



Easter Monday

April 5, 2010

Dear Friends,

It is with troubled hearts but in the spirit of complete transparency that we report to you on the results of the investigation by the Conventual Franciscan Friars into multiple allegations of sexual abuse and other serious misconduct on the part of APUFRAM employees and its leaders in Liberia and Honduras. As we have previously reported, the Definitory (that is, the Franciscan board) of Mary, Mother of the Poor Custody in Central America and the Definitory of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation in the U.S. voted last December to conduct a “truth commission investigation” into the incidents in Liberia and other alleged incidents in Honduras. This investigation was conducted by Father John Stowe, OFM Conv., presently Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia in the Diocese of El Paso (Texas), who has been involved in the investigation of clergy sexual abuse accusations and dealing with victims of abuse since late 2002.

A very important item in this report that we don’t want you to miss is at the very end, when Fr. Stowe reports on the current situation at Liberia Mission. He says in part:

“Exactly one year after the events described above took place, the mission is functioning in a normal and healthy way. All of the mission residents are aware of all that happened.... There is a strong expression of faith by the residents of the mission and every evidence that they are happy.... Benefactors can be safely assured that their donations are being used to support the children and the smooth functioning of the mission.”

Fr. Stowe has completed the investigation into the events at Liberia Mission related to the sexual assault of two minors, physical and emotional cruelty towards residents and employees, financial malfeasance, and subsequent efforts by members of APUFRAM to suppress and distort information about crimes committed in Liberia. The report, including its key findings, follows this letter.

The Franciscan investigation as to the situation in Honduras involving more than twenty allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct by APUFRAM employees and its leaders has *not* taken place. It is our understanding that it has not taken place for two reasons:

1. Fr. Emil Cook has not complied with the “Letter of Obedience” issued by his Franciscan superiors ordering him to 1) report to Saint Joseph Cupertino Friary in Comayagua (Tegucigalpa) by 1 February 2010, and 2) to cut himself off from APUFRAM. Because Fr. Emil Cook has remained with APUFRAM in Flores and has not moved to Comayagua, he therefore stands in defiance of his vow of obedience to his superiors.

2. APUFRAM has not demonstrated to the Franciscans' satisfaction a safe environment program (Child Protection Program) for the sites they manage nor have they implemented agreed upon policies to ensure the protection of victims and witnesses who speak with independent investigators. Without sufficient safeguards for victims and witnesses, they feel it is not possible to accurately and conscientiously conduct the investigations.

The Franciscans are awaiting the resolution of these two situations -- especially the first -- before attempting to carry out their investigation in Honduras. Until then, the prohibition on Fr. Emil not to raise funds or leave the country is in place.

Below is the report of Fr. John Stowe's investigation into the events at Liberia Mission. Please be advised that it contains graphic details of rape and extreme cruelty to children. The names of victims and minors and one police investigator in Liberia have been changed for their protection. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact us at the email or phone number above.

We are making this report available to our supporters in the hope that they will understand that we have done and will continue to do everything possible to correct this situation and protect the children we are committed to helping. Please continue to pray for healing for all those affected by the troubling events that have taken place.

Sincerely in Christ,



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# Investigation of Liberia Mission Incorporated

## BlackTom Town, Lower Careysburg, Montserrado County, Liberia

15 – 19 February 2010

### Introduction:

The Liberia Mission, not far from the capital city of Monrovia, was founded in 2003 under the auspices of APUFRAM, Asociacion de Pueblos Franciscanos de Muchachos y Muchachas, an organization founded by Father Emil Cook, OFM Conv. and consisting of Boys and Girls Towns of residences and schools for poor children and youth in Honduras and the Dominican Republic. Founded by Father Emil with Dave Dionisi, the Liberia mission was led briefly by Liberians, but from November 2005 until April 2009 the mission was directed and administered by Hondurans from APUFRAM. At present the mission is directed and administered by a married couple, an American and a Honduran, who were originally APUFRAM volunteers. The mission is funded by Mission Honduras International, headquartered in Chicago. The resident mission population presently consists of 86 boys and 27 girls of primary and secondary grade levels. Saint Anthony School, on the premises of the mission, has 232 other students in addition to the residents of the mission.

