the few air conditioned rooms in the building I'm working with kids and she's going down the ravines and I wondered how she would do when she came back at the end of the day and she said I'm going back I'm going back and she did and I have such huge admiration for the fact that she would do that and go down to the kind of place she was in because I never went to see anything like that.

Now to the topic of voodoo and again this is just remember a person with four weeks experience the history of voodoo in Haiti I'll run through this really quickly Haiti was the first island that Columbus bumped into that's what people think and Haiti didn't do well after contact with Europeans.

In essence the French and the Spanish in various ways eradicated the native population people. I was talking to one of the professors working down there saying they do genetic testing to see if they can find residual genes from the Qasquea people that's the schools named after the original habit and says we can't even find genetic traces.

They just went from out if the disease didn't kill the Spanish or the French armies just slaughtered them just get them off the land because we want to grow coffee and we want to grow sugar. As they brought slaves in from Africa they came in extremely large numbers and one of the things that was observed is the slaves were coming in from various places in Africa so the authors at the time say there were about a hundred discrete language and or cultural groups arriving in a slave population and being forced together so then the slaves couldn't speak to each other.

They were from much different places in Africa. The Catholic church was dominant as the slaves arrived. It was a French country and as the slaves got off the ship the priest was there to baptize them as they passed by in their chains.

[40 : 40] So they're now all Christians so you're Christians welcome to the island. There was no indigenous culture because the local population had been essentially eradicated. Literacy among slaves was actively and severely suppressed.

The idea if they learned to read they may become difficult to handle or we don't want that. There was a commonality rapidly established amongst the slaves based on the formation of the Creole language which is often called slave French.

It sounds like French and there's some French words but the spelling are odd and you begin to listen and my high school friends started to help me a little bit but it's a simplified different version. So they developed their own language based on what they were hearing around them and adapted to their culture that way.

They also brought with them voodoo and that's an African animus based religion it's very complicated. Haiti was exceptionally prosperous for the Europeans. Did my Google search on this to be sure of myself.

The ratio of whites to slaves was as high as 32,000 whites looking after 790,000 slaves. That was at the peak. The slave population was not stable. Disease was epidemic.

[41 : 47] People were simply being worked to death in a tropical climate and the birth rate was extremely low amongst the slaves so that they were importing 40,000 to 50,000 per year to keep that 790,000 where they needed it to be.

Right away they had a problem with slaves running. If you've been to Haiti it's very mountainous. It's really rugged and Port-au-Prince isn't a little plain but then it's like steep. And I mentioned there the crumpled paper.

Napoleon never got to see the country that he reinvaded but somebody of Napoleon is supposed to have said, well it was the king of France I'm not sure, who said, what does Haiti look like? And the person reporting back took a piece of paper crumpled it up and threw it on the floor and said it looks like that because it is tremendously rugged and steep.

And now it's essentially defoliated the people's mostly gone the soil is gone it's just been really severely treated. In 1685 a code was written for use with slaves and I don't want to be dramatic with this it's called the Code Noir you can look it up it prescribed punishments for slaves they were working on sugar plantations and they were growing coffee it included execution by throwing them into vats of molten molasses building special barrels filled with nails and then rolling them down the steep hill sides as an example to others it was a real brutal repression.

Then you've got a revolution in France where it gets to the slaves they're thinking hmm sounds like a good idea they became more difficult to deal with the reading that I've done suggests that the bureaucracy managing the place was having difficulty understanding how do we take what's happening in France and work it out here so the bureaucracy got itself into a problem and open rebellion breaks out and the slaves organize they essentially push the French off the island the French took as much as they could on the way out including mahogany Haiti was a beautiful island covered with mahogany trees at one time mahogany is extremely valuable 1802 Napoleon reinvaded it sent his armies back in and they were defeated by a slave army including a division of Polish troops there was a Polish division within the French army and the Poles remember the fact that they were in the French army because Napoleon had attacked Poland and they watched the slaves fighting the French and said change sides so they jumped to the slave side and gave them some assistance Christian workers number 12

