

Haitian Spirit? A food distribution following the storms of last year was a surprising event of cooperation and solidarity. Ten communities worked to help us provide food for the most needy. Some feared riots and others expected a futile exercise of greed, but of 10 communities chosen, only one community leader "strayed" and was eventually "decker" by another leader. It seemed Haitian Justice was at work and we noted the untrustworthy one.

That leader stayed in character during failed attempts to open a community clinic but did attend the final meeting that was boycotted by those he had supported. We discussed future needs of the poor and potential programs to help depressed sud la gonave. He sat quiet as others pledged cooperation with sharing and solidarity. As the meeting ended, he embraced me and left with a strange look on his face.

As an agent for agriculture and livestock owners this leader came several weeks ago asking us to fund a seminar lead by a World Vision agronomist. They would address free range animals and other issues so we agreed to help. A full report of the meeting was sent yesterday listing attendance and subjects covered. Included was a proposal for a micro finance group that would "share with the poor" and he was listed as an officer of the group.

Tuesday we meet with group leaders from an organization known as AAPLAG. For several years the group has helped develop industry on much of the island with a focus on helping the poor. We are searching a way to use undesignated funds that will be left when our appointment ends. We hope for a way that has lasting effects and encourages development rather than dependency. AAPLAG encourages administration by local Haitian groups.

This morning, our errant leader arrived with a small group and asked to speak with us. He presented a proposal for an established micro finance group in Dent Griern, to help the poor by letting them help plant a group/community garden. A list identified 20 microfinance members, plus ten poor who can work and two who cannot.

All 32 will work to plant the garden using seed purchased by the microfinance members. Workers will receive a meal of rice and beans the days they work. When the harvest is ready, all 32 will work and claim the produce grown. The additional workers will make possible a much larger garden, provide food for the poor and market produce for the group members.

This Sunday we celebrate the Pentecost appearance of the Holy Spirit. Did the same spirit hover before creation, put words in David's mouth, then a zillion years later appear as the advocate in Jesus' absence? Is it just possible that same spirit would touch a heart in Haiti and change a perspective?

Joe discovered a garden hidden on the compound and a goat tied to a tree. They belong to the very poor couple we hired because we couldn't tell them no another time, or listen to the children crying. On \$25.00 a month they have a goat and a garden and surely the Spirit is in this place.

Shirley, May 29, 2009, Haiti blog: <http://gbgmlagonave.blogspot.com>