

**Leaving Haiti:** I sit on the top step of "the Palace" as Joe calls our living quarters. It is early Sunday morning, and for the first time all week the sea is still and quiet, the palm branches hang motionless under a thin layer of clouds to reflect the pink sunrise. A transport is on the horizon, leaving Haiti.

Many village people have serious symptoms of chronic malaria, common to the cooler weather. Doniz, our cook was sent to the hospital in Anse a Galet, yesterday. Louis, our assistant, received medicine and treatment at Point a Raket the day before and was moving about some last night. Young Abamang leader, Nelson, is still hospitalized on the mainland.

Reynaud, a fisherman with 5 children, received treatment for shingles two weeks ago and sadly has developed a complication not uncommon to the virus; chronic nerve pain that may take months to go away. He cannot move quickly or lift and certainly cannot fish to provide for his family. Yesterday, he said he would like to purchase items to start a booth. He is a "provider" and will do what needs to be done until he can fish again.

The clinic sits lifeless to my right with a rather nice paint job. I have given out most of the useful medicines and people are aware it is another non-functioning resource of south La Gonave. We wait to hear from the health minister concerning a physician. I ponder, then what do we do? We have a commitment to pay a nurse, but a lab would be critical, and a roof and ceiling and medicines.

There are so many mountains. The school has books students can't afford and teachers are unpaid; no transportation to distant clinics and no money for most to pay for prescriptions even if exams are free; the majority of children are significantly underweight; and, water is unavailable or sporadic for drinking and laundry in many localities.

Water, food, health, education, industry, technology are all so necessary, yet beyond the reach of a hungry people in need of work, education, food, water, transportation and a friendly environment.

Our granddaughter is involved in a high school assignment that asks some difficult questions. "Should Christian missionaries continue to aid third world countries and non-Christian nations, in the opinion of citizens or leaders of that country?"

There is great anxiety that we may leave in a few months and not be replaced. We have provided only palliative programs with what seems significant support provided by our Conference, friends and teams and some grants from GBGM. Have we made any headway into the mountains that must be climbed by "citizens and leaders of the church and Haiti?"

Who benefits most from what we do? Haley didn't ask that question, but I do.

If we get a couple more wells working; if we can provide another clinic; if we could start a food kitchen; and, if a small fishing cooperative develops, will we leave Haiti better for our having been here? There will still be mountains.

Shirley, La Gonave, January 25, 2009.