

"Gray Areas" Last evening we had closing devotion with the Kansas team of five women who painted the guest house. During reflections I told a story from Oswald Chambers. He pointed out that Jesus told the disciples to go get in the boat. In the boat they decided where to go, what to do and what determined success of the venture. Jesus only told them to get in the boat. Our call is to journey together and let God determine the details.

At 5:00 am today, the team boarded the sailboat for the 4 hour return to PaP. The sea was calm with distant thunder and the pier crowded with people expecting a free trip. We limit the number on the boat to the 19 life jackets but Haitians consider the boat full when water is lapping over the edge.

I was testy as they pulled away with one too many on board. A man from Port a Bonheur boarded early and told me he was a mariner. I tried to juggle those who had asked permission and the ones we were transporting for medical care and "the mariner" refused to exit the boat when the captain told me he was not a crew member. The issue is one of team safety but also liability for all who travel on the "mission" boat.

I pledged to push the "mariner" back into the water when the boat returns as they pulled out to sea and I waved goodbye to Joe and team. Anger and frustration accompanied me to "the palace" until I recalled my "teaching" of the night before. We face many "gray" issues in Haiti.

The team arrived with nearly 150 Birthing Kits which I anticipated with great joy. I plan to give them to church women to hand out after our Women's Conference July 2nd -4th. A thought plagues me as I realize the contents may well be used or the kit sold long before the baby is born. Is Jesus saying, "Give them the kit" with instructions and hope, then let God determine the details?

Old issues of no teacher salary, poor management of school lunches and tuition and local industries prevail on South La Gonave. Many are excited about a developing plan for intense training in the areas of agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing. The experienced Haitian agency providing the training, promise 3 years follow-up and reinforcement and assure us education and commerce will improve once there is organization and cooperation of committed people. A program new only to sud la gonave will use funds that could be used in the same way as years past. Is Jesus saying, "For crying out loud, just get in the boat"?

By tomorrow I have to decide if the opportunistic mariner is going to know my displeasure when I greet him in my swim suit or if I accept tradition won this one. Decisions on gray area issues take nights of making lists and listening for a "voice" from the star filled sky. It's hard not to decide the destination and details of success when God invites your presence in the boat. It is unrealistic to expect the sea to be always calm. My favorite place in the boat is standing by the mast watching for flying fish.

Pastor Shirley, Sud La Gonave, June 22, 2009.