This investigation was prompted by the revelation in February 2009 that one of the female residents of the mission had been sexually violated by the director of the mission beginning at the time she was thirteen years and continuing for 4- 5 months. Although the girl told her story to mission staff including the perpetrator in the presence of her family and to the National Police and the Gender Based Violence investigators, and even though Dave Dionisi verified everything in February and early March 2009 shortly after the initial revelation was made, APUFRAM denied the severity of what took place and sent distorted versions of the events to benefactors of APUFRAM and of the Liberian Mission. The revelations as well as the refusal to admit what actually happened, resulted in a suspension of funding for APUFRAM by Mission Honduras Inc. The Conventual Franciscan Friars of the Custody of Mary, Mother of the Poor to which Father Emil Cook belongs, and the mother province of Our Lady of Consolation, headquartered at Mount Saint Francis, Indiana, were asked by Mission Honduras Inc. to investigate what happened at the mission and to assist in the creation of policies for child protection to avoid any kind of violence or exploitation of vulnerable youth in the future. It was the sincere desire of Mission Honduras Inc. to assure a safe environment for all those served by APUFRAM at all sites and to be able

to resume funding for the missions that they believe in so strongly. Everyone involved is unanimous in their admiration for Father Emil and the vision and work of APUFRAM throughout its forty year history. The personal investment of the individuals involved to the work of Father Emil and the institutions he founded, make the circumstances of this investigation very painful for all involved.

This investigation was conducted by Father John Stowe, OFM Conv., presently Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia in the Diocese of El Paso (Texas) who has been involved in the investigation of clergy sexual abuse accusations and dealing with victims of abuse since late 2002. The investigation was conducted from 15-19 February 2010, exactly one year after the first reported case of sexual abuse at the mission came to light. Jerome Cabeen and Clarisa Chavarria who have directed the mission since March 2009 were most hospitable and cooperative throughout the investigation. Mission Honduras International facilitated the travel and visa arrangements, they gave complete freedom to the investigator to pursue the investigation as he saw fit with no interference. Father Donald Halpin, OFM Conv., visiting the mission and providing spiritual direction and orientation to the staff and residents alike throughout February 2010, was a great support and fraternal presence throughout the investigation.

What follows describes first the significant findings of the investigation and the evidence and support for those findings, then a more detailed narrative related to each of the findings, followed by summaries of the interviews. The narration could have included far more details and minor episodes that add to the story, but the most significant ones and only those that could be verified by multiple sources were included. The documents used as evidence in the investigation are already in the possession of Mission Honduras International, the Conventual Franciscans of Our Lady of Consolation Province and APUFRAM.

### **Documents:**

1. Liberia Mission Incorporated APUFRM “Childe Recruitment Form” for Jane Doe dated 21 July 2006.
2. Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Republic of Liberia, “Medical Report” for Jane Doe dated 18 February 2009 at DuPort Road Clinic.
3. National Police of Liberia “Writ of Arrest” for Omar Orellana dated 19 February 2009. Mount Barclay.
4. “Magistrate Charge Sheet” for Jose Omar Orellana dated 18 February 20009.
5. Report from David Dionisi dated 2 March 2009.

6. Response to Report from David Dionisi by Emin David Rodríguez Martínez and Roger Ernesto Montez Suazo dated 11 May 2009.
7. Letter of Father Emil Cook, OFM Conv. addressed to “Friends” dated 1 July 2009.
8. Letter of Father Emil Cook, OFM Conv. addressed to “Pastor” dated 5 July 2009.
9. Letter of Father Emil Cook, OFM Conv. addressed to “Terry” dated 23 July 2009.
10. Letter of response to Father Emil Cook from Steve Hayes dated 26 July 2009.

### **Findings:**

1. **That Jose Omar Orellana Martínez, henceforth “Omar” and Alexis Rodríguez , henceforth “Alexis”, were negligent towards the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the children of Liberia Mission Incorporated and were physically and emotionally cruel towards residents and employees alike.** Multiple witnesses, listed below, testified that Omar and Alexis gave the children food that was rotten, food that was beyond the date of expiration, food with insects in it, children were fed dried corn that they could not eat instead of rice, donations of food and clothing were not given to the children but mission property and food was freely given to friends of Omar and Alexis. Both Alexis and Omar stated frequently in the presence of residents and staff that they disliked black people, they called the children and adult employees of the mission derogatory names in Spanish and in English. The children were made to work in the fields without being allowed to straighten their backs periodically, were hit for not performing adequate work, were denied water while working in hot conditions. Omar and Alexis were regularly drunk in the presence of children and staff, even though at times they tried to conceal this behavior. They had Spanish speaking guests frequently at the mission who were fed meat when the children were not. Alexis did not allow the children to touch him, if they did he made a dramatic gesture of brushing himself off so as not to be contaminated by them. Omar brought women to his room at the mission.

Testified to by: Dolly Gurley, former employee of mission; Helena Gonyor, house mother; Harris Mulbah, house father; Augustine Nufea, mission

employee; Olivia Galama, mission employee and Benjamin Wollor, mission resident. Dave Dionisi and Matt Hayes, an American volunteer, heard these reports consistently from the children. Monsignor Andrew Karnley, Administrator of the Archdiocese of Monrovia from 2005 until the appointment of co-adjutor Archbishop Zeigler in 2009, was made aware of these complaints during the administration of Omar and Alexis.