[44 : 04] Christian workers in Haiti commonly state that voodoo is a key problem in sharing the gospel and this is the area where I'm not sharing experientially I'm sharing a little bit of experience but trying to share what the missionaries told me about and the little bit that I've been able to read and then drawn a working conclusion and seeing if I can make an application here at home and when I go to questions and stuff please challenge it I may be totally totally totally wrong on it but it seemed to ring something was ringing in my ears between 1800 and 1860 the established church in Haiti was Catholicism that was a Catholic church and essentially the island was excommunicated because it was under rebellion and missionaries priests nuns were withdrawn and there's a 60 year period very well described in the literature during which the churches essentially sat empty and voodoo and some native Catholic clergy and stuff and voodoo particularly moved into that space the Europeans have gone they've taken their faith with them we have voodoo which has been developed out of

African religion so we occupy the churches and use them they're here they're important they're good places to meet voodoo now had a home it lacked an institutional structure and scripture and everything I've read now says there is no voodoo scripture it's an oral tradition but it occupied Christian spaces in that process of occupying Christian spaces the practice of voodoo was then validated because now you've got something that was alien to Christianity because of the essential nature of the things that the voodoo people believed in but it's now occupying Christian buildings essentially with quotes and saying that then gives it a stamp of approval after the 60 years the Catholic Church returned to reclaim its property and as the clergy arrived they noticed something there were a lot of people in the churches now full of people doing voodoo and you have to face a problem do we reassert more orthodox forms of Catholicism and lose the congregations or do we adapt and so the decision was made to adapt so on the one hand slaves practicing voodoo were adapting themselves into Catholic spaces

Catholics returning or adapting themselves to voodoo and therein lies a story that I think is interesting and compelling so the man this is one of the few quotes I'm putting in from another author about voodoo says voodoo notice he spells it differently is more than a symbiotic product of African religions and Catholicism rather it is a tertium quid or a third thing emerging from two

different things it became the state sanctioned religion of Haiti in the year 2000 so then I asked myself a question you'll see it in bold there does adaptation lead to adoption so the idea is that the church tried to adapt to un-Christian belief un-Christian practice consulting spirits of the dead and the various practices of voodoo don't make sense in terms of any Christian context that I can anyway imagine but in the process of adapting it's ended up adopting it so that what you now have is this idea of a third force for fear of losing credibility with the population and in an effort to keep influence and attendance has the church itself simply become pagan and lost its message and lost its influence this creates an even more difficult task in sharing

Christ's gospel with those who have become part of the adopted church and then my question is does this sound familiar I think it does sound familiar as the church bends over backwards sometimes to try to adapt itself to the world around it it ends up adopting the world around it and it loses its message in its zeal to be in favor it loses its essential message and I know in talking to the missionaries they identified that repeatedly as a key issue they faced because voodoo and Christianity have become a hybrid a hybrid car two sources of power for it and it's not working it's a third thing and I was struck by the passage in Corinthians to the weak I became weak to win the weak I have become all things to all men so that by all means I might save some I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings but my thought around that passage is becoming all things for the sake of sharing the gospel as opposed to becoming all things for the sake of having people in the building and I think that's one of the issues behind voodoo and certainly that's what the missionaries were telling me the bottom of page two there was a saying in Haiti very often repeated and I heard it over and over again Haitians are 70% Catholic 30% Protestant and 100% Voodoo and I can't overemphasize the impact that being around all that voodoo had on us it was very very obvious non-Christian thought and practice has become deeply institutionalized I am a Christian this is something I heard from Haitians I am a Christian and I believe in God and his son and I believe in Dumballa who is St. Patrick's famous for the snakes and that has a connection and the virgin birth as shown to us in Izuli the Black Mary so that for every Catholic figure saint within the Pantheon you've got an analog in voodoo and you just merge them together and say that's Mary that's also that's Saint Patrick that's also so they have two forms the manifestations of voodoo in everyday life and in special education and here I'm stretching to make my connection for you fatalism and any one of these could be discussed in length and they are very well portrayed in the literature things just happen they do that we are controlled from beyond by the spirits and that's a feeling that was repeatedly expressed to me you know it's going to happen it's going to happen the spirits are running things anyway so I lose a lot of my ability to make changes and then in special education

