

2011 March 26 Waiting for the outcome

Greetings from Wallondri in northern Haiti!

We had a quiet Election Day here last Sunday. That may have been because troublemakers were promptly arrested, as well as the presence of UN troops. Most of the rest of the country had a quiet day as well.

We have open (rather than secret) ballots. That means that anyone standing by can get an idea of how an election is going by looking at the ballots as they are cast. The reports I heard in this area seemed to favor one presidential candidate, and that may be true for the rest of the country as well. The government has told the journalists and radio stations not to say anything about the elections until the preliminary results are issued on March 31. That has not stopped the cell phone calls. The question that keeps coming up is whether the government will give out the actual results of the vote by the people or try to impose the preferences of the present leadership. It could get "warm" here next week. Thank you for praying.

2011 April 1 Still Waiting

An announcement was made earlier this week that the preliminary election results would not be released on March 31 as previously announced. That would have happened at midnight. Instead, the results will be announced on April 4. I have heard two reasons given. One was that the information is serious, but might not have been taken that way if released on April 1 (April Fool's Day in the USA, April "Fish" Day here). The other was that the votes for the deputies (something like US congressmen) had not all been counted. It appeared that most people were not surprised that there had been another delay. There have already been others since this process started in February 2010.

The prices for just about everything went up at the end of last week. Fuel prices, which are set by the government, jumped suddenly. That affected the fees for transport and transportation, which in turn affected the cost of food in the market. I heard this afternoon that the fuel prices had been dropped back. That will be a great help since the people here seldom have any reserve funds to deal with such problems.

I had already made plans to return to the US on April 19. I need to attend the second week of Orientation for Baptist World Mission, which will complete all their requirements. I will also be visiting some churches. I hope to return to Haiti before the end of June.

2011 April 9 And the winner is...

This past Monday promised to be a busy day at the clinic. We had thirty patients coming for return visits, and then another eighteen people wanted consultations. Some of the histories were hard to get because patients could not explain their problems well. It turned out to be a long day.

Most people were talking about the announcement of the election results, which was scheduled for 5 pm. There was also a lot of talk about how most of the machetes in Port-au-Prince had been bought. That was true in other places as well. Thanks to cell phones and the internet, the people knew who won the election, and they were prepared to take action if the results were not fairly announced.

I had hoped to be done in the clinic before 5 pm so the patients and workers would all be well on their way home before any possible trouble started. The complicated cases meant we were still seeing patients at 5 pm. The announcement time came and went, but everything stayed quiet. Then around 6 pm there was a lot of laughing and shouting. The announcement was finally made by the Haitian officials. My friends said one reason there was so much laughter was that the results had already been announced at noon on CNN, France Air and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. The people were waiting to see if their own officials would agree with the “big journalists”. When that happened, the tensions stopped.

Our new president is Michel “Micky” Martelly. His background is popular music, and he has been known for his stage antics. It sounds like many people wanted a change from the politics of the past twenty years. The campaign promise that attracted a lot of attention in this area was a restoration of security. Mr. Martelly will inherit many problems, and needs much wisdom. I remember an encouragement years ago to pray for a “Daniel” to advise the American president. Our new president could benefit greatly from several such godly people to give him counsel.

My return to the US is still scheduled for April 19. It looks like I will be very busy right up to the time of departure. This is the way things usually turn out, so I should not be surprised. But I probably will be tired!

Thank you for praying.

Dr. Anne—Haiti