

Sitting in the sun is healing to the soul and hopefully "the grippe". Cold, wind, clouds and rain with temperatures as low as 73 degrees have us all bundled up and sniffing. Soon Joe and I will face temperatures much lower and already we are in sweatshirts!

A favorite weekly lectionary site asks, "If Christ is Lord, where is he being followed in ways that save the planet and ALL the "peoples"?"

We live midst people who fail to thrive beyond mere subsistence and accept fate at the hands of those with "power" which is taken, not bestowed. Although a "Christian Nation" there is the constant looking back at abuse rather than ahead with vision and promise of justice.

That is my "lead in" to a puzzling issue.

We have no more money designated for university or vocational school. Dorvil, an engineering student needs money for 12 books and engineering supplies and Patrick, enrolled in plumbing and electricity needs money for testing tools and equipment. Both have been suspended until they have the required supplies. If we can provide for the "now" there is still next year.

Katria, from Sousafilip, whose mother has paid her tuition for university nursing school until now is suspended for lack of this year's tuition of \$350.00 US. One other young man who has paid his own tuition for two years has asked us for work references so he can return to university. Jobs usually go to people who have family or friends in "high places."

The question constantly before us; with more than 1600 primary students in our 9 Methodist primary schools on La Gonave and many with no tuition paid for this year, what is the priority? In Sousafilip, 13 in 6th grade will not take the national exam and have to repeat next year. Less than \$100.00 would let all of them take the exam, yet most would fail as they have no books and poor teachers. Teachers recite the lesson to students who stare at them and can't do homework without books.

Is it right to ask for consideration for dedicated university students who have survived the system somehow, or should we perpetuate a failing education system with temporary programs? I know it is not a fair question? I just wonder if those who have survived may one day be the solution.

The Haiti Consultation focused on raising money to pay teachers. Salaries range from \$200.00 a month in places to \$37.50 a month on La Gonave with some owed 4-6 months back wages. Living here raises more questions than answers but often we fall back on "star-thower" philosophy. If you can save one, two or three, while seeking solutions to saving them all, do it.

So if you have a drunken uncle with mega bucks in his pocket, don't send the uncle but go to our web site and save one of our floundering starfish with a donation designated "scholarship." It will be hand delivered to the student. I promise, you will not receive a dead starfish in the mail.

Shirley, La Gonave, Haiti, November 20th, 2008. www.centralumclawrence.org (Haiti Mission)