[49 : 50] I don't care what you say nursing a child past two months even if it's possible we're not talking about the next child arriving or the fact that the mom is very very ill even if possible means that snakes will come into our house when the missionaries told me you're making this up they said no we're seeing kwashiachor in these children well in some cases it's because the families can't afford to provide protein but in other cases it's the widely held voodoo belief that if you nurse a child past the second month snakes will come into your house St. Patrick does that and that sounds completely spun around but in my perspective I'm saying to families I'm looking at a child with kwashiachor with a mild mental handicap probably caused by that lack of protein and they're being told that it's because you mustn't nurse past the second month and talking to the medical people working said you can tell those families over and over again keep nursing your baby keep nursing your baby snakes will come they won't come and then the very polite response is we really don't know what you're talking about snakes will come

I don't care what you say nursing a child past two months even if possible means the milk goes to the baby's head and hurts the brain again we got that information from medical teams working over there I saw it it's just a tiny little picture the cleaning lady came into the room I was working it was very nice and we had a little chat in my high school French and she accidentally knocked over a vase and broke it big deal I helped her pick up the pieces but later on the director very kindly said to the lady you broke the vase and then the conversation ensued I got it translated later no I didn't do it the vase just fell over things happen it's beyond this I'm not responsible and the director said but you were with the duster you knocked the vase over it fell but you knocked it over no it fell it was meant to be it just happened or talking to parents about a child and trying to encourage them that their child is capable of better reading better mathematics than saying my son is just not smart and

getting that from the parents my son is just not smart he was meant that way we'll try but it's not hopeful it's the way things are so trying to get past that fatalism

I can tell you that when I work with families here and I still do work in Surrey and I'll be working next week with a child with a disability that's not the attitude you get in most families here my kid can do more how much more can he do as opposed to he can't do more he's not capable of it number six we must save for my father's funeral if we want blessings we must ensure that the loa spirits are pleased with us and I was told by one of the staff in a room with two people there are twenty loa we are surrounded by these spirits so that belief that there are spirits everywhere that you can interact with the first house I stayed at and you saw this as well at the Hersey household they've lived in that home for I think eight years now it's a rented house the house next door the grandmother who lives there is a voodoo priestess and we were warned about that and said you know she's a very nice lady but don't look out the window at her particularly when she's in the backyard tending her pigeons and she had a big block we heard them making all this noise those are her sacrificial pigeons she's a professional voodoo priestess

I said okay and they said if we begin to see portable chairs arriving then we will be moving out of this house for the night and we'll go to another missionary's house because the sweeping of the animals and the pigs being killed and the beating of the drums and the chanting it's impossible the children can't tolerate it they can't sleep that didn't happen unfortunately but I did notice this number seven the government cars the only new cars that I saw while I was in Haiti were outside that house all day long they came and they went to see the mambo the voodoo priestess because these were government officials trying to leave this country out of its problems and they were there to consult with her to receive advice and to sacrifice to cast against enemies and ensure success she had 20 or 30 pigeons in the backyard ready to go and she tended them lovingly every morning yield no we must look after ourselves and again I don't want to overdraw this but these are just little vignettes trying to get ready for the Christmas fair and they had these really heavy picnic tables under the mahogany tree at the school where staff and children eat together and Sharon and one of the other teachers was attempting to move this massively heavy picnic table

I wasn't very healthy and two of the fellows with the shotguns were standing there just watching it and the idea of helping that's not my job that's your job it's the idea of I do my job I don't do any more than my job and there's a fatalism involved in that as well I was told and finally Christianity in art and in slogan on the bus some of the pictures were just phenomenal we have photographs if you're interested in them sometimes not an unusual picture the top of the bus at the back beautifully painted it says mercy Jesus John 316 that's at the top of the picture and then there's a painting of Jesus Christ and John the Baptist standing in the waters of baptism and in the picture you can see underneath because they're both standing on a bikini clad woman who was from the James Bond movies with sequins around the edges and sequins I'm told are a symbol of voodoo as well verses as good luck I said when I first arrived I'm seeing all these bible verses written on walls written all over the place thank you Jesus bon Dieu all kinds of things I said there must be really faithful people here there's a difference between believing and sloganizing the idea that if I put a verse on my bus it'll be safe from accidents if I put a verse on my shop it'll be safe from accidents and if I can surround it by voodoo symbols and the mermaid the underwater girl is this powerful voodoo symbol then we'll combine them so Christianity and voodoo go together and I'll be safe and happy how did it get this way at number ten coming to my conclusion after my first visit

