

Bonjou Fellow Christians,

Another day in what I call "Paradise Lost."

My first impression of La Gonave is that it is a typical Caribbean Island. As I look from the hill of the Methodist Compound today, I see as everyday a beautiful blue sky with a few scattered billowy, cumulus clouds. Through the branches of a palm tree, in the distance sits an aqua blue Caribbean Sea. Sailboats are headed out for the catch of the day. The trickling of sweat from my brow tells me the shades of the night have developed into the mid-morning steamy heat of the upcoming day. The hillsides are painted many shades of green. As the villagers begin to stir, I hear burro's braying, dogs barking and of course the magical voices of children beginning play.

As the young 8 year old shepherds herd their goats, the ladies carry their baskets on their heads to market. We join the men doing the construction project on the guesthouse. Today we haul sand and buckets of water to mix cement.

After our 1st of two meals today we head to the beach for "Balloon Day at the Beach." I brought 144 balloons to be given to the children to do what they want. Typically, as children will be, you have balloons flying in all directions, popping and cries for more "blood" ("blood" is the word for "balloon" in Creole).

Looking deeper I see dirty clothes, harsh living conditions, yet happy faces. As I look into these eyes and faces I know God has not forsaken these people. Though they maybe lost in what we would call poverty.

My prayer for today is..... O God, we never know where we will find you or in whose face you will appear. Keep us mindful that you are present even in places we've been told you have forsaken. Help us to see your steadfast love in every face and every place. Amen

Respectfully yours,

Dennis Brady