

"Category 3" Sure glad GBGM gave us this wonderful desk chair with wheels. We don't use it at the desk because the floor slopes west. The chair rolls backwards, out and down the front stairs, with a body in it. While it is so hot, me and my laptop roll around seeking the slightest breeze or smallest cloud of mosquitoes. Learned to look up from the screen while rolling when I nearly shot out the door!

I am missing my first Annual Conference in too many years to tell, and have given much thought to the importance of "connection." After I retired and moved, I discovered how outcast one can feel the second time "visiting." Tough for one raised in the church, I can only imagine the discouragement of the inexperienced in worship in ones native country.

We worship weekly, here in SaP, and "beginners Kreyòl" does not keep us from being part of the family of God. I get to do the benediction occasionally and they applaud! Each week I even have on line conversations with our friend, Tony Ikenberry who has been in Dakah, Bangladesh for 3 years. We ask you all to pray hard and often for this man who is converting many Christian Disciples in a Muslin country.

The GBGM training for Long Term Volunteers addresses discouragement and frustration of living, long term in a foreign culture. Different ethics and values give rise to paranoia and a sense of failure for westerners oriented to plans and implementation and a feeling of accomplishment. I'm certain God created mission as a way to humble the most self assured!

With four months left in this appointment we were struggling with a sense of failure. We face daily more and more hungry; sick without access to health care; requests from all schools for 50% of the tuition and 5 months back salary for teachers; gardeners who cannot afford seed or food to feed workers; young out of school making babies because that is the one thing they can do; young mamas with underweight babies and no breast milk because of no food; and, old people with clothing wrapped around bones who are no longer hungry. It is hard to see accomplishment in the face of need. And I'm the one telling Tony it isn't what he does but that he is there with the people.

Yesterday, an email to the PCUSA was answered and followed by a phone conversation about a native plant that is nutritional for infants, mamas and goats!! Ten teachers returned from Matenwa training center, filled with plans for the future. Then God surprised us at a meeting with an organization called AAPLAG today. Representatives of agriculture, livestock and fishing got excited over a plan for training and improving techniques by a Haitian organization with a 25 year history of success on La Gonave. A breeze like the Holy Spirit seemed to fill the circle and infect us all.

Tomorrow is Trinity Sunday and many will be preaching on the three ways to experience God. On La Gonave today, God was present in a diverse community; in words of agriculture and water and fishes and goats; and, as a Spirit of Hope for tomorrow. A comment I read in my bible study referred to God as "a category of one". Today God has been "a category 3" on sud la gonave.

Shirley, La Gonave, June 6, 2009 blog tomorrow.... <http://gbgmlagonave.blogspot.com>