[55 : 26] I felt a sense of despair again based on just two weeks I was sort of looking this place has broken down the power wasn't on the water wasn't on 80% unemployment 80% of the population making less than a dollar a day the United Nations has it listed as the third worst country in the world for foreigners to work in right behind Afghanistan and Iraq thinking this is not good people with nothing to do problems of all kinds starvation prostitution very high HIV rates all kinds of terrible things and I said how did you get this way how do you get out of this I remember asking one of the career missionaries a lovely Dutch woman she's been there 21 years and I said if you could wave your magic wand and do one thing what would you do other than the spiritual realm and she said get the power on and leave it on because the power system completely fails all the time because she said without power you can't pump sewage you can't pump water you can't have businesses running you can't have factories and she said we used to have factories here we used to have tourism here you can't do any of those things without the essentials and power as base to that so I said oh I can't imagine

Steve was trying to explain to me one evening the story of Haiti and all the trouble with Papa Doc and Baby Doc and the Tauntaun Mahout the gangs that went around and the murders and stuff in the streets I said oh I can't imagine how a country would get like this and then Steve said these words to me in number 10 he said Steve said you know Dave you're from Vancouver take Vancouver turn off the power turn off the water turn off the sewers lose your police and army and replace them with gangs let it sit like that for 50 years and you see how hard it is to fix I think that was very very I didn't have the heart to tell him we live in Surrey so I didn't want to go there was it worth going yes it was worth going will we go again that's an interesting question because they always do this missions agency is really good about following up they telephone are you okay talk to us write a report for us and so we did that and they said do you think you need to go back would you like to go back and I had to be honest and say the answer is no because I've now seen more kids in that school than any school in Canada would get in five years so I said we weren't caught up maybe going back in a couple of years would be appropriate

I'd go back if they said go back but I said no I think going back immediately doesn't make sense in terms of the kind of work that I do they don't need me there to do that although I'm in email contact with some of the families and stuff and there was a long pause and I said but you know it was kind of a fluke because I don't speak another language and you had a school where they teach in English and then there was a pause and she said we have a school in Nigeria that's in English are you interested and we said yes my last comments and I'll take some questions if that would be okay on the back of the page I want to read you two things the first one is called A Prayer for Haiti and I'd like to read it and if you join me with me as a prayer I would appreciate it there's nothing particularly special about this this is what I wrote when I was waiting to get on the plane to come home the first time and I just copied it out of my little journal poor Haiti you are crumbled and fallen built by slaves and freed by slaves thank you invaded and fought over how will you ever recover what do you need may God guide you and lift you may he put you back on your feet may he give you pride in yourselves may your trees grow back may your power stay on may your officials serve you and not themselves may you know

Jesus Christ may you prosper amen I didn't hear a single gun shot while I was there although there had been a lot of trouble we didn't hear a single gun shot but the first time that I was there I didn't hear anything nobody shooting I had all kinds of trouble I flew back to Montreal and then I flew back to Vancouver the next day and a day later this happened during my trip I got the following email from Haiti I'll just read that to you Pastor Pastor Odenar Sincere was one of Sue Espoix that's the name of the missions agency they're called under the blessing was one of Sue Espoix most effective ministry partners for decades Pastor Odenar has been instrumental in training deacons to assist poor and transform their communities Pastor Odenar trained deacons in Port-au-Prince's impoverished and crime infested neighborhoods despite increasing gang violence Pastor Odenar chose to live and serve as a pastor in the troubled Fontamara neighborhood of Port-au-Prince in the early evening of September the 18th that's when I was traveling Pastor Odenar and his wife were returning from an evening church service as he approached his home he was attacked and murdered in a failed kidnapping attempt please pray for peace and transformation in Haiti so again I'll just recontextualize that by saying I'm no expert in Haiti we haven't seen do a much better job what I'm giving you is just my reactions are there any questions or comments anybody would like to make yes it seems they have a philosophy of trying to cover all bases with regard to spiritual protection of some sort pretty much like the Chinese yeah I think the word that occurred to me watching the way that spiritual life in Haiti has worked out remember there are many Christians in Haiti serious dedicated believers but culturally it seems that the whole thing has become a massive superstition of fetishes and good luck things things like when you get to an intersection which usually jammed takes you 45 minutes to drive 10 miles and the intersections are completely clogged wherever there's an intersection we were told look up at the wires there's these odd objects hanging from the wires they're fetishes because they believe every time there's an intersection there's spirit traveling back and forth so I think if you look at the people's origins they were stolen from their homelands they were forcibly transhept half of them died on the way and when they arrived they were brutally treated they held on to their African beliefs they created a new language out of the language of the people who were oppressing them and then they hybridized it with Catholicism and I guess the thing that troubles me about it is that it has degraded on a very broad sense into sort of sloganeering that the

