



REPORT ON HAITI

By Thelma Rose

Most of you know that since last December Haiti has passed through a series of revolutions. The political upheaval began when President Magloire was ousted for trying to extend his term illegally. Since then Haiti has had six government upheavals, some of them bloody. Many candidates for the presidency added to the confusion. Finally in June the military junta headed by Gen. Antonia Kerekou took control of the country.

Official results of the Sept. 22 presidential election showed that the country doctor, Francois Duvalier, had defeated former Sen. Louis Dejoie by an overwhelming majority. Threats of bloodshed from Dejoie supporters have died out. They had promised to burn down the capital Port-au-Prince if Dejoie lost the election, but soon after he dropped suddenly out of sight after charging that the balloting had been riddled with fraud.

The election was called by the ruling military junta in the hope that the newly elected leader would end the political turmoil that has rocked the Caribbean island for the past months. When seizing control the junta had imposed rigid security measures, one being the imposing of a curfew.

The last of September a very serious incident occurred that threatened to affect U. S. - Haitian relations. An American man, 30 years old Shibley Talamas, was picked up one Saturday night during curfew while out seeking a doctor for his wife. She gave birth the next morning while Talamas was in prison. He was beaten to death for violating the curfew.

U. S. newspapers reported that Talamas had gone to the American Embassy in P. A. P. which in turn had secured promise of his protection from the Haitian police. The fact that Talamas was beaten to death in spite of the promise had brought relations between Washington and the Haitian ruling junta to a state of crisis. Reports after that stated that Americans were warned not to go out in Haiti after dark, and it was believed that they may all have to leave the country.

However as days passed, one heard or read less and less of the subject. A few weeks ago a missionary leader expressed that all the Haitians he had talked to were embarrassed about the incident and were anxious that it be forgotten.

From a Miami Newspaper of Oct. 11 we quote from a Haitian reporter: "Haiti's curfew will be removed with the impending inauguration of Dr. Francois Duvalier as president. Full civil liberties will be restored and martial law, including the curfew, ended when the new chief of state takes his oath of office.

Meanwhile Haiti is quiet. Hotels and transportation and other tourist facilities are operating normally. There actually has been no request or suggestion that dependents of America in the island leave the country. The report was mistaken. In fact the primary objective of both Dr. Duvalier and Gen. Kerekou is to guarantee the safety of the tourists. It is their purpose to establish a free nation amenable to the will of the people.

The Haitian reporter stated that the recent death of Shibley Talamas, a U. S. citizen, was an "unfortunate accident" now under full investigation of the Haitian Government. This I can personally believe, for up until

that time a missionary friend wrote to me that during the upheaval all they would have to do is state they were Americans and they were allowed passage through. One time a policeman got in the jeep to accompany them safely through a military blockade to their destination.

Also my experience has convinced me that the Haitians are a gentle people and have always shown courtesy to the missionaries. I've travelled from one end of the island to the other, and often unaccompanied by anyone that knew me, but without fear of being molested. I've had more fear living in the Hills of Kentucky, and on some of the streets of our own country than I ever experienced in Haiti. True the people there may be subject to "mob influence" but so we find many people who live nearer home.

God could use the incident termed as an "unfortunate accident" to incite a more cordial welcome and a greater protection on the part of Haitians toward all visitors, tourists and missionaries, for does He not "move in mysterious ways His wonders to perform?"

"AN OLD MAN GOES HOME TO DIE"

An account by Lillian Dickson, World Vision missionary in Taiwan, about one of the first Christian among the headhunters there.

The other day we had to take an old man home to die. The mission doctors told me they could do nothing more for him and that now it was only a matter of time. I did not want him to die away from his people, so we took him on a plane back to Hwalien on the far east coast.

To those who saw him he was just an old man, shabby and thin, and obviously very sick. But to me he was an angel on the glory road to Heaven. For he was Do-wai, one of the first Christians in the Tyal tribe, the head-hunting tribe.

Over twenty years ago, while still under the stern rule of the Japanese, he heard the Gospel at the foot of the mountain and believed. He asked permission of the Japanese authorities to come over to the missionaries and study the Bible. They refused, saying, "When we are ready for the mountain people to have religion, we will give them Shintoism."

But Do-wai belongs to the tribe that does not know defeat. He disregarded the police, and came over the mountains to our home and asked to study the Bible.

My husband took him in. Do-wai and his wife stayed safely with us for two years. Then he went back to preach secretly to his people, visiting them in their homes.

After a while he sent us word that he had about thirty believers among the Tyal tribe. They were meeting at night, from 12 o'clock midnight until two in the morning, the ex-head-hunters, singing praises to God high up in the mountains.

But the police discovered it and they were beaten until the blood came, and Do-wai was put in a horrible prison, denied the right kind of food, denied medical aid when he became sick. If he would have said, "I will not be a Christian," just those five words, the prison doors would have opened and he could have walked out into sunlight, freedom, safety, good food, companionship.

But Do-wai never denied his Lord. He was in prison for almost two years. The white shining courage of his faith caught like a flame among his people and while he languished in prison, the Christian faith swept over the mountain villages in an underground movement, until at the end of the war, there were thousands of Christians. Now there are about 250 churches in the mountains and over 15,000 Christians, and this is just since the end of the war.

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