

2011 March 19 update from Anne Livingston, Haiti—elections, patients, patience

Greetings from northern Haiti!

There has been a lot of political activity in the past few weeks as the candidates for president and senators have campaigned. It has been noisy occasionally as trucks with mounted loudspeakers have passed through the neighborhood. The truck that went through early this morning may have been the last one for this campaign. There are many opinions over who should win. There has been occasional violence during the meetings with people throwing rocks and bottles. The elections in December were very noisy here in Wallondri. There were some armed gangs and gunfire. My staff told me this morning that such activity would be unlikely this time. We will see tomorrow, our election day.

Churches are either having services earlier or having shorter services. We will have a combined Sunday School at Maranatha Baptist Church, and the Sunday worship service will be shorter. There are two reasons. One is so that people can vote. The other is because the local polling station is very close to the church.

The Grace Baptist Clinic has been very busy. That means many opportunities to present the Gospel as well as to deal with physical problems. We have had some very sick patients. Doctors here do not usually tell patients when they are not doing well. I think it is important to let someone know they need to get their affairs in order, and especially to deal with their spiritual condition. Pastor Thelamour is a great help for these cases. He will talk to the patient and their family again after I am done. He often has several other people listening as he talks with the person about their need for Christ.

I have heard some funny complaints over the years. Things like:

--I have an empty head and the wind is blowing through my ears. (probably anemia)

--I have a neck ache (said as they are pounding their neck) and a gas running around my body. (arthritis and muscle cramps)

And this one yesterday:

--This is an emergency! My father's womb is falling out! (That would have been one for the record books!)

The complaint may sound funny, but the problem may actually be serious. I am concerned that this last gentleman may have cancer of the rectum. He is not a Christian. As we work with patients, we try to remember that the most important part of them is the person we cannot see, that immortal soul that will still live after the body has turned to dust. We need to patiently deal with both the physical and spiritual needs before us, remembering how patient God was with us.

Thank you for praying for the elections here. God has told us not to put our trust in men. After all, they will die. It is encouraging to know that God has the nations under His control, and that includes elections in the small country of Haiti.

In our Lord's service,

*Dr. Anne*