[61 : 56] Bible is good luck pictures of Jesus are good luck and again talking to missionaries it's very difficult when people believe they've got Christianity and voodoo and how do you then say no this person whose picture is everywhere Jesus' picture is everywhere it says mercy Jesus all the time is not a voodoo God he is the savior of mankind and he wants to save you and he said that's a real uphill struggle it's a real uphill struggle for the missionaries to get that it's easy to fall into that you like to feel safe cover your back just a little bit any questions for my wife I have to tell you she was injured she broke her finger she fell in the shower because I left water on the tile floor she went the only injury in

Haiti was caused by me she's still getting physiotherapy on the finger I'm reminded of that constantly yes you know I asked that question I don't pretend to know much about Catholicism at all but talking to the missionaries that we were staying with career missionaries and they were saying no you have to understand it and go back into this context of what happened and it does seem strange although I'm told I don't know very little about Catholicism but in different parts of the world Catholicism will bend and flex to adapt to local customs and traditions and amalgamate with local beliefs although I know that from what Harold Van Van Damme was saying he's the head of the missions in charge of the preaching ministry for the island and he's working primarily with Haitian pastors who are working in their churches saying that the degree of the flexing in Haiti is probably greater than has been seen anywhere else I don't know if he has empirical evidence to prove that but that that flexing of the gospel to meet local conditions you know takes the skids right out from underneath the gospel and that the

I said don't the Catholic priests in town we went to the performance of the Messiah in the big Catholic church downtown it was wonderful don't the priests resist that and he said by and large no no because we want people to come to church we want them we'll give them the message so they'll be Catholics on Sunday and voodoo practitioners for the rest of the week and have a double assurance the assurance of a voodoo culture and the Sunday assurance of Christianity and are not being challenged on that amalgamation I don't know how to explain it but it's certainly very very powerful and again as the missionaries kept saying to us that makes their job in promoting the gospel very very very difficult and I mentioned at the beginning that I don't want to press things too far but I see analogues to that in the western church in Canada where people will say well you know we'll adopt this fashion this belief we'll give we'll give on doctrine so the people will want to be part of us and pretty soon the church isn't the church it's become the outside and it's it's dressed up to look like a church but it really just represents the world it's lost the gospel in that sense and I think that's essentially what I think from my little experience

I saw in Haiti it's strange because it brings me back to what happened in the past year in England where they were the neck of the cardinal because they wanted these relics in the cathedral so they're really so in the bone worship it's not a good type of it yeah that is something that is really frightening it's very very complex and it is frightening and again I think from the perspective I had was it's sort of so everywhere it's just a little anecdote they had a Christmas craft fair on the school grounds and local craftsmen and artisans could put their booths up it was really fun Santa Claus showed up fantastic well died of perspiration in that suit it was the director but everybody who was there most of them were Haitian folks bringing in some stuff and we bought some stuff but they all received a set of instructions saying this is a