2. **That Omar and Alexis made repeated, unwanted advances of a sexual nature towards minor female residents of the mission.** Two female residents who have been at the mission from the beginning, Sarah Sampson\* and Mary Moore\*, independently testified that both Omar and Alexis watched the girls dress after bathing and walked in on them while dressing, on various occasions they approached the girls from behind to pull them to themselves. They told the girls that they loved them and called them sweet names. The older girls talked about this and tried to avoid all contact with both of them.

In addition to the two girls who experienced this first-hand and testified to this, Harris Mulbah and Helena Gonyor were aware of this and testify to it. Dolly Gurley was aware of these things. Gurley reported this and the concerns listed in #1 above to Monsignor Karnley at the archdiocese.

3. **That Omar had sexual relations with Lucy Monroe\*, a teenage student at Saint Anthony School, on multiple occasions between February and April 2008 and he expelled her from the school in April 2008.** Harris Mulbah reported this to Jerome Cabeen in August 2009. Jerome Cabeen sought out Lucy and interviewed her on video tape. She testifies that she was sexually violated by Omar on four occasions, having been threatened with loss of her scholarship and expulsion if she did not comply with Omar's sexual requests. The relationship between Lucy and Omar became known to other students and Omar expelled her because students were talking about it.

Testified on August 2009 video tape by Lucy. Reported to Jerome Cabeen and Clarisa Chavarría.

4. **That Omar sexually violated mission resident Jane Doe\* on four occasions beginning when Jane was 13 years of age.** This was reported to Helena Gonyor, Jerome Cabeen, Clarisa Chavarría, and Olivia Galama in the presence of her parents, her brothers Varney and Momo, and her sister Famatta on 16 February 2009. Omar was arrested at the mission that day, Omar confessed verbally and in writing that he was having sexual relations with Jane and was charged with statutory rape, considered a crime against the state in Liberia. He was arraigned and imprisoned following an investigation by the national police, but was released from prison some time later. The lawyer who secured Omar's release refused to be interviewed for this investigation.

Evidence in police reports, medical examination of Jane, all witnesses listed above, written testimony by Omar Orellana.

5. **That Liberia Mission employees and other APUFRAM personnel were involved in an effort to release Omar from prison and suppress information about the crime.** This included asking the victim, Jane, to lie about her age to lessen the severity of the charges against Omar. It also includes Father Emil Cook, OFM Conv., founder of APUFRAM and the Liberia Mission, distorting information about the rape in communication with benefactors.

Testimony of Jerome Cabeen, Clarisa Chavarría, Father Boniface Flokiah, Dave Dionisi, Matt Hayes. Corroborated by Harris Mulbah; National Police Inspector William Dennis\*. APUFRAM personnel were not interviewed but the written report by Emin Rodriguez was used. The attorney who ultimately secured the release of Omar Orellana refused to be interviewed. Letters from Father Emil Cook and his statements and those of APUFRAM representatives at the meeting in El Salvador 17-18 November 2009.

6. **That at the time of this investigation, Liberia Mission is a joyous place where the children live a balanced life of prayer, study, work and play.** The atmosphere of the mission is one of joy. Every child that was asked said they were very happy at the mission, including those who had experienced trauma earlier. The children are well fed, the staff is content with their working conditions and the direction they receive, and the

financial records are in good and working order. The evening prayer services and the masses celebrated there were deeply moving expressions of faith.

Personal witness and that of Father Donald Halpin, OFM Conv. and mission staff are evidence.

***\* NOTE: The names of victims and minors have been changed for their protection. The name of the National Police Inspector has also been changed. All other names in this report are real.***

### **Narration:**

While the first finding above of negligence and abuse is not the worst of what occurs, it clearly sets the scene for the subsequent sexual abuse. Given the extreme poverty that is the reality of Liberia, steady employment at the mission and the hope of an education are things that Liberians are willing to sacrifice and suffer to obtain. It was evident to Omar and Alexis that the employees needed their jobs and would not jeopardize them. The students would tolerate indignities and injustices to receive their education and sustenance. The fear of being put out of the mission was a concern of the children who have no other real options. Every person interviewed at the mission in a formal setting, as well as a number of the children who were asked informally, and Monsignor Karnley of the Archdiocese of Monrovia, stated that the mission went through a very difficult period under the direction of Omar and Alexis from the time of the departure of Hector and Norman in 2008 until their own departure in 2009. It was clear to the key staff members of the mission like Harris Mulbah, Helena Gonyor and Augustine Nufea that Omar and Alexis were not happy to be in Liberia, they disliked and were verbally abusive of the Liberian staff and children and were involved in heavy drinking and relations with women. On at least one occasion, witnessed by Harris Mulbah, the two of them got into a fight with each other. Mission property, like power tools and furniture, was placed on the mission truck, Omar and Alexis would drive away and return without those items. There are stories of them driving while intoxicated with children in a mission vehicle, of bringing women home to the mission and to their rooms, and of partying heavily with Spanish speaking friends. Omar had Harris Mulbah drive him to meet a woman, take her to a hotel and then wait for them to finish their activity and bring Omar back to the mission. Harris, Helena and Agustine, long-term employees of the mission; Dolly Gurley, ex-employee of the mission, and Benjamin Wollor a resident of the mission all attest to this.

