

# How's Haiti ?

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Vibrant colours, streets full of people, vendors balancing baskets of wares on their heads, selling anything from vegetables to school equipment, shoes to a mosaic of pills in blister packs – these are the immediate impressions of the streets of Port au Prince, Haiti. Women squat on the pavements under umbrellas arranging a pile of oranges or other fruit, throwing water on aubergines to make them glisten, selling live chickens or cooking whole ones on charcoal braziers precariously balanced on street corners where the taptap buses stop. The smell is appetizing but health and safety does not rule!



Such is city life as Haitians piece together their lives once more after the earthquake of 2010. In one week the remaining wing of the National Palace was dismantled, a sign that Haiti can and will move forward. All the tented camps in the parklands of the centre have gone but nearer the airport they still remain. People are finding accommodation or returning to the countryside as aid and food handouts dwindle. Buildings are going up - hotels, schools and churches as well as private homes but not fast enough for the pressing needs and the overwhelming poverty.

Haiti, the poorest nation in the western hemisphere where the majority of people live on less than two dollars a day, has a long way to go. It is now our home and we are settling in, meeting people, assessing the health needs and preparing training materials for the Methodist Church of Haiti.

We have rejoiced at church openings, singing in French and blessing the furniture and structure of St Martin's Church and School; prayed at the ground breaking for a new replacement school at Nouveau College Bird where children are still learning in tents and temporary classrooms and we celebrated the formal opening of Leveque School funded by the Wirral Circuit, the Haiti Appeal and other churches in Britain.

As the days go by and we become accustomed to the humidity and heat of 94F we are learning more about the needs of the country and also the ability of the





Haitian people to pick themselves up. Help is required in forward planning, finding appropriate and economic technology and so we assist by seeing the bigger picture and drawing on our resource of knowledge and past experience.

The Methodist Church of Haiti is active in the community through diverse branches of micro-finance, agriculture, water and now health as well as education and evangelism. At the heart is a committed church of worshipping people, singing strongly, praying fervently

and meeting for mutual fellowship. Best of all it is a growing church.

We have valued people's prayers on our arrival and would ask you to continue to pray for the Church in Haiti celebrating good progress and tackling the ongoing challenges. Personally, we would ask for your prayers as we discern our roles, commence developing strategies for action and visit churches and communities around Haiti.

God bless

Sharon and John Harbottle



At the National Museum

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