

# A Word from the Wilsons

September 2010

The camp's water purification system was not working. It was June 1st, and a team of 40 Campus Crusade staff and students had just arrived at a compound in Haiti that would be their home for the next three weeks while they served earthquake survivors.

The local well water was contaminated with at least five different bacteria species, including *E coli*. Many of the village children suffered from coughs, runny noses and chronic diarrhea as a result.

Suddenly the solar-powered water purifier that team-member Dr. Marc Compere had brought along became pretty important.

Marc teaches mechanical engineering at Embry-Riddle University in Florida. His students in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) there had taken on the challenge to build a self-contained water purification system that:

- supplies safe drinking water for 500 people per day
- is powered by renewable solar and wind energy
- is small and easily transportable
- can be quickly set up by three people who have no formal training

Throughout the spring semester Marc had put the word out to as many engineering students as possible: "Let's go to Haiti and use our engineering skills to bring clean water!" And the students responded—they built momentum on campus and *Facebook*, put out flyers and arranged meetings, and raised more than \$2,800 to construct the solar-powered water purification unit.

Twelve Embry-Riddle students flew to Haiti with Marc to deliver the unit. The compact system, just 11.5 cubic feet in volume, traveled with them in the cargo hold of the plane.

When they arrived at the camp and discovered that there was no clean water available, Marc's students quickly got to work. "The students transported the bulky boxes, unpacked and put the water unit together, and started serving clean drinking water to our own group as well as the local Haitian people," Marc remembers.

After a speedy set-up, the solar panel works beautifully. It powers the water unit and recharges a battery so the pump will continue to work after dark. Every ten minutes, the system fills a five-gallon water bottle with water that meets U.S. federal standards for safety.

"It was incredible!" Marc says. "The entire camp of 75 people plus 300 Haitian K-12 students used the water purifier for five weeks straight before the camp's larger unit became available."



Dr. Marc Compere (right) and Embry-Riddle University ASME students set up their solar-powered water purification system in Haiti.

During their three weeks in Haiti, Marc's team visited the tent cities and IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camps—where they delivered desperately-needed food, water and relief supplies, showed the *Jesus* film, and initiated numerous spiritual conversations.

Over the course of nine weeks in Haiti, three teams of American students, staff and professors not only brought purified water but *living water*, the gospel. They personally led over 150 Haitians to faith in Christ and presented the gospel to several thousand people, including at least one witch doctor and others involved in voodoo.

Marc's unique contributions to the team in Haiti demonstrate the *power of professors!* Professors can motivate and involve students, encourage them in their faith, lend credibility to the gospel and open doors for ministry. And like Marc, many professors possess specialized expertise that greatly aids in relief efforts for the poorest of the world.

Dr. Walter Bradley, one of Marc's mentor professors in mechanical engineering and a founder of Faculty Commons, encourages other Christian professors to seek out research avenues (like developing the solar water purification system) that serve the world's neediest people.

Currently at Baylor University, Dr. Bradley says, "I have sensed God leading me to focus my engineering research to serve the poorest two billion people in the world...rather than helping to make the most comfortable billion people a little more comfortable."

Please pray with us that research and service opportunities like those these two Christian professors have pursued will continue to open doors for the gospel. Thanks for your partnership with us!

*Daryl & Ceil*

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