The description of the cruelty towards the children involved the serving of food that was spoiled or insect infested and serving inadequate amounts of food, the refusal to allow adequate breaks for the children during their work in the fields. Alexis would hit the children with sticks in the fields. Alexis also hit sick children in bed, telling them to get up and go to work. Among the students there was fear of expulsion from the mission for whatever reason. The staff feared losing their jobs at the mission, especially after Dolly Gurley was fired on 14 June 2008 after reporting concerns about the treatment of the children to Joanie Fabiano and hoping that her concerns would be conveyed to Father Emil Cook. Once Gurley was fired, the other employees were even more afraid to voice their concerns and even encouraged the children to keep quiet so as not to be expelled. Martha Karvuah, a cook was fired after complaining to Omar about verbal abuse by Alexis. Students John, Mark and Sam were expelled from the mission for being in the storeroom without permission.

It is easier to understand the subsequent events when the atmosphere created by Omar and Alexis is described. The older girls who were watched by Omar and Alexis while dressing and who fended off unwanted advances from them knew that to make an issue of these things would probably result in expulsion. So they found their own ways to try to avoid both of them. Benjamin Wollor, a high school student at the mission was called "lazy" by Alexis because he went to get water from the well during the work period. Benjamin refused to sign a form that would result in his expulsion, so he was given extra work which made him late in arriving at Saint Kizito's School. Alexis wanted Benjamin expelled. Benjamin witnessed the verbal abuse to employees. All of this is witnessed and attested to by the same employees and student above.

The girls mentioned above, Sarah and Mary, stated that their experiences were shared by other older girls at the mission. Omar and Alexis would ask the girls to clean their rooms and offices and look for any opportunity to have them in isolated places where they could make advances on them.

Lucy Monroe\*

Lucy Monroe was not able to avoid the sexual advances of Omar. She was not a resident of the mission, but attended Saint Anthony School at the invitation of Hector

Lanza, a previous director, who gave her a scholarship and promised that she could study through high school. She lived across the road from the mission in Black Tom. Omar asked her to “love him” and she was threatened with expulsion from the school if she did not comply with Omar’s sexual demands. She had sexual relations with Omar in his room and in a school classroom on four occasions when she was sixteen and seventeen years of age, according to her testimony. Omar would bring her home after their encounters. Lucy was aware of two other girls in the village having sexual relations with Omar, one is older than her the other is younger. Lucy Monroe was not interviewed at the time of this investigation, but her testimony in on video tape and should be sufficient evidence given what we know from multiple sources about Omar’s behavior. Lucy was expelled from the school in April 2008, allegedly because Omar became aware that students were talking about his relationship with her. Lucy admits that she told some of her friends what was going on. The word got around and the students mocked her. Unfortunately Omar was already out of the country when this incident came to light and it was not possible to charge him with this violation.

Jane Doe\*

Helena Gonyor, Harris Mulbah and Augustine Nufea noticed that Omar took a special interest in Jane. On one occasion in July 2008, Omar took her out of the dining room by herself while the other kids were watching a movie, sometimes Omar would send other kids to look for Jane and bring her to him. Omar would bring Jane food at night. The same witnesses said that Omar would leave with Jane in a mission vehicle at night.

Beginning in July 2008, probably when Helena was away, Jane went to get water from the well near the generator at 5:30 a.m. Omar waited for her there, and pulled her into the building where the generator was housed so that they were out of the sight of the other children and the noise of the generator would block any sounds. Omar violated Jane there on three occasions. On another occasion he had sex with her in a room between the church near the girls’ home where she felt trapped.

In February 2009, Jane reported to Helena Gonyor that she had missed her period for two months. Helena asked her if she thought she was pregnant, but Jane did not answer. She showed Helena pills that Omar had asked her to take. Helena told her

not to take the pills, Helena checked them out at a clinic and discovered they were pills to induce labor and could be used for an abortion. Helena obtained a pregnancy test on her own and discovered that Jane was not pregnant; because she wanted Jane to tell her what was happening she did not reveal the results of the test to her immediately. On 16 February 2009, Jane told Helena, Olivia Galama, Jerome Cabeen and Clarisa Chavarria that her parents were coming the next day and that she had something to tell them all together. The next day with her parents, brothers and sister present as well as the staff described above and with Omar present as well, Jane told them that Omar had violated her. Omar admitted having sex with Jane to her brothers Momo and Varney in the presence of everyone. He only contested Jane's version of the dates when this occurred.

