



LUTHERAN MISSION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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2009 Haiti Trip

On February 28, a group of three traveled from the USA to Cap-Haitien, Haiti, to visit and work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, North District. Those who went were: Susan Martin, a nurse from Racine, WI; Virginia Valleau from Independence, MO; and Lil Spilde from Bemidji, MN.

The weather was rainy when we arrived, and it continued to rain for the first four days we were there. We stayed with Pastor Eliona Bernard and his wife Lynda, and their two young sons, Elioth and Bryan.

Susan worked at the Lutheran Medical Clinic, seeing patients and assessing the situation there. She had an interpreter while she worked, making communications easier. The doctor at the clinic is Dr. Brutus. He was educated in the Dominican Republic. He speaks French, Creole, Spanish, and a small amount of English. For the first three days of the week he practices at our clinic, while a nurse covers the other three. Susan learned a lot, especially about malaria, typhoid, dysentery, and other maladies often found in the Caribbean.

Virginia and Lil worked the first few days in the storage rooms, organizing and sorting the boxes that LMA had shipped with the 2008 Container Project, hopefully making it easier for the Haitians to find things. LMA was aware of and knew that some of the things that were sent in the container had been stolen at the port before they arrived at the Madeline Complex, and, with the shipping manifest in hand, Virginia and Lil were on the lookout for other missing items. It appeared that the majority of the missing items were boxes of food. LMA had sent about 350 boxes of food in the container, and though some had been already given away, it was figured that there were about 1/3 of them missing. The majority of the food shipped in the container was provided to the LMA

by two Minnesota organizations "Feed My Starving Children" and "Kids Against Hunger".

Our group also started putting together school desks that had been disassembled before they were packed in the container in Bemidji. Two young men worked with us, and when we left, they had put a number of them together by themselves. Shelving for the classrooms was also assembled, and we patched a rusted spot on top of the storage container with Gorilla glue. (Ever try to get that off your hands without paint thinner?)

On Thursday, Pastor Eliona called the pastors from the North District ELCH together and asked us to meet with them. Each pastor expressed many thanks to the LMA for the many ways LMA has helped their fledgling congregations. We discussed the current construction being done in the North District; the progress of DonDon, the additions to the Lutheran School and Lutheran Medical Clinic at the Madeline Complex in Cap-Haitien, St. Raphael church is in need a concrete floor, plastering, and front steps. We also discussed the start of a new church planting in Grande Riviere du Nord. LMA introduced the concept of an "Adopt-A-Church/Pastor" program. They were VERY enthused about it!

Our group was able to visit the "Airport School" which is currently located in a rented building in a very poor area of Cap-Haitien. There were about 65 children in attendance, but they were in very poorly lit classrooms. There has been discussion about setting up a gasoline generator to power the lights, but they feel they would need an inverter and batteries to provide continuous light without spending a fortune on gasoline. It is one more thing that the North District ELCH and LMA need to think about. The "Airport School" is now included among those schools receiving a noon meal of beans and rice from Trinity/HOPE, a group of LCMS churches from Tennessee and Alabama.

Our group visited a chicken farm near the Madeline complex, which is also an orphanage, that raises chickens for meat and eggs. We learned a lot about their methods for raising chicken and asked many questions. We also spent some time at the "new land" near Madeline, a 4 1/2 acre piece of land which LMA helped to purchase

for the North District ELCH. The church members have planted okra, plantain, squash, and cassava on it. However, as soon as there are bunches of plantain ready to pick, they are stolen. There is a strong need for a concrete wall to be put around the land to make it secure. We were able to procure a copy of the plat map of that land, and will try to find the funding for the land's security and development.



Mother's grateful for gift of food.

On Saturday we made the long, rough trip to St. Raphael and DonDon, with the pickup loaded with boxes of food, some clothing and chairs tied on the top. We were concerned about the river which we needed to drive through, because of all the recent rain. It was higher than I have ever seen it, but we made it through. There were approximately one hundred people waiting in St. Raphael to greet us and receive food and clothing. A short service was held, and an accordion, a gift from LMA, was played. We also distributed chewable vitamins to the children, and left enough for a three-month supply, in which each child receives one vitamin per week. The new well at St. Raphael, donated primarily by the Brookfield, WI group is really appreciated! It is in use, is secure and provides safe water to about 300 families.

We stopped in DonDon on the way back to visit the site where their new church is being built. The foundation is done and the rebar is set into the corners and posts, but they, too, are out of money. The folks there are willing to work and build, if only they had funds for the necessary blocks and concrete supplies.



DonDon Church Foundation

On Sunday, we worshiped with about ninety people in a small second-story room with Pastor Eliona translating for us. The service followed the order of our services, but without liturgy. After the service we walked to the new piece of land that LMA donations purchased for their church building. While there, Pastors Eliona and Gergens closed the deal on the land with the agent. The land had been previously used for cock fighting and gambling. We hope that building a church there is a better use of the land.

The trip was short, but successful, in that we were able to see what is currently being done in the North District ELCH and assess future needs. Every evening we sat around the kitchen table with Pastor and Lynda asking questions, discussing issues, and having devotions. Probably most importantly, we were able to visit with and worship with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Haiti.

*Votre soeur en Christ,
Lil Spilde*

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Distributing food at St. Raphael

The Lutheran Medical Clinic

The Haitian people have seen many struggles this past year. Due to the hurricanes, floods, and rains the resulting illnesses to the Haitians have been terrible. They continue to face great hardships in their lives. Many subsistence farmers have left to find food and jobs in the bigger cities such as Cap-Haitian. As the families travel through a barren country to find food and jobs they fall ill and come to the clinic extremely ill from starvation, lack of shelter, contaminated water, and wounds resulting from travel and disease. They are not able to afford the clinic cost, but the clinic staff treats them and provides medicine as best as they can. Because of this outpouring of service there is no money coming in to the clinic to replace the stock of medication and provide wages for the staff.

