



WITNESS SEASON

MINUTE FOR MISSION

May 15, 2004

Building Relationships in Haiti

A 17-member mission team from Palms Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, returned from Haiti filled with a deeper understanding of God's work in the world. For a week, Palms members worked hand in hand with Haitian church members from the community of Blanchard. Blanchard is just outside Cite Soleil, one of the most disadvantaged areas in Haiti. Last year the team finished the first floor of the Blanchard school and this year the second floor walls were completed. The team also made forty desks that would seat three children each and seven tables for teachers.



Members of Palms Presbyterian Church build relationships with school children in the community of Blanchard, Haiti.

Palms involvement in Haiti began with member, Dr. Howard Jolles. Five years ago Dr. Jolles went to Haiti to work at the Hospital St. Croix, a ministry of the Episcopal Church of Haiti and the PC(USA). In the years he worked there, he became friends with Pastor Leon Dorleans of the Cite Soleil church and mission workers Rodney and Sharyn Babe. The Jacksonville Beach church became increasingly aware, through Dr. Jolles, of Pastor Dorleans' work and the creative approach to social and economic problem solving of the Babes.



Palms Presbyterian Church's ministry in Haiti has funded more than 20,000 employment hours for Haitian workers, has built worship facilities at two churches, and has provided school scholarships for eighty-four children. Through Rodney and Sharyn Babe, Palms became acquainted with Conflict, Development, and Peace Network (CODEP) and have supported it for fifteen years. CODEP helps Haitians become self-sufficient by providing training in how to reforest their mountainsides, plant crops, capture clean drinking water, and raise fish for food. The mission relationship between Palms and the people of Haiti has deepened as God's love grows between churches and brothers and sisters in Christ.

As they say in Haitian Creole French, *Bondye Ap Travay* (God is working). God is working in and through Haiti, and God is working in and through members of Palms Presbyterian Church.

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Do you have a mission story to tell? Would you like to read inspiring stories of Presbyterians in mission? Visit the Witness Season Web site: www.pcusa.org/witness. New minutes for mission are posted every two weeks.

For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-228-7228, ext. 5689, or Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org.