After the meeting, Jane's family went to the Police Station at Mount Barclay. Omar took a shower and informed Harris Mulbah that he was leaving the country and returning to Honduras. Harris notified Jane's sister who in turn notified the police who then came and arrested Omar at the mission shortly after 12 noon. Helena was also arrested at the police station as the one who was responsible as supervisor and who should have reported the abuse. Jerome Cabeen paid \$100US to have Helena released. She was released with an order to return on 18 February; the charges against her were dropped according to Police Inspector Dennis. Emin David Rodriguez Martinez, henceforth "Emin" and Roger Ernesto Montez Suazo, henceforth "Roger" had arrived on 13 January 2009 to replace Omar and Alexis as director and administrator respectively. These two met with Jerome and Clarisa to discuss how to proceed. Emin insisted he was in charge. Jerome stated that he would not lift a finger to defend Omar. Emin and Roger brought water and bug spray to Omar at the police station and food and clothing the following day, despite Jerome's order that they not make contact with Omar.

Emin's report and subsequent statements by APUFRAM and APUFRAM supporters emphasize the fact that Jerome spat at Omar at the time of his arrest, punched an object in the mission office and was offensive toward Omar. Jerome has never denied that behavior, and while never appropriate, in the context of what had actually transpired is rather insignificant. He also apologized to Omar in the presence of witnesses and personally brought food to Omar and visited him in prison.

### Efforts to Release Omar and Distort the Story

Omar wrote two checks from the EcoBank mission account before being taken away from the mission by police. One check for \$5,000US was payable to Father Boniface Flokiah and one for \$2,000US payable to Harris Mulbah. Both Father Boniface and Harris said they understood that the money was to get Omar out of the country. Omar's letter to Father Emil from jail says that it was to hire an attorney for his defense. Father Boniface claims that he was instructed to give \$1,500US to a James Mulbah and he was later instructed by Omar to give another \$2,400US to James Mulbah for "tips". When asked about who James Mulbah is, Father Boniface said that he showed up at his parish but he had never met him before. He has not seen him since giving him the \$2,400. No one at the mission has ever heard of James Mulbah, his existence has never been verified. When asked what he understood by the instruction that the money was to be used for "tips", Father Boniface answered that he understood "bribes" to help Omar get out of the country. Father Boniface said that he paid \$40 as a retainer to the legal aid representing Omar and used \$60 for "miscellaneous". When asked to clarify the miscellaneous expenses he said it was mostly gas for the vehicle he was using. The remaining \$1,000US was given to Jerome Cabeen together with another \$1,000US which Father Boniface obtained from the Honduran UN worker Carlos Castro. Jerome acknowledges the receipt of the \$2,000US. According to Omar's letter of 10 March 2009 to Father Emil Cook, Carlos Castro received \$3,000US from Omar's brother in Honduras via Western Union. Presumably \$1,000 of this money was half of the money given to Jerome by Father Boniface. Father Boniface had told Dave Dionisi that he stopped helping Omar when he learned of Omar's guilt. During this investigation, Father Boniface said that the legal aid worker was a Catholic and she informed him that this case was a serious crime under the Gender Based Violence law, was very sensitive, and that a Catholic priest should not be involved in this. Father Boniface explained that his primary involvement with Omar and the mission was in helping arrange to receive the land in Grand Bassa for the new mission; part of the land was a gift from Father Boniface's parents. Father Boniface first met Omar and Alexis through the Consolata Sisters who were Latin American friends of theirs and worked at Father Boniface's parish.

William Dennis, the Police Inspector who investigated the case, shared the file kept at the police station which states the charges of statutory rape, contains the statements of Jane and of Omar admitting having sex with a minor. When asked how it was that Omar was later released from the Monrovia Central Prison, Dennis said that took place after his role in the case was finished. He said that since this rape was considered a crime against the state, even if Jane or her family were persuaded not to prosecute, the state could have prosecuted the case on its own. Given the Liberian president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's campaign against gender based violence and the tougher

penalties for such crimes which had been recently enacted, Dennis said that the only way Omar could have been released is if “special money” had been exchanged. Dave Dionisi reported that Major Andrew Jackson, the jail supervisor tried to convince Dionisi to let Omar go free and Jerome Cabeen says that Jackson gave every indication that he could be bribed. Mr. Yomie Gbassy, Omar’s lawyer, adamantly refused to participate in this investigation and warned Jerome not to bring the investigator to his office.

