



**Mission Honduras International + Liberia Mission Inc.**

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May 5, 2010

Dear Supporter,

All of us at Mission Honduras International/Liberia Mission Inc. remain focused on our mission to help the poor in Liberia, Honduras, and elsewhere. Please read the complete Spring 2010 newsletter and learn about the life-saving work of Liberia Mission. We also feel obligated to write this letter.

Most of you on our mailing list have recently received one or more letters from APUFRAM International requesting donations on behalf of Fr. Cook and APUFRAM in Honduras. You should know that those letters were full of misinformation and against the wishes of the Catholic Church.

For clarity sake we, therefore, want you to know the position of the Conventual Franciscan Order:

- First and foremost, Fr. Emil Cook has not complied with the "Letter of Obedience" issued by his Franciscan superiors ordering him to a) report to Saint Joseph Cupertino Friary in Comayaguela (Tegucigalpa) by 1 February 2010; and b) to cut himself off from APUFRAM. Because Fr. Emil has remained with APUFRAM in Flores and has not moved to Comayaguela, he therefore stands in defiance of his vow of obedience to his superiors.
- APUFRAM has not demonstrated to the Franciscans' satisfaction a safe 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, the Franciscans feel it is not possible to accurately and conscientiously conduct the investigations.
- Fr. Cook has been denied permission to raise funds for APUFRAM or APUFRAM International in the United States. This decision by the Conventual Franciscan Order is in compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (see letter below). APUFRAM has now sidestepped Church restrictions by ignoring the prohibition from using Fr. Emil's name and then by asking you and me to send donations to Special Missions Foundation, which is not a Catholic organization and is therefore not bound by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) sent this past December to all bishops in the United States is still in effect. If you have any questions concerning this letter, we strongly encourage you to consult with your parish priest about the nature and importance of such letters from the USCCB, especially concerning the protection of children.

We also want to briefly explain why the serious and broad-ranging problems surrounding APUFRAM's response to child abuse are not resolved by the recently touted child protection policy. We have tried ever since the multiple abuse incidents came to light to be open with supporters. For this reason, we share with you this additional information.

First, APUFRAM International just sent out a letter claiming that APUFRAM has put in place a child protection policy. This policy varies significantly from what was agreed upon in October by Fr. Emil, APUFRAM International, Mission Honduras International and the Conventual Franciscans. Here is one example why. A key feature of any effective child protection policy is an independent review body that can ensure a fair investigation and protection for victims and witnesses, a necessity anywhere, but especially where poverty makes people

extremely vulnerable. The independent review board that they have set up, according to the APURAM International letters, will be comprised of two members from the business community appointed by APUFRAM, two appointed by the Catholic Church, and one appointed by the Special Missions Foundation, which is the same group that is accepting donations on APUFRAM's behalf.

We believe that it is essential that any independent review board, especially one charged with investigating accusations of child abuse, be 100% truly independent, and that its members should not have any possible conflicts of interest. Victims, witnesses, and whistleblowers must be assured of confidentiality and protection. This is not the case with the APUFRAM proposal, and it is certainly not what we demanded of them.

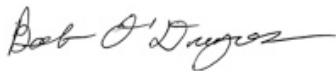
Second, there was not just one crime in Liberia involving APUFRAM, there were many. The investigation by the Conventual Franciscans confirms serious and repeated abuse and misconduct by APUFRAM employees. Further still, this misconduct includes Fr. Emil's efforts to distort information about the horrible rape of a student by the APUFRAM director. For the complete report and findings, including an analysis of the present situation at Liberia Mission, please go to this link: [www.missionhonduras.com/Franciscan\\_Investigation\\_Report\\_IntroLetter.pdf](http://www.missionhonduras.com/Franciscan_Investigation_Report_IntroLetter.pdf), or call us to request a copy.

Third, the problems are not isolated to Liberia. We continue to receive reports documenting years of neglect and abuse at APUFRAM sites in Honduras.

Therefore, Mission Honduras International has decided that we must discontinue working with Fr. Emil and APUFRAM, but at the same time we are blessed with a wonderful mission in Liberia, where we are successfully repairing the damage done by APUFRAM. We are focusing our energies on this important work.

We look forward to partnering with you to bring hope and a brighter future to the poorest of the poor around the world.

God Bless,



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### Memorandum

To: All Bishops

From: Msgr. Ronny Jenkins *RJ*

Date: December 22, 2009

Subject: **FR. EMIL COOK, AND "APUFRAM".**

The Office of the Minister Provincial of the Conventual Franciscan Friars has asked that the bishops of the United States be advised of the situation of Fr. Emil Cook, OFM Conv., and ministries he is related to which operate under the organizational names "APUFRAM" ("Asociación Pueblo Franciscano de Muchachos y Muchachas") and its fundraising arm, APUFRAM International.

APUFRAM has not demonstrated, to the Minister Provincial's satisfaction, that adequate safe environment programs have been enforced at locations it operates. As a result, Fr. Cook's Major Superior has denied him permission to raise funds in the United States. Thus, the Conventual Franciscan Friars do not endorse any fundraising whatsoever in the United States by APUFRAM, Fr. Cook or APUFRAM International.

If further information is needed, contact may be made with the Office of the Very Rev. James D. Kent, OFM Conv., Vicar and Acting Provincial, at 812-923-8444.