

July 2010
Report on the Lutheran Church of Haiti
By Pastor Revenel Benoit

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, greetings in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Is there any hope that Haiti might one day become a modern and developed Christian nation? Will the Haitian people one day experience the blessings of a good government that truly cares about the people? With God all things are possible. Please continue to pray with us that things change in Haiti, and that the Lord's blessings can be seen all over the country, and that Haiti might cease to be the haunt of demons, and become a country where our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is worshiped and glorified!

That's been the vision of the LCH for the past five years. Despite dirt, deep poverty, voodoo, superstition, and corruption in the government, we still believe that the Lord can turn things around and make Haiti a model of a country that turned to the Him and was rescued from hopelessness.

As long as the Church is committed to spread the Good New of the Gospel according to the Lord's great commission, as long as the Word and Sacraments are administered faithfully, as long as the Church is committed to care for the widows, the orphans and the broken hearted, the Lord will bless the country. That is our conviction, and those are the goals of the LCH. They are attainable, and we press forward to achieve them.

Why I am saying this? I can see a hunger for the Gospel wherever I go in Haiti, in the mountains and in the valleys. If invited, the Haitian people will come to church. It's as if they cannot resist the power of the Gospel. This is a sign that the Lord has not forgotten nor forsaken this country. He has a plan to bless and recue poor, dirty Haiti, and make it a beautiful country.

Last week we experienced a clear demonstration of the people's willingness to receive and embrace the Gospel message. Our Lutheran brother from California, Paul Klenner, brought an evangelism team that put on street crusades in villages where there were no churches. That team of seven people conducted six days of crusades in prominent voodoo areas. Many souls confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and as a result, five churches were planted. The Lutheran Church of Haiti will follow up with instruction and training for the new believers. That makes for a total of 197 congregations in our church body.

That hunger for the Good News of the Gospel is all over Haiti. It is my hope and prayer that one day the government will stop supporting voodoo, that Haiti will be dedicated to Jesus Christ, and that the voodoo temples will be shut down. By the Lord's mighty power this is possible.

The second reason I think we can bring about change in Haiti is that we have lots of brothers and sisters in the US, Canada and around the world who are committed to helping us rebuild our country. The following are some of our current and ongoing projects:

LCMS World Relief and Human Care approved a grant which allows Star Construction Company , a company owned by the LCH, to remove the rubble from collapsed homes in the city of Leogane, the epicenter of the January 12th earthquake. About 90% of the homes in that city were destroyed or so badly damaged as to make them uninhabitable. To date we have removed the rubble from about 650 houses. The grant will cover the cost of removing the rubble of 7000 destroyed houses in Leogane,

Port-au-Prince and Jacmel. Seeing the rubble being removed brings hope to the people, and allows them to begin thinking of rebuilding.

LCMS World Relief and Human Care will establish 4 medical clinics in four strategic places in Haiti where many refugees from the earthquake affected areas have relocated. The cities chosen for these clinics are Gonaives (Poto), Port-au-Prince (Caradeux), Jacmel and the Central Plateau (Thomassique). Each clinic will have a Haitian staff that will provide daily, reliable medical care to the people in these areas. Their salaries will be paid by LCMS World Relief and Human Care for the first year.

The LCH has also been working with the ELCH and World Harvest for Christ to get 100 prefab houses through customs. These will provide temporary housing for Lutheran families. The average Haitian family size is 8 to 10 people. Another 300 prefab houses will be shipped from the U.S. to Port-au-Prince soon. Star Construction Company, working hand in hand with the ELCH and LCMS World Relief and Human Care, can help set up these homes.

The other great project under way is establishing four or five new villages in various locations. All of the homes in these new villages will be new, inexpensive homes based on several possible floor plans. The homes will be available to Lutherans and other Christians.

I also want to report that the Lutheran Church of Canada, through Haiti Lutheran Mission Society in Canada, has helped Haiti a great deal. They provided 100 tents that were distributed to larger families in Port-au-Prince, La Saline and Leogane. Haiti Lutheran Mission Society also provided funding for relief supplies that have assisted about 35,000 people. Recently that society sent \$5000 to buy Creole Bibles for Lutherans that lost their Bibles in the January earthquake. Also \$21,000 was provided to rebuild 7 of the 55 LCH Churches that were destroyed in the January 12 earthquake. And finally, these dear people from Canada have donated \$10,000 to rebuild the LCH bakery that was badly damaged in the 2009 flood in the City of Gonaives. Very soon the bakery will be up running again and will again be a source of income for the LCH.

Also Mission: Haiti in Florida has been wonderful in sending 6 teams that have provided medical care and relief supplies to about 11,000 people. They are in the process of planning an orphanage and education center in the City of Leogane. They have been sending teams to Haiti about once a month. In fact a medical team, which will be led by Helen Roenfeld, will be arrive this coming Saturday, August 7th, and will stay in Gonaives for about a week serving the local people and refugees from the areas hardest hit by the January earthquake.

So it's a blessing to see how eager our brothers and sisters in the US and Canada are to help us. We praise the Lord and are sure that these resources will make a difference in the country of Haiti. The Lord used 5 small loaves of bread and two fish to feed 5000 people. I am sure He will use the efforts of our brothers and sisters in Christ to bring about change in Haiti.

Thank you. May the Lord continue to bless all of you as we partner in His ministry.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Revenel Benoit,
President, Lutheran Church of Haiti