

Into The Unknown, with hope: Today is "epiphany" and is celebrated with two understandings. New Testament understanding is the revealing of Jesus as the Messiah / Savior, the way to live, the truth of God, and promise of life everlasting. Old Testament promise was to Jerusalem. The promise was deliverance from exile, salvation from the darkness of separation, and redemption from slavery. However we see it, epiphany is awareness of what God wants for all God's people; life supported by the necessities for living; food, water, shelter and community.

Tomorrow we fly back to Haiti for a brief visit on the island of La Gonave to assess progress of three projects we left in developing stages. The water project has been a challenge of man pitted against nature! The development of industry through training and organization has been a challenge for people without resources but a desire to change a way of life; and, a scholarship program for young adults has been life changing for a small number of students.

We will also spend several days meeting with the Haitian Methodist Church, discussing future relationships with former support groups and organizations. New President Paul has indicated a reorganization of people and priorities that promises growth in ministry, education and community.

We left Haiti in October as Pres Paul was just taking responsibility and the church was in transition. Our mission certainly was not finished, but our health, family needs and a stalemate in direction from the HMC indicated it was time to "take a break."

The break for us has been healthy as we have celebrated with our family, taken care of health issues on hold for two years, and become sufficiently homesick for our friends in Haiti. Communication is limited and raises questions about progress with projects, but primarily President Paul has had time to establish some priorities and direction for the church.

The treasurer at CUMC and invitations for presentations about the mission indicate interest and support is still active and committed. We feel a deep sense of "promise for the future."

The people of God returned to "Zion" with a promise for the future. They would sing and dance as gardens grew and good life restored. Didn't happen.

I believe the promise for a new way of life does not put the responsibility all on God and God's doing. Epiphany seems to be the awareness that "new life" is based on a co-operative effort between God and the people of God. The promise for life with resources for living well includes faith in God and effort by the people for unity and action.

I ask your prayers for unity of purpose to improve life for all God's children in Haiti and on La Gonave. May we grow the church together with Haitian leaders, and may God's will be done.

Pastor Shirley, January 6th 2010, with hope for the future.

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