

"Culture Confusion" Walked down the hill to get 500 gouds from Joe to pay for the lambi (conch) we will have for dinner tonight with the small Kansas team. Three cooks work on the rocks outside the cookhouse harmonizing some quiet Kreyòl song as the team rolls paint to Popular CD's.

Mona is doing laundry in a large round aluminum pan, sitting under a shade tree, hanging it over the cloths line. She has worked since early morning and it will finish drying tomorrow. Her toddler sleeps on the sidewalk as does Novem another helper, and Doniz organizes things in the ice chest

Around the team are coke bottles, cameras, bandanas, tubes of sunscreen, bug spray, and water bottles. Around the Haitians are broken shells and knives, music and flies. Heat and humidity require all to take frequent breaks and "cushi" (rest) with a bit of conversation and laughter. The Americans look and explore. The Haitians move languidly and conserve.

Little Jonny, 4 years old leads the family goat down the walk toward home wearing a size 18 month unbuttoned oneze as a t-shirt above his bare bottom and unshod feet. Baby Jenkins crawls behind Grandma Rosemary as she sweeps goat pou pou from the sidewalk. He wears an earring, small bead necklace, green muscle shirt and bare bottom. He is the cute child of a fisherman and progressive, malnourished mama.

Wedlen, a little orphan who claims a special place in our lives was taken to the hospital a couple of days ago and we aren't certain she will survive. She is two years old and when the aunt raising her goes to garden, the toddler is left in the care of her 4 year old sister to roam the community trying to charm food from neighbors. There are many orphans but not one orphanage on the island.

The five team members sacrificed luggage in Florida when told of an embargo allowing only one bag per person. They left behind clothing to bring over 200 UMCOR birthing kits provided by several Kansas congregations plus knitted and crocheted newborn caps and other supplies. Blog and photos later.

One of the team will stay behind and we will participate in a Methodist Women's Conference on July 2nd in Ansaqale. Birthing kits will go to each church represented to be handed out in the many communities as a prenatal gift from the church. And I plan to speak on women's roles and family planning!!

I find myself speaking Kreyòl to the team and English to the staff, who knows what I mean in either language. After two years they read my mind or convince me I want what they are providing because it's best. There is music in the air, rats in the ceiling, huge spiders on the wall, cokes in the cooler, Haitian Prayer Angels and birthing kits piled on a table, and babies dying from unsafe water.

Bill Clinton says, Haiti has the potential to leave behind the pain with promised help from developed countries. Pain is not the property of any one nation or culture, it is the sharing of ways to survive and rise above it that is the way of God. At times it is a bit confusing.

Shirley, June 18, 2009 La Gonave. Blog: <http://gbgmlagonave.blogspot.com> Tomorrow.