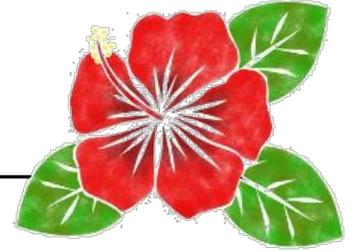




HBS Newsletter

Hôpital Bon Samaritain

Limbé, Haiti

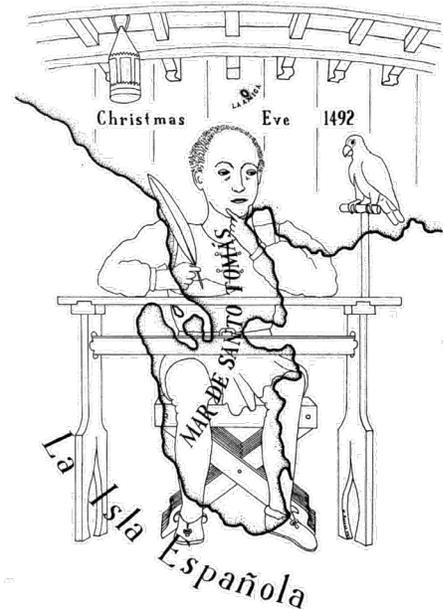


William H Hodges, Christmas 1983

It is possible that the first Christmas ever celebrated in Haiti was the best one, for never again could the world be seen through the same rose-colored glasses of optimism and hope. On Christmas Eve of 1492 Christopher Columbus was anchored in the Bay of Acul, some four or five miles east of Limbé, where I am writing this letter. Seated aboard his flagship, the Santa Maria, he looked out over the wooded mountains and fertile valleys of Haiti and tried to comprehend the full meaning of his discoveries. The Bay of Acul he called "La Mar de Santo Tomas," and declared that this harbor was "the most beautiful and one in which all the ships of Christendom could lie." The great navigator was feeling the full flush of his success; he was already aware that this island of Hispaniola was one of the most treasured geographical prizes of the world. His contact with the Indians had been exceptionally peaceful; indeed, they regarded his company as "men from heaven," and the air was full of promise.

The entry in Columbus' journal for the 24th of December, Christmas Eve, captures some of the exuberance of the Discovery:

"Your Highnesses may believe that in all the world there cannot be a better or more gentle people. Your Highnesses should feel great joy, because they will presently become Christians and will be taught in the good customs of your realms, for there cannot be a better people or country, and the number of the people and the extent of the country are so great that I do not yet know how to describe them for it is true that the things here are a wonder, and the great peoples of this island of Hispaniola, for so I call it, and they call it 'Bohio;' and all display the most extraordinarily loving behavior and have soft voices, unlike the others who seem to threaten when they talk . . . " (Translation, Cecil Jane)



In a way, to see the world or another people in such optimistic terms is almost to have the spirit of Christmas. We would have to have a "Scrooge-like" experience in which the counting house would be measured against the glorious "God bless us everyone!" of Tiny Tim. Scrooge became another man when he saw himself and the world in the light and love of the Christmas message. **"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman... to redeem them that were under the law, that ye might receive the adoption of sons."** (Galatians 4:4)

When we follow history down to the present day, we have abundant evidence on every hand of man's general perversity, depravity, and hopeless condition. The twentieth Century offers unparalleled examples of human cruelty and unmitigated fury.

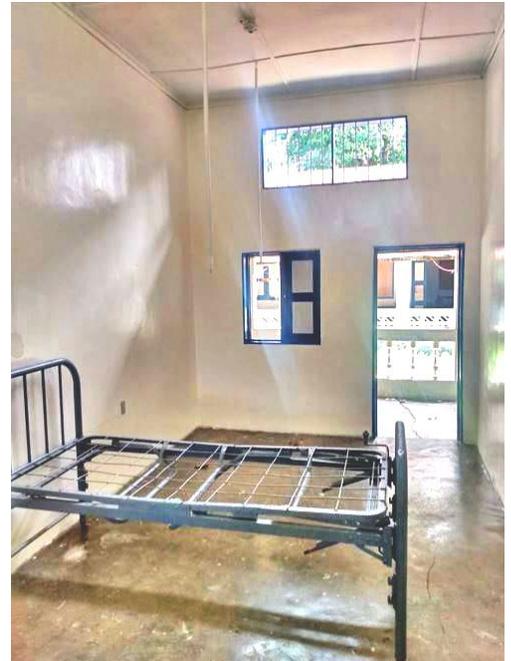
The Christian, however, sees all the human race as the object of God's love and redemption. All may be transformed by the life which began on Christmas. God sent forth his Son for the Indians, the Spaniards, the Nazis, the Japanese, the Palestinians, the Jews, and the Haitians. May we, like Columbus seated on board the flagship, put on the rose-colored glasses of Christmas, which permit us to see beyond the sin and degradation of man's condition, to see the glorious redemption which God has promised. **CHRISTMAS MEANS HOPE.**

HBS Maintenance

Since we received and replaced the beds in Maternity last year it was time to clean and paint the Clinic, Waiting Room and Adult Ward.

Starting in September the beds were taken out and all the ones that needed repairs were fixed. With the help of the Hodges House children the rooms were pressure washed and cleaned. A fresh new coat of paint was added to the walls, doors, and windows. The benches for the Waiting Room were also re-done.

It has been almost three years since volunteers come regularly to HBS to contribute and assist, an aspect of the hospital culture that has been greatly missed. Hopefully things will go back to normal soon so everyone can start coming back again. The hospital just isn't the same without all of you!



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

HBS has been providing healthcare, hope and God's message of Christianity for almost 65 years. Even though times are difficult, with your valuable support, prayers, and help, we have faith that HBS will persevere as it has many times in the past. ***"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it."*** John 1:5

May this Christmas bring all of you many reasons to smile. Share this wonderful time of year with those near and dear to your heart. Warmest Christmas blessings to everyone and all the best wishes for 2023!

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you again." Luke 6:38

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