

Let the Weak Say "I am strong": Our constantly creating God continues to change the opportunities for service to the people and the church on La Gonave.

In April a group from Kansas East Conference, joined Joe and me in PaP and proposed a covenant with the EMH related to priorities set by President Paul. This last week President Paul attended Kansas East Annual Conference to watch as the voting body accepted that proposal with a decisive "yes" vote.

The agreement includes repair of the guest house structures damaged in the earthquake of Jan 12th. Work there was begun just days after the disaster by teams and specialists from Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City. Another major project proposal is for funds and teams to rebuild College Bird School, a prestigious asset for the church. Classes now meet in large tent structures as debris is removed and engineers and architects develop a rebuilding program.

A project near to our hearts is the building of a (manse) parsonage and small guest house on the island of La Gonave. Completed in good time, Pastor Paul could appoint a full time ordained clergy to develop island churches and schools in 2012. We meet with him on July 23rd to consider location along with acquisition of property and building plans.

A young couple from Kansas City has expressed interest in becoming Missionary Volunteers in Haiti for one year. This may be the opportunity for us to pass the La Gonave Church projects to these young, progressive leaders.

President Paul proposed a summer feeding program for children through a grant from GBGM / UMCOR. We will address this while on the island in July. Some scholarship students are attending classes in temporary structures. Water issues remain critical as the well at Dent Griern is still not functioning and many community cisterns need significant repair.

APG, the fledgling industrial association continues to develop the large goat park with animals ready to begin herds for new groups in training. We meet with AAPLAG to discuss groups and resources for fishing cooperatives and gardeners. A land rover is available for our use on the island after some repair.

Water availability (wells and cisterns) continues priority; educational funds for scholarships and teacher training; food for children and of course, industry and the goat park are issues of importance. We return every 12 to 14 weeks to assess progress and meet with church and community leaders. While at home in the US we joyfully share the experience of life on La Gonave with congregations and organizations. Funds generated go into the Advance Special to be used for water, food, education and industry primarily on south la gonave.

We enter a new era, believing God offers a different path for the United Methodist Haiti Mission; hard work and great opportunity for the Methodist Church in Haiti; and, justice and equity to make the weak strong on La Gonave. Times are changing, thanks be to God!

Pastor Shirley, (pneumonia mama) in Kansas, June 14, 2010.

www.centralumclawrence.org