Christian school no voodoo emblems items objects nothing and then we watched while Harold's wife and another lady had to repeatedly have to threaten to have people removed from the premises because I don't understand why this is but the use of sequins the little dazzling sequins is a big thing in voodoo and so somebody had set their booth up knowing they were in a Christian school and following the rules and then when no one's looking all that stuff comes out and then the staff coming over and saying put it away you know that's not allowed here that's voodoo we are Christians it's not here it's not to be here and then underneath them ten minutes back up again until they're having to say then you're going to leave if you bring that out one more time and I don't think it was for the purpose of trying to sell because I don't think people were buying it it was more of display again I don't want to over overstate it but it seems to be that drive to display voodoo symbols it's really really important I bought some art that I brought home nice plates and stuff last time we bought some things at the mission house where missionaries out in the field bring in good quality stuff to a central location and you can go and purchase things there and we got some beautiful wood and obici wood and gorgeous crafts really fine crafts being done in Haiti but if you go

out on the street as you did you need to have somebody who's experienced with you because you can end up very easily buying things that are covered in voodoo symbols without even knowing it because it's so complicated you don't want that this is good there's no symbol embedded in there anywhere and we felt very serious about that we did not want to endorse it or encourage it or have it in our home we felt very strongly about that yes

[68 : 00] I'm surprised that it wouldn't just take one woman to nurse her child for six months to kind of disprove that or are they were saying invading people's out regardless well that might be and you know how superstitions get oh well my neighbor the snake came that proves it now there are lots of examples where I mean some of the missions are providing formula that women can use some women can't nurse past the second month because the next child is showing up or because they're just too emaciated to do it but the people working in the missions area say it's just really difficult to get past people who are not well educated and who are deeply steeped in superstitious beliefs I think it's a constant source of frustration it leads to different kinds of medical services though I know that the photographs you took sort of going down into the ravines never going at the same time twice because you get mocked only providing services for children not for adults because of adults wanting to get at drugs and then resell the drugs but little things like walking around with rubber gloves on and just looking at kids heads looking for scabies and just walking over and saying hello putting the medication on and then saying wash that off tonight and on to the next child so yeah I know I think the practical evidence there may well be progress occurring in

Haiti but I don't want to be negative but I sense the sense of there's a positive sense among the workers there but at the same time there's a stoicism that says this is a long slow climb it's very difficult to overcome this stuff yes yes well in the churches that we attended several churches the bigger one being Kiskeia Chapel which is a Haitian church and there they have a very strong Sunday school program and it looked really good to me Kiskeia school is an unabashedly Christian school and they have chapel services every day and all the children take a Bible course in the classrooms every teacher working there has to be a confessing Christian like you know I wasn't reformed I had to be a confessing Christian so with that population they're very very clear and very good it's well done instruction in that school having said that a lot of the other schools the level of instruction is quite poor a lot of it at the basis of 50 kids in a room chanting by rote to learn their lessons and the impact of

Christianity I don't know again it brings me back to that theme that troubled me and that's the idea that when you take Christianity and you hybridize it with another alien belief to me they don't go together but they've obviously fused them you're inoculating the kids against the gospel you're inoculating them against the truth because they're being told these two things that are so different are true and then somebody comes along and says no that half is this is Sharon had one day when we were driving to answer your question we passed by a church that was being built and there is at least one one man there a Christian man who has Sunday school or church for just children and he had hundreds of children come to that one church I don't know I didn't bump into them but they may well be I don't know there's an awful lot organizations in Haiti Christian and otherwise there's a lot of organizations and that puts it in the context too that the number one source of income from Haiti are Haitians living outside of Haiti sending money back that's the backbone of their economy the 100,000 Haitians living in Montreal sending their \$50 back home you didn't end up wearing a pistol no no I didn't I didn't but I I don't know if you were wearing one no no I did end up inadvertently staring up the barrel of an AK-47 we had a vehicle breakdown in the middle of traffic and we were leaning against the back of the pickup truck and Steve had called on his cell phone for help and the Haitian police showed up and it was fine because he can speak Creole but the Haitian policemen they don't put their guns down the UN troops are very careful about gun protocol so he was standing beside me with his gun this way and I was looking down the barrel and he wasn't threatening me I was thinking do I move suddenly or what and I said to Steve afterward I felt very uncomfortable looking down the barrel with that gun and he said it's probably so rusty it wouldn't fire don't worry about it I don't want to find out some sermons have that effect yes well thank you David and any volunteers for Haiti you'd love it
Josh thank you you you you you you