

God's Concern "The Exodus scripture this Sunday challenges Judah's parochialism to give them a more universal view of God's concern." Karen Armstrong ends her book, "History of God." with a big "if." We prepare for Haiti Consultation in Atlanta later this month with many "ifs" on our minds.

We ended our first year on La Gonave vacillating between elation, frustration and hesitation about the future. With a zillion NGO's running around Haiti, I think I'm now convinced Haiti will survive because of us or in spite of us, "IF" they are destined to survive.

Joe and Diane, the Vim volunteer, have been playing "bat busters" in the clinic, hanging enough shiny aluminum to make it look like a birthday party. World Vision has indicated they will be sending staff twice a week for mobile clinic but "the church" must first sign some agreements. There are many "ifs" involved in that. Meds come from the US, the nurse volunteers and many save for years to have surgery that costs under \$300.00.

This afternoon a 14 year old cut his knee while cutting wood for charcoal and it looked like a "blood-letting" in front of the clinic. The translator was ready to toss his cookies until I put my thumb over a small but deep cut and washed un-clotted blood from legs and feet.

Schools are finally opening with less than 50% of normal enrollment; about 50% of children have thinning, faded hair; and most adults are significantly underweight just as their children. National schools have nice buildings; more students at lower tuition and one teacher may have over 100 pupils. Individuals start private schools to ensure good education, use their own funds and beg us for pencils. We assure them we will seek sponsors while we pray somehow education will be seen as a form of "salvation" for Haiti.

Next week, we will finally distribute 7 tons of food to the very hungry in 8 coastal communities. Things don't move fast in Haiti; even the people die slowly at early ages. The community leaders are excited and offering suggestions for ways to do something they have never done before. If we don't end up in the "stew" we will distribute food using \$3000.00 from UMCOR-Haiti and \$6000.00 from our support system. GBGM added \$4666.00 to our water grant to use "however" and UMCOR, CWS and ACT Haiti are adding health kits, layettes and blankets as "dessert" for the package.

Speaking of water; the mission of repairing the windmill / well at Dent Griern, begun so many years ago, is a "go". We will also seek a well near Piqua-meby, so far from the element that gives life. Horrible Hanna exploded cisterns in Trou Jaks and Port a Bonheur and blew big holes in bamboo huts, remarkably resistant, and caved in tin roofs everywhere. Gardens are green and corn is tall, lobster is climbing out of the sea and anpil pwosan are swimming through the huge holes in the fish nets damaged by the surge. Nets need mending; cisterns need repair before rains end; and, somehow, Haiti needs to become part of the "world view" ... "if" God's concern is universal.

Shirley, La Gonave, October 17, 2008, in the pouring rain.