

Seeing Again for the First Time: Hot, humid, still, days with a silent mirror like sea floating debris and zillions of baby fish. Boats quietly floating sans sails or with, dugouts or charcoal boats riding low in the water, and children not yet ready for school swimming and searching pods from the sea to crack and eat. Tall cumulous clouds pink, orange and gray, thunder constant and far away until dark, bugs, birds, crabs and multi-colored things scurry everywhere. In Haiti, it is always summer.

Diane and I delivered food to the man we hired to cut brush because his children are malnourished. A marmet and half of rice, a mini marmet of beans, a bag of spaghetti, and pint of oil should feed them for a few days. He is old and climbed the tall palms so I could see the sea.

I played tour guide and we made house calls in Abamang. Immediately children surrounded us, with little hiding behind big, smiling and reaching out yet afraid to touch. Grins and giggles, came out of naked skinny bodies with thin orange hair. I realized how much they have changed in the last year and I was glad Diane had not taken her camera from the case. Many I have treated for "grippe" this last year and only a few have gained much weight although infants are now toddlers.

Today I was saw them again for the first time.

We have been assured GBGM will help us get food and we have community leaders making lists of the most malnourished in their villages. At market this week we purchased 25 lbs of rice, 5 lbs of beans, a gallon of oil and 12 bags of spaghetti for over 170.00 US and estimate it will feed 4 small families about 4 meals. Our hope is UMCOR will purchase at much lower cost since we have people in over 14 communities to feed plus shipping, packaging and distribution.

The children we see and the adults we hear. Madam Connell greeted us on her rock, covered with a quilt, preparing a dough ball and 2 tiny fish for her meal. A lady in rags smiled, rubbing her tummy, "grangou" she said the first time and just a smile and hand shake the next. Mud and green water stand between houses from continued rain and without waves the shore smells bad.

Today, I sent a request for disaster response teams to help Trou Jacques recover from Hanna who tried very hard to wash them into the sea. Again. This morning a very strong wind blew the top from their leaking cistern leaving them with no water except by boat from Picmy. The children there are also playing in the mud as their bodies get gaunter and hair more orange.

Tonight, on line we watched videos of Gonaives, Haiti, and listened as workers and hungry Haitians told their story. It's the same story told to us every day to hear again, for the first time. The story is part of the laughter, greetings and kisses, jokes and gifts of pretty shells, and nice guys who capture the spiders and carry them outside to the rocks, and, I have to open my eyes to see beyond the sparse braids, the children.

Mexico, Texas, Taiwan, and points north feel the wind and rain. I wander though, when do the children's hair get thin and colorless? Where did they all come from today?

Shirley, Sousafilip, La Gonave, Haiti, October 11, 2008,