

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

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton has been doing an admirable job in his position as special U.N. envoy to Haiti. He and his team have addressed internal problems of security, finance, health and agriculture. He has arranged for experts to dredge rivers and create levees to deal with the severe flooding that resulted from hurricanes in recent years, especially in my hometown of Gonaives. He and his team have met with various groups in Haitian society to hear about the people's needs and see how the U.N. can better assist us. In about a week he will bring a group of North American business men and women who are interested in investing in Haiti. It is estimated that in the next six months 300,000 jobs will be created. He is bringing hope to the Haitian people as they begin to see the fruit of his efforts.

In the spiritual realm we also need good spiritual leadership. Numerous mission teams have come to Haiti to help in areas such as evangelism, education, health, VBS, construction, etc. They have all had a positive impact, but the most effective ones educate Haitians to help themselves and their churches, their communities and country. In August we experienced a BIG boost when brother Paul Klenner and sister Helen Roenfeldt came with the Church Multiplication Coalition team lead by Rev. Jonathan Morris. In a week of crusades we had over 300 people receive Jesus, developed home Bible studies, and planted three new Lutheran churches. The team prayed for over 1000 people, and more than 100 bibles were distributed to new converts who signed up for Bible studies. It was a challenge, but now that we Haitians pastors have seen this new model of ministry, we understand how we can win souls and plant new churches with our own resources. That's the kind of boost we needed to get our churches moving from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Since August we are seeing the fruits of the self-sufficiency vision the LCH has had since its inception six years ago. We have faced tough economic times the past six months and are seeing our 42,000 church members taking responsibility to support their local pastors and teachers while continuing with evangelism and outreach programs.

Advances in our agriculture program and successes with our LCH credit union have been remarkable. The credit union loaned small amounts of money to over 200 families since the severe flooding last year. All of those families have repaid their loans! We are very pleased with that!

We have had a crop-growing program for Lutheran farmers for the past 7 years. Despite the global economical crisis, our 300 farmers have had successful corn and soy beans harvests over the past 7 months. This has greatly contributed to their financial support of their local churches.

We have also seen local farmers help support the Trinity/HOPE school feeding program by donating food to the local school Principal to be used in the feeding program. They want to contribute to this good cause of providing a hot meal to the kids at school Monday through Friday.

It is our hope that these excellent and positive agriculture and credit union programs can grow and continue to bless our Lutheran families.

The LCH quarry is glad to report that it will finish paying off the Unibank \$250,000 loan by December 15th. This will allow us to begin repaying the recent loan we got to purchase a guest house property for the church as well as a loan to buy a powerful generator for the quarry. Remodeling at the guest house is progressing. We have used the loader from the quarry to remove large quantities of mud from the yard; mud deposited by the flood last year. We are currently rebuilding the walls around the property. Everything is going very well and we expect to have the guest house in operation the first week of December.

Please pray for a group of about 15 men from Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha, NE who will be coming to Gonaives for two weeks of construction work mid January 2010. They will assist the LCH in building a new church facility for Faith Lutheran Church on our six acre campus as our current facility is too small. If any of you would like to join us for a working vacation, please contact John Gebuhr, the TV engineer in Omaha, at 402-932-3443.

Pray also that Channel 6 in Omaha might donate their two solid state transmitters to us as they are now going digital. John Gebuhr has made that request on our behalf. These are BIG transmitters which will help us cover more territory with the Good News of the Gospel. Hopefully John can install them when he comes in January 2010.

Haiti Lutheran Mission Society in Canada has been playing a big part in getting clothes, shoes and bedding items to the Haitian people. The other day another 40-foot container arrived in Gonaives. Very soon we expect to begin distributing clothes and shoes to about 15,000 people in the Artibonite region. This will take about a week. Then, before Christmas, another container from the HLMS will arrive. Many thanks to the HLMS for these shipments that are blessing many Haitian families. Even the empty containers are being recycled for use as storage containers for local businesses.

Needs: Please pray that we can get \$20,000 to get the bakery up and running again. We need about \$10,000 to reconstruct a school that was completely destroyed by Hurricane Anna last year. We will need \$15,000 to buy the Mitsubishi SUV that I have been leasing at the end of the lease term which comes up November 15th. Bibles in Haitian Creole are always needed. Also we are looking for furniture for the new LCH guest house.

May the Lord bless all of you for all your help and support to the Lutheran Church of Haiti.

Pastor Revenel Benoit, President
The Lutheran Church of Haiti