

Emotions in Haiti:

Our July journey to Haiti was enlightening and surprising. We were invited by a Haitian infrastructure group to attend a meeting of NGO'S and Haitian agencies. Other than the mayors from Ansagale and Pwent a Roquette the others focus on industry, education, healthcare, water and sanitation and residential issues. Concern WW presented a project proposal based on a completed survey of issues related to earthquake affects on LGN.

Their project includes 1. water wells, sanitation and latrines, 2. Livelihoods: work programs and preservation (work for wages), and 3. Shelter: providing homes for the 1300 who lost homes to the earthquake and for the remaining 8000 refugees that remain on the island.

In Port a Prince we met with President Paul and New Pastor Admirables, who will work together on the Petit Gauve and La Gonave Circuits. Leaders from LGN churches had been invited to discuss concerns of our appointment. Only one pastor made the journey and his issues was in regarded to activities that occurred following the earthquake. He seemed content to "have his say." Pres Paul identified the greatest problem on La Gonave as long standing jealousy between church communities.

President Paul said it may take a long time before the LGN Circuit would agree on a location for the manse but it continues to be his project of choice and hopes KEC will eventually have opportunity to spearhead that project. A visit with Pastor Admirables and discussion of the scholarship program, industrial group APG and the water project was amicable. We gave him a check to repair eq damage to the church at Sousafilip where the Circuit Conference will be held August 26th. We were asked to refuse all requests from individual churches as they are ignoring long standing protocol.

We toured the epicenter area of the earthquake and were sad that little debris removal had been done with buildings still untouched nor bodies removed. We noted some attempt to provide security barriers around the tent cities but people remain vulnerable and insecure. Transitional housing is becoming available but at a cost most cannot afford (\$2400.00 US) and the largest number have floors and roofs but plastic walls. Schools are open in large tents and market business is active with a good melon crop this year.

As we lounged in late afternoon we were stunned when a scheduled HDR team arrived. The team was from Main Street UMC, in Bay St Louis, Mississippi, where we set up and managed a Katrina Disaster Response Center in August of 2005. The team leader was the one who contacted our Kansas East DR Director and asked for help. It was a wonderful reunion with those we had served, coming to serve in Haiti. The next morning they presented us with a beautiful cross that had been made from the damaged steeple of the church in BSL to honor the nearly two years Kansas provided leadership in recovery in Mississippi. The cross is being prepared for display and will make a number of appearances before coming to rest in the disaster shower trailer that resulted from that mission. It certainly was a God thing.

Pastor Shirley Edgerton, following much thought, August 10, 2010.