

Ukraine photo album

Lutherans in southeast Ukraine hope to form synod

THE ASSOCIATION OF BRETHREN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN UKRAINE currently consists of eight registered churches and four unregistered. Churches in Ukraine must be registered with the government. When ten congregations are officially registered they can register the synod. The 12 churches in the association serve some 400 souls. LCC Missionary Rev. Roland Syens attended the November association gathering of 14 delegates. The synod has only a few buildings and the newest church is still under construction in Nikolaev, a port city about 150 km from Odessa. An additional \$10,000 US is required to complete construction.



Pastors of the Association of Brethren Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine gathered in Nikolaev, November 15-16. LCC missionary Rev. Roland Syens (second row, far right) was asked to attend to share and report.

Bible study and outreach in Lviv

IN EARLY NOVEMBER, LCC missionary Rev. Roland Syens and his wife Anita travelled 1,000 km to Lviv to connect with the ongoing ministry there. Although LCC missionaries left the area in 1998, Dimitri (Mitya) and Olessa continue to lead Bibles studies and spearhead outreach. (Photo right)

The next day the group visited an orphanage where Olessa has a clown ministry (below) and the team sings and teaches Bibles stories to the children as well as help with humanitarian aid when available. We thank the Lord for this ongoing ministry and Lutheran Church-Canada's involvement in helping to enrich and improve the lives of orphan children through this ministry outreach.



Haiti hurricane relief update

The October issue of the Canadian Lutheran contained a preliminary report on the devastation caused by Hurricane Jeanne in September 2004, to Haiti, specifically as it affected the constituency of the Lutheran Church of Haiti in Gonaives. From e-mails and other sources we can piece together a more extensive description of damage, need and response.

Hurricane Jeanne swamped the deforested hills of northwest Haiti with heavy rains, causing floods and mud slides that destroyed homes, roads and infrastructure. Close to 1,500 lost their lives and more than 200,000 were left homeless in the Artibonite District alone, with Haiti's second largest city Gonaives, at its centre. The disaster destroyed most of the country's rice and fruit crops which grow in this area, the bread basket of Haiti. Some Lutherans lost their homes and lives. The Lutheran Church Haiti lost all equipment and furnishings in many of its social service, outreach, and fund-and-job-generating projects (orphan and seniors' shelters, computer school, bakery and concrete block factory). Fortunately, the FM radio and TV stations were spared, as they are on a mountaintop 11 km from Gonaives. Twenty-five orphan boys and twenty seniors are being housed in the third story of the building which also houses Faith Lutheran Church's sanctuary and other LCH facilities.

Rev. Revenel Benoit, pastor of Faith congregation, escaped with his life when five people on a riverbank helped pull his stalled truck out of rushing flood waters. Twenty minutes later at that spot, many vehicles were washed downstream and their occupants perished in the surging torrent. Separated from Pastor Benoit by the flood, his wife, Marie, their children and many neighbours



Photo by Revenel Benoit

Residents of Gonaives struggle to receive food from aid workers

spent the next three days and nights on the concrete roof of his home without food or drinking water. We thank God they were spared and reunited when the flood waters subsided.

The need for food, clothing, shelter, equipment and building material is unimaginable to us in Canada. However, people across Canada and the U.S. have been moved to contribute more than \$116,000 U.S. and materials for storm-relief. A coordinating committee met recently in Santa Rosa, Calif. with Pastors Benoit and Joseph Romulus who reported on the situation in Haiti. Dorothea Korcok and Howard Bogusat represented our Canadian board at that meeting. The committee has already spent more than one-third of those funds on food, shelter, medicine and healthcare. Help from Canadian Lutherans as of October 29 has amounted to \$36,578 Can. and \$400 U.S. In addition, clothing and other material will be shipped as soon as arrangements are made.

The Lutheran Church Haiti has struck a task force to meet needs and plan reconstruction in ten areas, the above three already under way. The rest are the orphanage, seniors' home, bakery, block factory (for producing building materials), computer

school (computers and laptops have already been donated to replace those lost), reconstruction of members' homes, and setting up a credit union to enable members to restart small businesses. The task force has hired a Haitian medical team, abetted by medicine shipments from our brothers and sisters of the Lutheran Church of France and Belgium.

The need is still great and ongoing. The board of the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society Canada encourages all Lutherans and others to continue supporting our efforts with your prayers and gifts. I can best conclude with a recent plea from Jay Brinkmeyer, Haiti Lutheran Mission Coordinating Council project manager, in an October 12 e-mail: "Please keep Pastor Benoit, his family, the orphan boys and his congregation of Faith Lutheran Church in your continued prayers. Please pray (for) all Christians living in Haiti as they continue to be confronted by people who are following the great liar of all time, Satan... Please be aware (of) problems between the U.N. Peacekeeping Forces and the Aristide supporters who want him back in Haiti... God be with you and your families."

*Rev. Richard Wukasch,
Haiti Lutheran Mission Society,
Canada*