

**Mountaintops:** I got hung up on a daily devotion from several days ago and just keep going back to it. Related to numerous bible stories of mountain top experiences it rings my bells. The author points out that in all the mountain top stories the excitement and blessing of those meaningful and transforming events all end with the participants eventually going back "down" the mountain.

For years in the operating room I helped repair serious injuries as people fell from, jumped down or otherwise returned to earth from ladders, roofs or trees. Coming down is often difficult and results in life changes.

In 2006, Joe and I felt compelled to continue our mission activities by volunteering to live on the island of La Gonave. We understood a number of developments as "God things" or those events that reveal God's rightness in one's personal future related to God's ultimate plan for peace and justice in the world. Not situations we manipulate or "set up" but mostly unexpected situations that seem to change the direction of life.

We experienced many "God things" in a short time. The results were two years living on an isolated island in Haiti, in a primitive situation that both blessed and transformed us and allowed us to have impact on the lives of many hurting individuals. These God things resulted in a "mountain top experience" that has lasted well into 2011. It seems it is time to "come down".

Oswald Chambers, in his wisdom, says that God asks us to "be in the boat together" yet not to plan the journey nor try to determine the success or failure of where the journey leads. For many years now we have experienced life "with" people of another culture, and have our own desires for their future. Our tendency is to judge "the success" of our mission. Our resistance to leaving "the mountain" is rather like asking "are we done now?"

"Our plan" was for others to carry on when we could no longer live on or travel to La Gonave. Oswald suggested, we planned the future according to our hopes, not according to God's will. We knew our time on the mountain would be limited by age and ability, yet the "coming down" is traumatic and feels more like failure.

As I prepare my Adult Bible Study and apply the lessons to life, I'm aware there are other "boats" where God may be calling us. The excitement and challenge of the "mountain" made Peter want to build structures to stay there. Sort of like our old basset hounds who thought petting was to last forever.

I return to La Gonave in October to assess the water project that has attempted and failed to get wells to the dry west end; the industrial development association that is slowly progressing along a Haitian cultural path; and, the scholarship program that has potential with modification.

We hope the decent from the mountain top experience of the last several years will open our eyes to other activities in service to God. God is constantly rearranging and redirecting lives, and in our experience, we can trust we have learned not to try to determine the future or what constitutes success or failure.

Pastor Shirley Edgerton, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011.