

Embalming 101:

Began early yesterday when the mother of a young woman who died at sunrise came to have her blood pressure checked and be embraced by friends to share the grief. Bible text this week says, in our universe to die and rise again is part of the process of reality. Words of comfort fall short at the moment of death while tradition provides focus for creative transformation. Experience of change in an atmosphere of the familiar makes "why," unimportant.

Community leaders from several communities met early to discuss the issue of a clinic in the area. We sent an old man with an obstructed bowel by sailboat to clinic at Pwentaraket and paid for transportation to the mainland hospital whenever the wind allows a boat to cross. My bedroom dresser looks like a pharmacy and Joe says if I keep paying transportation and surgery expenses we will be begging money to come home.

Still unable to get approval from EMH for use of the compound building we have promise of a nice adaptable home to use, with additional cost and significant consideration. A visiting Deaconess and I proposed a management system for the clinic, understandably rejected by leaders with long history of mega loss to corrupt managers. As we take issues to KEC the local leaders will develop a board of directors with guidelines.

Following the meeting we visited the family dead young woman, with a donation for dancers and/or tomb, took photos and suggested packing the body with ice since they were waiting a brother's return. As the camera was obvious, others in the community posed and greeted our visitors. We hadn't noted before but now all "blans" are Shiry's to the children.

A small sailboat came from Debale Sud for water as cisterns are dry west of us. Fortunately our generator had been repaired early am. Our "pumpers" cannot or will not provide rest periods to cool the motor so parts often melt or come apart. Last Sunday, World Water Day, I preached about sharing resources. Here, that is a natural response as most cisterns (basins) were broken in last year's storms and ran dry early. Waiting for rain, there is little hope they will hold water when it comes.

As anticipated I received a call to "embalm" the body and Penny accompanied me to hold the flashlight. She commented later she didn't remember "Embalming 101" in her nursing education. I admitted it was a "post grad course" taught by a midwife to visiting missionaries on lagonav.

Preparing to shower, I thought we had finished the day until the family came to borrow a small "Delco" to make light for drumming and dancing during the night. We entertained a discussion with the local school director about tuitions and "the other" school, and many coming to sell shells for food. Also a final frenzy for transportation funds to mainland clinics and other needs added activity.

The camera is set for funeral activity today; the tomb is built, and ManMan grieves amid Haitian tradition. There is hope, traditionally, biblically and "voo dooically" in creative transformation.

Shirley, Sud La Gonav, 29 Mas, 2009. Partially packed and ready for Etazini.