



Demonstration in Port-au-Prince<sup>1</sup>

## Demonstrations Rip Haiti – Crisis Affects Fond Doux

Political turmoil in Haiti is not new, but its effects are now being felt in Fond Doux. College student Emile Maceus has returned to Fond Doux and is unable to attend classes. One professor keeps in touch via WhatsApp. Medical student Dieuseul Istache is not attending classes in person, but the students of his class are receiving instruction via the internet. College student Faédra Olivier has also not been able to attend classes in Ti Goave. Universities are closed.

“The current political paralysis and growing unrest in Haiti has shut down schools, hospitals, transportation, businesses and other services throughout the country, sending prices skyrocketing and raising the prospect of an imminent humanitarian disaster, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) warned today.”<sup>2</sup>

When work stops, people are not able to buy food even if available. Because 60% of the people earn less

than \$2 a day and about 25% receive about \$1 a day, much of the country is in a perilous food situation.

The demonstrations are aimed at ousting the President Jovenel Moïse, who took over in February 2017 during a turbulent election year following the resignation of Michel Martelly. A probe by the Haitian Senate in November 2017 resulted in charges of Jovenel Moïse’s participation in corruption with his predecessor Martelly. Moïse, who owned a company named in the investigation, has denied all corruption allegations. He urges dialogue and says he will not resign. Political demonstrations caused the resignation of the Prime Minister in February; now they are aimed at the President.

The strength of the protests seems not so much to stem from the charges of corruption, however, but from rampant inflation -- the high cost of gasoline and rising food cost.

<sup>1</sup> By Voice of America - <https://www.voanews.com/a/angry-haitians-demand-regime-change/4782379.html>, Public Domain

<sup>2</sup> Nikki Gamer Catholic Relief Services -- Report from Catholic Relief Services, October 17, 2019

To illustrate, Schneider Saint Surin of Fond Doux got his motorcycle in August of 2018. He purchased gasoline for 45\$ht (45 Haitian dollars) a gallon. During the February protests (also partly about high gasoline costs), he paid 120\$ht and now he is paying 200\$ht -- thus going from \$2.50 a gallon to \$6.67 to \$11.11 per gallon. The result is a staggering blow to the economy. The results for the nation's poor are catastrophic.<sup>3</sup>

Pastor Brucely, said that the markets are open in the mornings, for 2-3 hours, but then close as the

disruptors come about and start blocking roads. "The fuel availability/cost is the biggest driver of the unrest; if only they could resolve this, it would help tremendously. Cost of goods has basically doubled."

Nurse Gernite Bonhomme said, "Food is hard to get and each day it takes more money to buy (something) than it did yesterday. There is no fuel ... There is no school. People are getting killed. Many doctors that come from Port-au-Prince cannot come because of the situation, so people are not getting good care and some die before they get to the hospital. The situation is terrible."

## The Foundation Responds

On Friday October 11<sup>th</sup> after consulting with our English-speaking partners in Fond Doux, the Foundation sent some money to buy food for the neediest of the families. The Fond Doux Foundation Committee had expected to buy the food at Lamadeine but the store didn't open. They needed to go to Violet! There they paid a truck to haul the food to Fond Doux. Unfortunately, the truck ran across a barricade from the demonstrators before they arrived in Fond Doux; so, the truck couldn't get through. They then needed to hire some men with motorcycles to go around the demonstrators to get the food the rest of the way-- twelve 55lbs-bags of rice, six 44lbs-bags of beans and 3 gallons of oil. From this they helped 51 families -- about 17 pounds of food per family. The food was distributed on Sunday October 13 after worship at the Primitive Church of Fond Doux. Emile Maceus, who engineered the distribution, said, "the transportation was not easy, but what made my day was the happiness that food gave to my fellow citizens! Everyone was overjoyed. Please let everyone know how happy the people in Fond Doux were because of that distribution!"



**Partway by Motorcycle**



**Food for Distribution**

<sup>3</sup> The crisis also has an international relationship dimension. Presidents René Garcia Prével, Michel Martelly and Jovenel Moise of Haiti, all developed an economic relationship with Venezuela,

resulting in Haiti's dependence on Venezuela for its oil supply. Haiti now feels the ripple effects.

**Sewing Sisters of Epworth UMC**



**Sewing the Pads and Shields**

About 4 years ago Ruth Clausing heard about the plight of young women, teenage girls, who could not go to school because of a lack of feminine hygiene supplies (sanitary napkins). She said to herself, “I never even thought about that.” That is probably the way most of us are, “we never think about those things.” But she overheard in the hallways Sharon Walker telling another woman about “Days for Girls”, a national nonprofit organization supported by United Methodist Women, that was doing something about it. They were making washable Sanitary pads and placing them in kits to take mostly to Africa. She said to herself, “That is something we could do.” Under the direction of Ruth Clausing and Claudia Goacher the “Sewing Sisters”, who originally made dresses for Haiti were reborn – this time to make feminine hygiene kits for teen-age girls in Haiti. They meet usually about twice a month on Saturday mornings to make and assemble these kits.

The centerpiece of the kit is the plastic shield to hold the washable sanitary pad. The kit consists of two plastic shields, two pair panties, two wash cloths, ten pads, a bar of soap, a one- gallon plastic bag to hold



**Assembling the Kits**

soiled pads, another one-gallon bag in which to place these items and a cloth bag to carry the items. When assembled they are taken to Haiti when a mission team goes to Fond Doux.



**Two Platon Recipients of the Kits**

The kits are distributed either by our community health worker, Madam Christela, or by our Haitian nurse Gernite Bonhomme. Both are able to explain their use. Gernite teaches a class about once a year

to introduce the kits and how to use them to the girls and their mothers.



**Five Happy Girls in Fond Doux**

The five happy Haitian girls are Lenise Ormilus, Darling Derisier, Fanolie Désir, Woodmiriel Delma and Fabiola Maurice.

Over 300 kits have been distributed in Fond Doux and Platon. The kits last about 3 years. Because of these efforts over 100 teen-age girls are receiving a better education. How can you get a good education if you are always absent from school? Over a three-year period, they could miss six months of school based on five school days per month. These kits have been distributed not only to teenage girls, but also to new mothers. A great program!



**Betty Dennis Teaching Use of Kits**

### In Memoriam - Paulisten Messidieu



The old gentlemen whom we featured in the October issue receiving a prayer shawl and hat during the August mission trip, Paulisten Messidieu, died recently at the age of 96. He was born Sept 12, 1923. Until his death he still took care of his animals, picked up wood to sell and was a good farmer. He was widely admired and always smiling. It is remarkable to live that long in the country of Haiti. We remember him in joy before God. "Rest in Peace."

### Sharing the Story

The Rev. John Clausing, Ruth Clausing and Linda Mitchell were at Swansboro UMC on October 16<sup>th</sup>. John spoke and autographed copies of the book, *Unto the Least of These*. He also autographed copies sold at the Outreach Auction at Epworth UMC, October 29<sup>th</sup>. Invitations to share our story are welcome. You can contact us at our website.

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The Fond Doux Foundation engages friend-to-friend with people in and around the village of Fond Doux, Haiti, helping to provide better access to medical care and health education, improved nutrition through agriculture and animal husbandry, educational scholarships, and intercultural faith-based activities. FDF is a 501(c)3 organization based in Durham, North Carolina, USA, whose Christian community outreach began in 2011,