

**Halfway From Home** : Scripture says the word of the Lord was rare and visions infrequent in Samuel's day. God spoke his name in the night and Samuel spent his life trying to show people the best of God's plan. He served the people in spite of their bad choices, and finished his work begging them to consider the things God had done and to fear and serve the Lord faithfully.

We enter our second "dry season" on the island with instant water shortage, shriveled brown leaves and animals eating rocks. This season must have inspired the proverb "beyond every mountain is another mountain."

We are 5 months into the school year with teachers unpaid. Lamare said they will feed children Monday in most schools. One meal is better than none. With our clinic closed people now add 6 miles to their journey to receive health care and many children did not return to school after holiday break.

I sat on the steps last night under a gazillion stars and a half moon bright enough to read by. The sea was motionless; roosters were still and the world far away. The team has gone with suitcases filled with smelly shells. Underweight kids play kickball, raggedy fishermen bring lobster for us and small flying fish for the beach economy. The diesel generator is sick with little water in the repaired cistern.

As we returned from Port a Prince, thinking of GBGM "gifts," I felt my "vision" narrowing with the road south of Ti Palmiste. That is the "last outpost" of civilization and industry as we move further away from transportation, communication and technology.

Energy that comes with teams brings hope and promise for a future with food, healthcare and education. Yet, my files are full of "performas" from young people hoping to open barber shops, fishing enterprises, computer schools and even build latrines for individuals. All they need is money and only small amounts.

Community school for 6<sup>th</sup> grade through high school costs from \$73.00 US a year to \$102.00 US in the 2 secondary schools on south La Gonave. Some teachers just split whatever tuitions are paid. Children can attend primary school for as little as \$30.00 US to \$56.00 in the half dozen Methodist and community schools on the south side. Teachers could receive the minimal salary they are offered if tuitions were paid. This is a high mountain for those with small rocky gardens, stunted, unvaccinated goatherds and leaky fishing boats.

We have no war and no real weapons on La Gonave. There is a small tabernacle on every other hillside and most memorize the scriptures. Some drink a little rum, a few smoke and most are faithful in family relationships. Young people speak of buying things like small generators and "igloos" to transport fish or ice. Everyone has a cell phone to use as a flashlight or timepiece. There are a half dozen motorcycles but taptaps stop at Ti Palmiste; halfway from home.

Joe will travel to Anse a Galets with Dwight tomorrow and they will stay at Fifi's CWS guest house. They will be on the ferry at 6am for PaP and Dwight's return to Kansas. Joe will attempt to find repair parts for the generator or go to "plan B" before returning home.

The team looked for God in the children, the sunsets and the music of the cooks. Joe and I wait and listen for the word of God that seems rare. The Haitian Methodist Church has their annual meeting in PaP this week and will select a new President for the church. Will he pause and listen for the word of God? Will he widen the path to south La Gonave? May we all, like Samuel, continue to speak of all God has done and beg for faithfulness of God's people.

Shirley, La Gonave, Haiti January 18, 2009...

