

Town Meeting: The center crossroad of Source a Philippe is dirty and rocky with the beach ending one road; a livestock-well guards the east exit; and, a high rocky hill the west. Important town meetings happen at this crossroad with people sitting on rocks, broken walls, porches, the middle of the road and at food stands. We were invited to be the center of a town meeting.

Self appointed community leaders expected us to explain that the local church leader was not responsible for making us stop an industrial loan program. He told us "they" were threatening his life and we needed to explain his innocence.

Much of the day I pondered the advisability of our presence in a place where young women are allowed to die from epilepsy because they "have a devil in the head."

An attentive group listened as we explained our invitation and relation to the United Methodist Church and UMCOR. Interested, they heard we were involved with water projects, recruiting teams to build and repair schools and attempting to teach schools and communities to manage programs that address poverty and hunger.

We explained how we raise money for projects and explained programs funded in the last 10 months by teams and our conference. The information was new to them.

A multitude of questions were directed to ways of improving programs and excitement filled the town meeting as they suggested ways to work together to carry out plans. Joe and I talked, but also had opportunity to hear, as many voices spoke keeping three translators very busy.

The "they" of the threats was suggested as a unimportant local source and feeding the hungry became focus of concern. We agreed to continue the conversation when we return from Port a Prince on Thursday.

A well-spring was opened with understanding of our focus and function plus a promise that all would have opportunity to be heard.

Standing in the midst of passionate Haitians was unlike any experience I have ever had. They massaged my soul, and it seemed, "God's good spirit was leading us on level (if rocky) ground." Ps 143

#2 Shirley, La Gonave, July 28, 2008