



June 2023

Charis Family,

Haiti is currently [“dangling over an abyss.”](#) Those are the words of UN human rights chief Volker Turk in his address to the United Nations security council on May 3rd, 2023. I have written to you all, in newsletters, about the current state of Haiti in reference to the danger, gangs, and overall state of anarchy that currently exists there. In the official reports published by the [United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti](#), it was revealed that 1,674 homicides, rapes, kidnappings, and lynchings were reported in only the first quarter of 2023. That number is up from 692 such incidents in the same period last year. If these numbers weren't bad enough, additional catastrophes have worsened the situation for Haiti to bring the situation to even greater degrees of desperation.

Over 13,000 Haitians displaced by tropical storm

First, a severe tropical storm struck Haiti on June 2nd and 3rd as rain fell continuously for 48 hours. The storm affected 8 out of the 10 departments in Haiti—including ours—and resulted in life threatening flash floods, rockslides, and landslides. The damage that these kinds of storms mete out to a country like Haiti—that has virtually no infrastructure in place—is devastating on a scale that most of us can't even imagine. Per official reports, the storm displaced 13,390 people, flooded 1,219 homes, entirely destroyed 160 homes, washed away roads, and killed many animals and people. We have been in continuous contact with our brothers and sisters in Haiti, and our leaders—to the extent of their current knowledge—have informed us that seven people (that include small children) have died in Marigot, one person in Peredo, and another one in Grand Riviere. These tragic deaths were secondary to drowning or sustaining fatal head trauma after falling in the fast-moving water. Three of the individuals who died we knew personally, and we are currently grieving with their families and holding them up in prayer.

Cholera outbreak and 4.9 earthquake

Secondly, there is currently a cholera epidemic occurring in Haiti. For those who don't know, cholera is an infectious bacterial disease of the small intestine that is most commonly contracted through infected water sources. Cholera causes severe diarrhea that can reach volumes of over one liter per hour. The diarrhea is aggressive, voluminous, and frequent causing severe dehydration leading to shock and death within

hours if not treated promptly. As you all know, the healthcare system in Haiti is beyond lacking, and treatment for cholera is rarely available and accessible especially for those in the mountain communities. Cholera is tearing through Haiti right now and its effects are being heavily felt in our area too. In Marigot/Peredo ten people have died of cholera and over 40 people are currently hospitalized on the brink of death. This death is particularly tragic for two reasons. First, death by dehydration produces intense suffering; and secondly, the treatment is rehydration which—in most countries—is considered basic care.

If this wasn't enough tragedy, an earthquake—with a magnitude of 4.9—hit the south of Haiti last week killing four and injuring 36 others. The infrastructure damage was also substantial as homes and businesses were heavily damaged secondary to the tremors. Additionally, on the night of June 2nd/morning of June 3rd, a boat carrying over 600 sacks of flour and 15 Haitian passengers set sail for Marigot from the Dominican/Haitian border. As the boat approached Marigot it capsized due to excessive weight, and all 15 passengers died. We heard this news from multiple people who witnessed the aftermath of this accident, and despite the news reporting only one death, the unfortunate reality is that all 15 passengers died.

Three main consequences

This amount of tragedy being experienced by our brothers and sisters in Haiti is so excessive that it almost seems unbelievable. In all the conversations we are having with our Haitian friends, there seems to be three common consequences emerging from all of these distressing events:

1. Hunger and the fear of children starving

People's gardens and land have been washed away or damaged beyond hope of saving. Food in the markets is expensive and best bought in bulk. However, buying food in bulk is far beyond most of our people's ability, and buying day to day isn't sustainable financially for most. The loss of gardens not only results in loss of food for the respective family, but also creates a loss of income as many sell their crops in the markets. As a result, many families have been left without food and this places infants and small children at the greatest risk of starvation and possible death.

2. Home loss or damage

Many of our church leaders have reported extensive damage to their homes and, in some cases, outright loss. For instance, one of our leaders named Sanon—a man that many of you have met on mission trips with us—has a small home that sustained heavy roof damage during the tropical storm. This resulted in many breaches in the roof that allow rain, wind, poisonous insects/snakes, and vermin to enter his home. Sanon has a newborn son and this roof damage places this small child at risk as the rain water



continuously falls into the home creating wet/damp conditions that jeopardize the health of the baby, Sanon and his wife. We have also had leaders tell us that the damage to their homes was so extensive that their families can no longer live or even sleep in the home resulting in homelessness with desperate attempts to find shelter from the sun, rain, and other elements.

3. Sickness requiring medications

The current lack of food, polluted water from the storms, children sleeping on the wet ground or mattresses saturated with water, amongst other factors, have all created a high potential of health problems. Many are sick with respiratory and skin diseases. When you add the current cholera epidemic that I discussed above, it results in a health emergency. As you know, we have a clinic between Marigot and Peredo that we established to serve our communities that either have no access to health care or that are too poor to afford medications at the local pharmacies. Over the last couple of months, we have served well over 1,000 Haitian babies, children, adults, and elderly individuals in an effort to alleviate the huge disease burden that exists in our area. As a result of this new wave of illness and the continued prevalence of cholera, we are in dire need of restocking our clinic's pharmacy to ensure timely and appropriate treatment of the sick. This part of the ministry is a great blessing to our area as treatment of pain, breathing difficulty, persistent diarrhea, constant itching, etc., greatly improves the quality of life for these people that are so dear to our hearts!

