

*Ron and I got home last night [1/20], and after midnight collapsed in bed for a good night's sleep and snuggle with Joshua George and Angel Grace. As I began my review of emails, I was filled with thanks for each of you, and for your tender loving care and prayers for us. For Ron and I, here's a first blush response to let you know how things were. Most of all, please know that we felt lifted high in your prayers, and are so very thankful for you. Blessings!*

Good Morning All, and thank you so much for your emails and prayers.

Ron and I and our whole team are now home from Cap Haitien, safe, sound, and filled with grief for the suffering of the people of Haiti.

We had arrived in Cap Haitien on Monday afternoon, January 11. From the air we were aghast at the flooding we saw, and from the ground we were drenched by torrential rains. It turns out that quite uncharacteristically, Haiti had been having nearly continuous heavy rain since before Christmas. The flooding resulted in people staying home from school, and it foretold that our own travel out to the rural churches and schools would be unlikely. We did get to visit Fr. Noe's schools in Cap Haitien on Tuesday, and got a great sense of the importance of both the children's and the adult vocational schools.

Tuesday afternoon is when the earthquake hit. In Cap Haitien, we felt it as a strong, but not deadly, earthquake. Our team's initial assessment of its strength, as we felt it and not knowing where the epicenter was, ranged from about 3.6 on the low side, to about 4.2 on the high. We heard the rumble, felt the significant shaking—it was enough that you could see the floor and truck shake—and the whole house rattled. Where we were, it was not enough, though, to cause breakage or significant damage.

We immediately texted out that we were OK, thinking that just in case it made the news, we wanted all to know we were fine. We had contact out for only a short time. Then the aftershocks began. In short order, we had no cell service at all. The power went out with the first quake, and people were on the streets wondering and worrying about a tsunami. There was general concern and confusion, but not panic.

As the aftershocks began, Fr. Noe started up his generator, and eventually CNN reports started to come in telling us about the magnitude of the quake and that its epicenter was near Port-au-Prince. By that time, communication by telephone—texting and voice—was touch and go, and soon gone altogether. Reports of the extent of the devastation in Port-au-Prince left all of us shocked and dismayed. There was great anxiety among Fr. Noe and his family as they awaited some word about their families, friends, and loved ones—and word was slow indeed in coming.

Everything essentially shut down on Wednesday as we watched non-stop coverage of the devastation in Port-au-Prince and tried to assess what we could do to help. The road from Cap Haitien to Port-au-Prince was closed, we didn't have speakers of French or Haitian Creole, and uncertainty and distress prevailed. As a team, we worked on the vocational school, and managed to make progress getting three classrooms cleaned out and painted and ready to be used after years of disuse. Now

there is a Woman's Center in the making—pictures and more stories about that to come! It was great to have something positive to work on, and to see hope for the future emerge from the chaos and sadness that surrounded us.

We were able to take some short trips to see Cap Haitien and some of the surrounding villages—and Sunday we had two wonderful services at Fr. Noe's church. Sunday afternoon, we discovered that contrary to the assurances of our airline that our flights would be unchanged, in fact, that system had failed, too, under all of the stress of the attempts to get people and aid in and out of Haiti. Eventually, we essentially got delayed one day in returning, but there's more to that story, too, especially for our members from Colorado.

We are so very grateful for all of your prayers, concerns, and support—and grateful that God gave us the opportunity to be with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. We each have our own story to tell, but for now, suffice it to say that God was present in it all. That, as always, is humbling beyond words.

Please continue to pray for Haiti. And please know that we love you and are filled with gratefulness for you. Ron will write up a trip report soon, and you'll then get photos and a lot more of the story. Meanwhile, from myself and all the team, I send you love and thanks.

Peace be with you.

Janet