

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”

Ephesians 4:29

Losing My Voice



MICHELLE
MCKAY

Before moving to a Haiti, I studied a petit (little) bit of Kreyol before I arrived in country, enough to think I was ready to chat with the Nationals here. Umm... non. By the time it takes for me to put together a sentence, the moment has already passed.

I have been silenced, unable to contribute to the conversations around me. Getting a bank account and visiting the doctor have become faith exercises in the goodness and integrity of strangers. One enduring quality of Haitians is their generosity of patience and kindness. Not one person has shown any hint of frustration with me attempting to speak Kreyol.

In a typical Haitian classroom, students sit as close to each other as possible, kids chat, teachers loudly instruct, there are no overhead lights, and chalkboards still show the previous lesson, unable to be completely erased.

Placing me in the front of a classroom of 26 to 71 teenagers to compete with the hundreds of voices swirling around the room, I can't out-shout anyone! I'm amazed how the students can see and hear, let alone comprehend, in this setting, but it shows me their grit to be successful. The Haitian culture of overcoming obstacles is inspiring, especially at such a young age.

I may have felt like I lost my voice, but God definitely has not! God speaks to me through the gentleness and hospitality of CONASPEH, through the students' joy and smiles. Through God's grace, the Holy Spirit is always with me, giving me back the voice I thought I lost.

Bondye do ou, fe' pa ou, M a fe' pa M. God says, do your part and I'll do mine. (Haitian proverb)

Michelle McKay serves with the National Spiritual Council of Churches of Haiti (CONASPEH). Her appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church's Wider Mission, WOC, OGHs, and your special gifts.

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