

How's Haiti ?

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Everywhere we look there are signs of new life. Pavements are being laid and roads repaired. Pedestrians are no longer walking in the gutters, climbing over rubble and rubbish, at danger from the wing mirrors of the motorcyclist-taxis catching their arms. Houses are being painted and



vendors encouraged to use new market areas. The National Palace has been totally dismantled and flags fly around the newly painted park areas. Haiti is recovering by degrees. A stable government and international support for increased trade links helps. Investment from multinational hotel chains is a sign of faith in the future, and the immediate welcome to Haiti of a new airport gives a short lived better impression. The overcrowded roads and grid locked capital city remain a challenge to cross. The dust catches in the

throat and after one downpour of rain bulldozers take four hours to clear the roads of the debris washed down in the rivers and deposited on the streets.

Work, for us, has stepped up a pace. After six months we have established useful links and made some inroads. The first Sunday School book for Adult groups has been published by the Christian Education department. The version for the children's groups is on its way. The whole church learning approach demands material for every group and class. Sharon has also preached at least

twice a month since December and has prepared services in French. She was the guest preacher for the annual Women's Conference but was more surprised to find that her services are recorded and played on national Radio Lumiere a week later at 12.30pm in the Methodist slot.



John has been busy at the clinics - weekly at Duplan seeing patients himself and also visiting a variety of other ones. At Olivier he was training nurses and meeting with the traditional birth attendants, known as the matrons. He has set up data collection and record charts and monitored them at Gebeau, Siloe and Bercy aswell as at the

more local clinic of Furcy. A visit to Cap Haitian in the north is planned for next week but a great deal of time and effort has been given to the island of La Gonave which has had a clinic for many years but it closed in 2009. The present Superintendant minister was born in that clinic. John took a 4 hour boat ride to La Gonave, in December to see the derelict clinic. By January an American workteam organised through UMVIM spent a week there renovating the building, clearing debris, re roofing and painting. Some medical volunteers went too, gave simple care and collected the data of types of diseases presented and also weight of children. This was valuable to John as he then knew what essential drugs to send with the next team. Through cooperation with the United Methodist Church of America's scheme for Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM), John has had a series of teams going to the island, looking at water



supply, solar lighting and giving medical care.

It was a day of great excitement when the shipment of donations from Great Britain arrived (last seen filling our lounge at home). Two medical couches were among the supplies and one, donated by Lynn Cawley in memory of her son Josh, severely disabled (22years), who died in



June 2012, was taken by boat to La Gonave and installed in the newly re-opened clinic. The pattern of life from death is at the heart of the Christian good news and to see this equipping occur leading up to Easter, made the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and his mighty resurrection meaningful in a new and tangible way. We are grateful for this donation, the church in Bolton for covering the shipping costs and for the many other donations that have been given by churches, individuals and groups.

At present the money received in London (WMF) is going to a fund to refurbish the school, church and clinic at La Saline with suitable equipment and repaired buildings. La Saline is in very poor area of Port au Prince adjacent to Cite Soleil, a vast slum, and for years it had offered good health care. However it was badly damaged in the earthquake and we were glad when Westminster Central Hall initiated a fundraising activity in their celebratory year. They have been joined by others in order to get things up and running for L'Eglise Methodiste d'Haiti, (EMH - The Haitian Methodist Church).



We continue to be grateful for your prayers, and emails - especially for those of you remembering us on Day 13 of the Methodist Prayer Handbook. and would ask your prayers for the clinics, the continued dedication of work teams working in conjunction with Haitian church members and supervised by the Superintendents. Please pray for the church as it seeks to implement the strategies for church growth and deepening spirituality passed at Methodist conference in January.

Those of you who looked at the material for the services of Easter Offering saw that it was entitled Beyond the Harbour Walls, and remembered how the Celtic saints increased the knowledge of Christianity in Britain and how many, over the years, have gone out to share that Good News in word of preaching and deed in action with others. We stand in that tradition and so as you continue to sing and pray we ask that you might remember us.



God bless

With Tom Quenet in May on his visit to Haiti

Sharon and John Harbottle

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