Women in Haiti often suffer from depression. One factor is that their husbands are forced to look elsewhere for work or leave Haiti to work in the USA or the Dominican Republic. During such strains in their life, couples become lost to each other and sometimes the women are simply abandoned by their husbands. The clinic pharmacy is not able to afford the medications to treat them.

Even with all of the hardship, many Haitian women are involved in keeping the clinic running to provide service to their community: women like Mrs. Obey, an LPN, who have been instrumental in finding staff and making sure the clinic keeps running. She continues to be a faithful member of the con-



Deb Larson, Ms. Wickland, Mrs. Obey

gregation at Madeline and a wonderful example to other Haitians. She has become a good friend of mine, even if we do not speak the same language.

LMA was grateful that a “Christ in Medicine” team from Nebraska was able to utilize the Lutheran Medical Clinic and offer their services in the treatment of many patients. Nurse Greta Martin will be traveling to the clinic in 2009 to work for a week.

In 2008 the Minnesota North District LWML awarded a \$10,000 grant to purchase medical equipment for the clinic. The LMA thanks the LWML women for their generous support in helping provide the means for healthcare in Haiti.

FUTURE NEEDS: The clinic still needs financial assistance; for purchasing medication, supplying wages, and the completing of the building addition which has only walls and a foundation. The current clinic space is inadequate to meet staff and clients needs. Please, prayerfully consider their needs.

Deb Larson
Lutheran Medical Clinic
Program Director

Haiti’s School Children
Adopt-A-Student in 2008

Schools are an integral and vital part of our church, wherever on earth they may be. For this reason, the Lutheran Mission Association’s Adopt-a-Student program is so important in assisting our sister churches in Haiti. Each year the AAS program has grown and the past year is no exception. Thirty-four students are currently being sponsored by individuals and groups from the Minnesota North District. In 2007 there were thirty-two sponsors and nineteen in 2006.

Further support of the AAS Program is given by individual sponsors who are Thrivent members. Through the **GivingPlus®** program each sponsor dollar is matched by 50%. The Lord has richly blessed our givers and the receivers of these generous gifts.

Mission Trip
Teaching in Haiti
Lori Salvhus, 2008

I have been a teacher for over thirty-five years, but perhaps my most enjoyable and memorable teaching experience ever, occurred while in Haiti in April of 2008. Before embarking on this adventure I had wondered if I would be of any value at all on this trip since one of the main objectives was to work building onto the clinic. After having both knees replaced two years ago, I knew I would not be able to sift sand, carry block or do any of the other construction tasks. Since I am a teacher I thought perhaps there would be some who would like to learn some English, and, even though I have never taught English as a foreign language, this is something I thought I could do.

When we arrived at Cap-Haitian, Pastor Bernard informed me that I would be teaching his seven seminary students English for the two weeks we were to be there. I had a preconceived notion that I would be teaching in the elementary school if it was agreeable to the Haitian teachers. So when I learned my main class was to be adults, I thought, “Wow!” I would be teaching from 3:00 to 5:00 each day. I had to scramble because I had not found a program to teach from and had to make up what I would do each day. Lil Spilde, who had been to Haiti before, had purchased



Lori Salvhus teaching English

the Rosetta Stone, a software program for teaching English. We thought that we could project the software on the wall and it worked well when we had electricity.

Each day, I would go over what I had prepared for the lesson, Lil would write everything I said on the chalkboard (because the men wanted to write it in their notebooks) and we would also use the Rosetta Stone software, letting the men take turns pointing to the correct answer projected on the wall. The first day we had class for two solid hours with no break! My legs were screaming from standing that long on a cement floor. But the class was such fun and the men so eager to learn that I was on cloud nine as we went home that evening.

Pastor announced at church that a free English class was being offered, and although we never had everyone there at the same time, there was a total of nineteen people who attended some of the time. The seminary students were faithful through the two weeks and many of them gave a speech on the last day- IN ENGLISH- saying how much they had learned.

Most memorable of all, was when they sang “Jesus Loves Me” in English, two verses, in the most beautiful harmony. I wished I had a tape recorder! I thank God that I had the opportunity to go to Haiti and I hope to go again soon, the Lord willing.



Students eager to learn.

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LMA participates in the *Thrivent GivingPlus®* program. Donations made by individuals are partially matched. LMA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Donation are tax deductible. Tax ID 20-0050325



New LMA Mission Program

The LMA started an Adopt-A-Church / Pastor Program to aid the growth of the churches in the North District ELCH in Hait.

AACP BASIC GOALS

- To Aid Churches in Foreign Fields – foster growth through financial means, communication, and prayer on their behalf. This brings about a mutual sharing of faith, talents, and gifts.
- To Encourage Pastors – assist and encourage struggling Pastors by providing means to alleviate financial burden, allowing them to devote their time and effort to proclaim the Gospel.
- To Provide Christian Educational Materials – give aid to churches and Pastors enabling them to grow in faith through the Word by supplying Christian education materials, worship materials, devotional materials, and Bibles in the language of the people.
- To Expand Christ’s Kingdom Through Literature - supply books, tapes, videos, and other printed material to Pastors, the Church, the schools, and seminaries.

For additional information about the Adopt-A-Church / Pastor program contact:

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