

June 2009
Report on the Lutheran Church of Haiti
By Pastor Revenel Benoit

Dear Lutheran brothers and sisters in Christ,

It would be a big mistake if the LCH, as a Church body, only met the physical needs of the people in the Church. On many occasions we have done the best we can to give food, shelter, clothes, and shoes to believers as well as unbelievers all over Haiti. So far, in the past six months, we have received and distributed 12 shipping containers of food and disaster relief supplies. We have served people all over Haiti using this social ministry approach as an outreach tool to win the people for the sake of the kingdom. In addition, the Church has created business and employment opportunities for our members via loans from our Church credit union, in order to promote self-sufficiency.

While doing social ministry to bless as many people as we can, we have not lost sight of the mission of the Church to spread the Good News of the Gospel to the lost, while at the same time taking spiritual care of God's existing flock of believers - as Jesus said, "teaching them to obey all things that I have commanded you". In the LCH we have tremendous opportunities to evangelize and disciple those who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ. We must teach the word of God to new believers so they are equipped to help their friends and neighbors to overcome the draw of voodoo. We must also conduct seminars for the growth of pastors, lay leaders and evangelists so they are equipped to carry out the mission of spreading the Good News. We must adequately train Sunday School teachers, and strengthen our children and youth ministries. Primary school teachers need to be taught the most effective ways of communicating the gospel to their students.

Since January 2009, we have shifted focus from social to spiritual Ministries where we focus on equipping the saints for the work of the Ministry. Our Lay Pastors have been crying out for training because they are facing spiritual challenges. We Praise the Lord that, so far this year, three seminars have been held on their behalf where they were blessed with good and sound teaching from the Word of God. We had 150 Lay pastors attending these seminars. All of them are eager to learn and be trained so that they can better serve the flock. Moreover, we have planned another four intensive seminars for them before the end of the year.

In Parallel with these intensive seminars, The LCH is establishing a Lutheran Bible school in Gonaives for those who would like to study God's word with the goal of becoming pastors, teachers, deacons and evangelists; this school will begin in October 2009. Haitian Lutheran pastors will be teaching the regular courses, and we have been in touch with pastors in the U.S. and Canada who will come down for a week or two of intensive teaching on particular subjects. The Church's foundation can be shaky without a place for Church workers to be trained in the word of God.

If you are interested in helping us establish this Bible school in the city of Gonaives, please get in touch with me in order to make arrangements. You may be the person God has chosen to help the LCH in this spiritual endeavor. My email address is: revenelbenoithtc@yahoo.com

Sometime in July we will consummate the purchase of a guest house in Gonaives that will be able to host approximately 40 guests. The cost is \$50,000 U.S. dollars. Short and long-term missionaries can stay in that guest house at a low cost and we'll guarantee good Haitian food. A loan to buy the Guest house has already been made available; this loan will be repaid from guest house income as well as other church income. Designated gifts toward the purchase are certainly welcome.

A week ago the people of God in Gonaives were blessed with a team that came from Faith Lutheran Church, Euctus, FL. That short-term Mission team was led by Mrs. Helen Roenfeldt. They spent five days in the city of Gonaives providing spiritual and social support in the following areas: A pastor's wife conference with 65 pastor's wives in attendance; a Vacation Bible School for over 70 kids; a medical/dental clinic that saw over 500 people, and; the construction of school benches that will bless about 400 students. The LCH leaders in Gonaives had a great time with the team and we look forward to continuing our spiritual partnership with that LCMS congregation. The two Pastors from that congregation were also on that short-term mission and expressed an interest assisting in lay leaders training in the near future. Thanks to that team and Mrs. Roenfeldt for such a great week of teaching, witness and medical work to the people of God in Gonaives.

Recently we had received from Cross International a 40 foot container filled with lots of vitamin rich foods. That food were distributed to thousands of people in the Artibonite Country as well as in the Port-de-Paix area. Thanks to Cross International, particularly to Mrs. Sandra Koch, and to Haiti Lutheran Mission Society of Canada for providing the necessary funds to pay for the food shipping cost.

Upcoming events: Please pray for a very special team from the Church Multiplication Coalition (CMC) that will come to Gonaives for one week in August. They will assist me in beginning a fresh evangelism and church planting movement in Haiti. Our goal is to plant a church in every town and village in Haiti that does not currently have a Christian to church in which to worship Jesus Christ. I am anxious to begin planting Lutheran churches where there are none, and this is yet another reason we must raise up and train pastors and lay pastors. As Jesus instructed, please pray to the Lord of the harvest they He send workers into the harvest field. Also, there is plan for a big pastoral gathering in the city of St Michel on July 14th. Pastor Jim Glynn will be leading that conference where we expect 150 to 200 pastors.

Needs: We are in need of a 1000 Creoles Bibles; each Bible costs \$10 U.S. We also need about 500 Christian Creole/French song books at a cost of \$5.00 U.S. each.

Thanks to all of you for your prayers and support of the Lutheran Church of Haiti. If you wish to support us, please send your support to Haiti Lutheran Ministry, P.O. Box 14275, Santa Rosa, Ca 95402.

God bless you all.

Reverend Revenel Benoit
President, the Lutheran Church of Haiti