On 21 February 2009, Dave Dionisi arrived as an envoy of Father Emil charged with resolving the situation. On that day, Jane was given a pregnancy test and it was negative. That same day an agreement with Jane’s family was reached which included a provision that Omar would be imprisoned until 7 March. Jane was willing to forgive Omar and have him return to Honduras. A defender named Mr. Bomie was present for the formal agreement, it was he who suggested the time frame for Omar’s release although subsequent events suggest that Bomie may have been offering more than he was capable of accomplishing. On 23 February Dave Dionisi visited Omar in prison with paperwork to transfer the mission account to Emin and Jerome. Omar pleaded to be released from prison sooner than 7 March; Dionisi promised to arrange for food delivery and to remain in Liberia until Omar was released. It was Dionisi’s intention to try to get Omar transferred to Honduras to serve his sentence there. Dionisi needed Omar’s passport for the bank transfer and tried to find out what other accounts held mission money. It was after this encounter that Father Boniface turned over Omar’s passport to Dionisi and the \$2,000 US and said he wanted nothing more to do with Omar. These facts are attested to by Dionisi and Jerome Cabeen.

On February 26, Dionisi asked Emin to inform Omar that he was leaving the next day with Omar’s passport. Dionisi informed Monsignor Karnley and just about everyone that he had the passport. The next day, Father Boniface reappears requesting at least a photocopy of the passport for which he offers to pay \$1,000US. Dionisi offers to write a receipt for the passport but not a photocopy. Emin, who was in regular contact with APUFRAM, objected to Dionisi taking Omar’s passport. Dr. Ramon Alfonso Fuentes of APUFRAM inquired about the passport. Dave Dionisi took the passport to Joanie Fabiano along with the bank statements from the mission. Jerome Cabeen would later receive the passport shipped from Chicago by FedEx on 23 March; he then turned it over to Emin. This information comes from both the accounts of Dave Dionisi and Emin.

APUFRAM's objection to the handling of this crisis by Dave Dionisi and Jerome Cabeen is centered on the disregard for Omar's well-being and the matter of the passport which they allege was stolen. All accounts agree that Omar gave the passport to Father Boniface. Father Boniface knew and attests that Omar was attempting to flee the country. Father Boniface surrendered the passport to Dave Dionisi but later requested it back, offering money for it. Dionisi was still willing to support Omar being allowed to serve a sentence in Honduras but did not want him escaping from justice all together. Provisions were made for Omar to have food delivered to him in jail and he was visited there by Jerome.

Matt Hayes, an American volunteer who arrived in Liberia the week that the abuse of Jane came to light, reports that Emin and Roger were absent every day from the mission during the time from Omar's arrest until their departure from Liberia. They would leave the mission in the morning in the mission truck and return at night. He also knew that they were in daily communication with Father Emil and APUFRAM. At the same time, Jerome was trying to get direction from APUFRAM and Father Emil and only involved Mission Honduras when he got no response or support from APUFRAM. It became clear that Emin and Roger had a different agenda than Jerome, Clarisa and Dave.

As late as 13 March, Jerome and Dave were still in agreement that Omar should be released as per the agreement signed with Jane and her family. Mr. Bomie, who had originally been paid by Jerome to represent Omar, came by asking for an additional \$1,700US to free Omar. Emin did not believe that Bomie was able to arrange the release and agreed to pay only upon his release. On 16 March there was to be a meeting to discuss the procedures to release Omar. Mr Bomie did not attend the meeting. This is in Emin's account and verified by Jerome.

On 13 April, Jane was led to believe that the only way that Omar would not have to spend the rest of his life in jail was if she agreed to change her age in her statement. She was nearly convinced although Jerome objected forcefully. Jane stated on this and other occasions that she had forgiven Omar and that she did want him to return to Honduras. The Consolata sisters from Firestone and a Father Miguel also pressured Jane to change her age in order to free Omar. Emin admits that they pressured Jane to change her age and deny that rape occurred. On 16 April, Father Emil put Jerome in charge of Omar's case, according to Emin's account. Jerome sought the name of reputable lawyers from the American Embassy the next day, but by April 21 Emin and Roger had made the decision to return to Honduras. They turned over funds, keys,

and equipment to Jerome on 25 April and left the mission. In subsequent communication with benefactors, Father Emil states that the Liberian mission was taken away from APUFRAM by Mission Honduras. It is rather the case that the mission was abandoned by APUFRAM through Father Emil's refusal to communicate with the Americans there and by the withdrawal of the Hondurans designated to be director and administrator.

Somehow at some date Omar was released from jail and returned to Honduras. Mr Yomie Gbassy, Omar's attorney, refused to be interviewed for this investigation. In a chronology of events prepared by Mr. Thomas Crea of APUFRAM International it is claimed that Omar was released on 7 June 2009 and that the case was dismissed due to lack of evidence and witnesses. This date and dismissal could not be verified. However, as the Police Inspector Dennis testified, this was a crime against the state, there were plenty of witnesses and a confession from the perpetrator is still on file. Dennis's opinion is that the only way this case could be dismissed is if "special money" were exchanged.

