

Saturday Poems:

When you have no education, you are sick;
when you have no food, you are sick;
when you have no clean water, you are sick;
there is no clinic for this sickness.

When your house is broken and you have no water or no food,
you fix what you don't have, first.

When a man reaches into his pocket and hands you money,
you must buy what you need most.

These paraphrased comments were made this morning in a clinic planning meeting which was boycotted by three angry leaders. Without pressure from the power structure, poetry is possible; listening is possible; expression and thought is possible; and, people can make compassionate decisions for the welfare of the whole.

I thanked the thirteen for the hard work they did to complete a census in 12 communities which identified households, ratios of age groups, education, vocation and vaccinations. We then discussed the results of a four day free clinic. Over 400 exams revealed 90% of the problems were identified as nutrition or water related illness. I reported construction costs had recently gone up nearly 300% and starting a clinic would require major construction. The meeting was then opened for discussion, comments, suggestions and personal thoughts. These comments are samples of the thoughtful conversation.

The meeting ended with a consensus (praise God) that a clinic, with education and outreach is very important, but the most reasonable necessity for life is providing food at some reasonable cost with a food store. The water project is progressing with geological challenges, and education, although critical, is dependent on factors beyond our control.

The meeting adjourned to await conversation with our KEC leadership and suggestions, then to meet again to "do what we can do with what we have."

The clinic seems unlikely but we agreed that Jesus healed in many ways, and most often from within and with the "bread and water" of life.

We have five months left in this appointment with early separation anxiety on both sides. Some have never figured out we have been about serving sud la gonav as the Haitian Methodist church agreed to do many years ago. An ecumenical group keeps asking if they can invite replacements if they provide a home and transportation. Our presence means they have identity and hope.

As we plan for their future, knowing somehow we will always be a part of it, we pray for wisdom to follow God's will with the generous gifts of so many, for the people of sud la gonav.

Shirley, La Gonave, May 9, 2009. www.centralumclawrence.org blog: <http://gbgmlagovave.com>