

Sunday's Sermon: Sermons to prepare, presentations to plan, questions to answer and phone calls to make now on hold after talking to Louis in Lagonave. Our conversations are unpredictable as communication is unreliable at best. I often long to hear his voice with messages about the people, the new association progress, issues on the island and just that he is "ok".

Today we talked about fears of the people when they feel slight movements in the earth and fear the sea is going to overflow, plus their fear of sleeping indoors. His phone is "fried" and food is scarce and expensive. He said many believe the end of the world is near. He said, at times he became afraid and discouraged but is now feeling better.

Long ago I gave him an English Bible, so he could practice reading in English. Louis' father, Manis, worked for the Haitian Methodist Church for many years. When Louis became a school teacher he got discouraged with the church as some members hurt the people or made life harder for others. We spoke frequently of the reality of human behavior that so often falls short of God's plan for justice, peace and joy. Louis expressed a strong desire to be a "good man" caring for his family and his people but felt torn by actions of some "church people."

Today he told me of a prayer meeting planned Friday, to pray for the island, Port a Prince and Petit Goave. He admitted he plans to attend, and then told me he had been reading the bible and does not believe the people need to be afraid. He said he now believes in Jesus Christ, and that God really wants good things, like Jesus said.

A bright school teacher, he said he does not exactly understand the earthquake but knows God did not do it, and will help the people who work together. Once again, I am tearful. The tears this time are not for the dead and damaged, but for life and hope and grace.

I preach this Sunday in Topeka and the text is about Moses and Jesus, and their appearance following their experience of the presence of God. Louis always made me smile; a "fat boy" he called himself, with a gentle wisdom beyond his years, careful and thoughtful of others, with dreams for a better life and a better Haiti.

The earthquake has shattered many dreams. PaP was becoming cleaner, safer and more cosmopolitan and is now a wreckage of broken buildings and bodies. We had discovered ways to educate bright young people in universities that are now rubble on buried students and professors. There was hope in industry and education for lagonave in a new association of people working together, who are now back in survival mode and fearful of the next moment.

Now, I sit with a smile in my face, and hope in my heart, as Louis plans to pray, study the bible and lead the people of lagonave to recover and move forward, because God is good, and does not hurt God's people. Can you suggest an illustration for Sunday's Sermon?

Pastor Shirley, about Lagonave. Feb 10th, 2010

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