During the time of his investigation in late February-early March 2009, Dave Dionisi reports that Father Emil instructed him to keep the rape quiet. In his letter to benefactors dated 1 July 2009, Father Emil Cook states matter-of-factly that one of the Honduran staff members had sexual relations with one of the teenage girls in the Liberian mission. After describing the "staff member" being arrested, imprisoned, expelled as an APUFRAM board member and prohibited from being hired or used by the organization, Father Emil states that the girl was 15 years of age, which he described as a "marriageable" age in Liberia. The intake sheet at the Liberia Mission for when Jane was received on 21 July 2006 stated that her age was 11 and that her birthdate was 8 July 1995. When the abuse perpetrated by Omar began, Jane had just turned 13. Jane was clearly not 15 years of age, but even if she had been, Omar would still have been charged with statutory rape. In the next line of the letter, Father Emil states that the "guilty staff member" confessed that "it" happened three times, "not 'repeatedly' and not 'violently'". Three times is clearly repeatedly. Whenever a person of authority takes advantage of a vulnerable person, especially when it is an adult who has the authority to expel the thirteen year old child from the mission and demands sexual favors, this is an act of violence. In the remainder of the letter it is curious that while Father Emil protects the identity of the "employee" (rather than director) who was arrested and imprisoned for statutory rape, he identifies the American volunteer as Jerome and portrays him as a troublemaker.

A subsequent letter from Father Emil to the pastor of a parish in Brentwood, Tennessee, states that “not one cent” of the parish’s generous donation for the construction of a second guest house in Honduras was used for that purpose. He refers to the 1 July 2009 letter described above as an explanation and claims that Mission Honduras International has become like a rogue organization and took away the mission site in Liberia and tried to destroy their work. Fortunately Steve Hayes, a parishioner of the parish in Brentwood, was able to demonstrate the false claims made by Father Emil with receipts.

By far, the most egregious of Father Emil’s distortions is contained in a 23 July 2009 letter to Terry Davenport of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The letter is two pages in length, but it is important to include the third and most inflammatory paragraph in its entirety:

I have a letter on hand from a sister in a nearby school in Liberia to our mission there. She states very clearly that the girl was not 13 years old whom our Honduran leader had relations with. But she is over 18 years of age. At about the same time an United Nations worker visited us and confirmed the truth of the Sister’s letter. The girl is between the ages of 18 to 21. The villagers know this. It is reported by the sister and the UN worker that Jerome gave money to the girl’s mother and brother to put the age very low in order to do away with Omar, the Honduran staff member. She was not violently raped. It wasn’t rape as she consented to it and she is an adult. It only happened 3 times. When the young lady (sic) entered four or five years ago the records show that she was 15 at the time. The mother is now 74 years old and the father is 80 or more. Do the math on it.

The sister who authored the letter is unnamed in Father Emil’s account. If there is such a letter, its likely source is the South American sister from Firestone who encouraged Jane to change her age in her report to a higher age if she didn’t want Omar to be imprisoned for life. It is likely the same sister who called Jerome “Judas” for refusing to go along with the plan to change the girl’s age. The visit from the United Nations worker who “confirmed the truth of the Sister’s letter” is likely the Honduran Carlos Castro who was actively involved in the attempts to free Omar and was the recipient of the money sent by Omar’s family according to his own and Emin’s account. Jane entered the mission in 2006 at the age of 11 according to the “Child Recruitment Form” signed 21 July 2006. Jerome has admitted all along that money

was given to the family of Jane; this was done as part of a formal agreement arranged by Dionisi and made in the presence of the public defender Mr. Bomie. It had nothing to do with altering Jane's age, which has been stated correctly by the mission from the beginning.

The same letter to Terry Davenport goes on to disparage Jerome Cabeen, David Dionisi and the Chicago MHI absurdly alleging CIA tactics and other attempts to destroy APUFRAM.

Even during meetings with representatives of the Conventual Franciscans, APUFRAM, APUFRAM International and Mission Honduras International which took place in El Salvador 17-18 November 2009, Father Emil and APUFRAM leaders would still not admit the full story of the rape of Jane and raised doubts about her age and story.

### Present Situation at the Mission

Exactly one year after the events described above took place, the mission is functioning in a normal and healthy way. All of the mission residents are aware of all that happened. They experienced the negative, negligent and cruel behavior of Omar and Alexis toward them. Even the younger children are aware of what Omar did to Jane. Many of the children have their own stories of negative and painful experiences with both Omar and Alexis. The children also witnessed the arrest and removal of Omar, and the abandonment by Alexis, Emin and Roger. They are grateful to Jerome and Clarisa for remaining with them, providing for their needs and creating a warm and joyous atmosphere for the mission. The children display their affection for Jerome and Clarisa very openly. There is a strong expression of faith by the residents of the mission and every evidence that they are happy.