Hold onto faith

Please allow me to speak from a more personal place now. Over the past several months Joy and I have been absolutely inundated with phone calls and text messages from our leaders and friends in Haiti. Since the beginning of this year Haiti has been in social free-fall due to the gang takeovers and violence that these gang leaders are engaging in. Fear, insecurity, and desperation have been the predominant feelings that we are sensing within the voices and messages of our Haitian brothers and sisters, and this was before all these additional tragedies struck Haiti over the last few weeks.

I don't have any words for the feelings and emotions of the people now. To say that Joy and I are devastated and saddened would be an understatement. This burden has become nearly unbearable, but we hold onto our faith in Christ Who has promised us, and the Haitian people, that He "will never leave us

nor forsake us.” (See Deuteronomy 31:6 and Hebrews 13:5.) The reality is that the Haitians are suffering badly as they cannot even eat, despite all the social danger and upheaval. Hearing from Haitian mothers who, through their tears, tell us that they cannot feed their children. Hearing from the fathers who beg us to help them get to another country, being willing to separate from their families for months or even years in order to find work to send money home to their families so that they can eat. This is no way for any human to live. When I think that our dogs, cats, and hamsters have more security in eating than our Haitian brothers and sisters, it gets really difficult to make sense of anything.

Food pantry, home repairs, pharmacy

Joy and I have been in conversation with Pastor Abony and his wife and they believe that restocking the food pantry that we started a few years ago would be the best way to help with food needs in our area. A few years ago, we initiated a food pantry that was overseen by Eliana (Pastor Abony’s wife). Since Pastor Abony oversees all of our churches, he has intimate and accurate knowledge of each person’s situation. He knows if there is a desperate and genuine need for food within the families in the church. This allows us to avoid abuse of the free food offerings of the pantry. We have security overseeing the storage area and our pastors overseeing the actual distribution (with Pastor Abony overseeing the pastors).

We need to buy food in bulk if the funding is to be utilized most efficiently, and we need a lot of food. This includes rice, beans, pasta, spices, oil and canned sauces (but no meat). This has been implemented successfully in the past, and there is no doubt in my mind that with the right funds we can implement this to the degree that it needs to be, and we can get people fed. Funding is also needed to help repair homes damaged by the storms. This will allow families to sleep in dry rooms with no excessive vermin or poisonous insects, having increased access to the interior of the home. Finally, funding is required to restock our clinic’s pharmacy, and get sick people the treatments they desperately need to overcome infections, dehydration, and other symptoms that occur with a variety of additional ailments.

I am reaching out to all of you, as I know that you are carrying this burden with us. Physical health and spiritual health are joined together in Scripture, and Jesus focused on both of these human needs during His earthly ministry. Jesus both fed people and led them to spiritual freedom through His gospel. We are commanded to do the same on earth for our brethren. Let us join hands and help these desperate people who cannot help themselves. Please be a blessing to the Haitian people who are in great need of your help right now. Over the last few weeks when the burden of Haiti and our ministry there has reached magnitudes too great for the heart and mind to bear, God has gently reminded me and encouraged me with the words that He inspired Paul to write in 1 Corinthians.

“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will



*also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” —1
Corinthians 10:13*

When I read this verse, three temptations relevant to the contents of this letter immediately come to mind.

1. Joy and I are tempted to allow the inundation of these problems in Haiti to overcome us and desensitize us, leading us to not be as aggressive in our response to this as we should—to throw up our hands and say that these problems are too many and too severe to fix.
2. You all, as you read this, will be tempted not to act—to think that someone else will help; or to think that your donation won't do anything that truly helps abet the situation.
3. Our brothers and sisters in Haiti will be tempted to give in to the devil and turn to vodou for help with their situation and turn away from God, thinking that God has abandoned them and has allowed them to suffer without hope of alleviation.

We all know that God is bigger than all of these temptations, and I pray that we all, in America, will refuse to allow the Haitians to go on starving, suffering with treatable illnesses, and living in conditions that are not adequate for any human being. Let's provide the food that allows them to eat at least once a day, provide the medicine that cures/treats their sicknesses, and repair their homes that stand in need of repairs that will provide adequate shelter for them. Joy and I love all of you and feel honored and privileged to be your hands and feet in your work, efforts, and prayers for the Haitians. We are more than willing to go to the ends of the earth for the Haitian church, and I know that God chooses to act through His sons and daughters (you and I) on earth. Together, let's show the Haitian people how much God loves them through our love. Thank you in advance. You all are the foundation of this ministry and we are grateful for your commitment to this mission work. Have a blessed day and let's all allow God to work through our lives as we show people who are suffering and desperate that the answer to all of the hurt, pain, and uncertainty is Jesus Christ—Christ in you, the hope of glory!

Your Brother in Christ,
Malcolm

