

Tonight: "God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses"

Sitting here tonight thinking of where I was and what I was doing just one year ago. At this time we were triaging numbers of injured in broken down tap taps, under guest house tables and between vehicles. Broken legs, broken heads, people still trapped in homes nearby and our three comrades in dubious danger at the Montana Hotel. A couple of confused UN personnel stopped in stunned disbelief that they had nothing to offer.

Much later, only Joe and I, felt secure enough to rest awhile inside the guest house. The night was full of sound and chaos, but only restlessness and groans accompanied the disbelief of what had occurred.

Very early this morning, Ericson called from Petit Goave just to check on us and Bruce from S. Dakota exchanged multiple brief emails about "the news" or lack of it in our local papers. I tried to call Ronald to say "how ya doin" as he does when he calls me. No answer. During the 35 seconds of death and destruction, I knelt with a firm grasp on his arm keeping him out of the swimming pool.

A call from Louis to say the S. Dakota team was working hard in Anse a Galets but had all paused for prayer and remembrances. They were there this time last year. Louis, Mr B. and all have been much in my thoughts today. The last two trips we by-passed Port a Prince, as our route to the guest house generally takes us through the 95% of the rubble that remains to hide the unfound bodies of now a year dead.

La Gonave, in early December we watched election results, a few burning tires and pondered the future. We met with church members to discuss the ministry and building needs of the church in Anse a Galets. We drove through Zetwa and looked at some transitional houses then on to the water well and projects of the future. It seemed more civilized than when last in Port a Prince.

On La Gonave, NGO's seem to be working together to undo, do-over and just "do" something to get life a little better than normal. The beggars remember us, Fifi sets a festival table and offered bottled water for bathing safety, and most debris is the accumulation of stuff from the last rains. They wonder when the cholera will stop and where all the money went, but tell us of weddings, funerals and the wives that have left.

Tonight I look at photos of scholarship students grinning at the promise of a university partnership and school tuitions paid; photos of goats, and wooden houses, and a small group studying a geological map and planning a well, and a church we will eventually finish. Tonight, I wander why Ronald didn't answer his phone in his tent in Port a Prince.

Tonight I know where Jim and Sam and Clint are. I'm uncertain if yet I know what witness their lives will be. There are still too many bodies under rubble and too many who don't answer their phones. In March I may stop in Port a Prince for a little while.

Pastor Shirley, January 12, 2011. Not there this time.