With 113 residents of both sexes and a wide range of ages, maintaining order and discipline cannot be easy. There were isolated discipline problems with two of the residents and Father Don Halpin was trying to help by getting these residents to open up about what they are feeling and perhaps better understand their reasons for misbehaving and being disobedient. It is also clear that the school staff, principal and teachers, cause stress for Jerome and Clarisa because they do not always follow

instructions and sometimes question Jerome and Clarisa's authority. Jerome and Clarisa certainly need support in their roles. But they are doing an outstanding job and it can be said that there has been considerable healing in the year since these incidents took place. Even the girls that were most affected by the inappropriate and criminal behavior of Omar and Alexis are glad to be at the mission.

The previous administration was irresponsible in the administration of the goods of the mission, but a careful review of the finances of that period was not within the scope of this investigation. The present economic administration is well organized and supporting documentation was not lacking for anything tested in the financial records. Clarisa has spent a great deal of time organizing the accounting for the school and the mission using QuickBooks. With the income from Mission Honduras and other outside sources coming in US dollars and school registration and tuition money coming in Liberian dollars, plus the daily fluctuating rate of exchange and different rates of exchange depending on the sum being exchanged, this is not an easy task. Benefactors can be safely assured that their donations are being used to support the children and the smooth functioning of the mission.

### **Recommendations:**

Given all that is said above, Jerome and Clarisa need greater support as they try to maintain the mission, its employees, the school and all that entails, and be in a parenting role to 113 residents of various ages. It would also be good for them to have a periodic day away from the mission to reduce their own stress levels as each day presents unique challenges and situations.

During the course of the investigation, it was also possible to present the rough draft of the Child Protection Policies being developed by Mission Honduras and in conjunction with APUFRAM. An initial introduction of the policies was done with the key staff. The policies will need to be adapted to the Liberian Mission's situation and also presented in an intelligible way to the staff of mission and school. In their current format, the policies were difficult to understand and interpret for the staff; this will make them ineffective if they are not improved. The students and residents will also need to be instructed in these policies. Clarisa has provided some training for the children, and her father who is a UNICEF official in Honduras recently presented a workshop on sexuality to the children. Olivia Galama who has worked with Children's Services prior to coming to the mission, would be a good choice for the role of on-site advocate. She has also been willing to disagree with other employees at the mission

when she thinks they are acting inappropriately. Perhaps Monsignor Karnley, who has such an interest and concern for the mission, could be part of the Independent Review Committee and suggest other members for that role.

It would also be a good idea for the key staff to meet on a regular basis to support each other mutually, affirm together the vision and principles of the mission, and share information and experiences concerning the children of the mission.

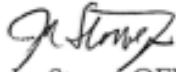
### **Concluding Remarks:**

Despite the charges of Father Emil and members of APUFRAM and APUFRAM International, the leaders of Mission Honduras International and both Jerome Cabeen and Dave Dionisi were sincere admirers of the work of Father Emil and worked in support of APUFRAM and all its good works. The stubborn refusal to come to terms with what came to light in the Liberia Mission and the ongoing refusal to recognize the dysfunctional climate of abuse and fear that characterized the Liberia Mission under the direction of Omar and Alexis is the reason that there has been no reconciliation between APUFRAM and Mission Honduras International.

The essential disputed points between the two versions of events in Liberia were the age of the victim which has been established and the treatment of Omar, the abuser, by Jerome and Dave Dionisi. In an institution dedicated to the well-being of children, the priority of care for the victim should be self-evident. Emin's own account of the events that followed demonstrate how his priority was the care for Omar; he did not even use the victim's correct name in his version of events. He quoted articles of conventions on human rights and biblical quotes about treatment of prisoners and love of enemies, but does not address what should have been the priority, concern for the child in the care of the mission who had been violated. The issue of sending Omar's passport out of the country is a legitimate and serious complaint. But it must be remembered that it was Omar who gave his passport to a third party initially, Father Boniface, who then turned it over to Dave Dionisi and later wished to buy it back. Ultimately the passport was returned.

The primary issue remains the rape of Jane Doe. Everything that was witnessed and every account heard at the mission affirms that Jerome Cabeen and Dave Dionisi were working for the protection of the children of the mission and for a just resolution of the situation with Jane. They are responsible for the fact that the mission is functioning today according to its original values and principles.

*I attest that everything contained in the previous pages is, to the best of my knowledge, true, accurate and fairly presented.*



John Stowe, OFM Conv.  
El Paso, Texas  
8 March 2010

THE STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF EL PASO

This instrument was acknowledged before me on 03/8/2010 by  
REV. JOHN STOWE



Notary Public - Signature