

Haitian Unrest

Well, it has been a very turbulent last few months for Joy and I secondary to the violence, protests, and political unrest in Haiti. I am sure that many of you are aware of the recent events, but for those of you who aren't, allow me to inform you.

The Haitian people feel that their President is not doing his job and are demanding that he leave office. Accusations of corruption, misuse of money, and a flagrant disregard for the people he made a promise to serve, have plagued the Haitian President for the last two years, but in recent months very real problems have materialized. The response has been an overt and understandable anger amongst the Haitian population.

The problems that have most contributed to this national outcry are:

- 1 Gas shortages throughout the country**
Since transportation and generators are entirely dependent on gasoline, this shortage has resulted in people not being able to fuel their transports and motorcycles, and no electricity/power for weeks.
- 2 Rapid depreciation of the goudé (the Haitian monetary unit)**
In a 1-2 week period of time the US dollar to goudé worth ratio went from 1 to 60, to 1 to 93!
- 3 Large increase in food costs**
The rapid drop in value of the Haitian goudé has resulted in a literal doubling of food costs. A bag of rice increased in cost from 750 goudés to over 1500 goudés! Thus, the already impoverished population cannot afford to eat resulting in hunger and starvation rising at an alarming rate.

These problems, amongst others, resulted in massive countrywide protests and demonstrations that rapidly turned violent. Manifestations of this national anger were seen as roads were blocked with burning tires, entire trees, and boulders. Attempts to pass these roadblocks could result in serious injury as rocks and bottles would be thrown and machetes swung in the direction of anyone attempting to pass through.



Cars were being burned in the streets, hospitals were being over-run with those injured from rocks and machete wounds, police were being targeted and in some instances murdered, citizens were being beaten and killed by police as they would open fire into large crowds, and fighting between people was resulting in many deaths. There were also threats made to stop all Digicel service (the Haitian phone carrier), which would effectively halt bank and ATM transactions, phone service, and internet service. I was out observing all of this first-hand and many Haitians whom I spoke with said that they had never seen things so bad!



This violence all developed very quickly, and shortly after this began, the CIA and United States State Department increased the travel advisory for Haiti to a level 4 (do not travel), and ordered the mandatory evacuation of the US Embassy in Haiti and told all US citizens working in the country to leave. Over the course of 2-3 days the embassy workers left the country along with countless aid workers and missionaries. Secondary to all of this occurring I made the decision to leave too, so Joy called the airline to change our tickets and within 2 days we flew back to the States.

I relate this story not just to inform you all about what is occurring in Haiti, but also to share a valuable lesson that God taught me through all of this. To properly relate this I must step back and share with all of you what God had been doing through Charis before and during this breakout of violence.

Deba finds every priest and priestess in her area

When we arrived back in Haiti the first week of January we knew we had many people to see secondary to the massive amount of evangelism that Deba had been performing while we were in the States. When we are in the US we talk to our Haitian brothers and sisters every day. It is not uncommon for us to wake up in the morning and have over 30 messages on our phones from various Haitian friends.

So we knew very well that Deba (the vodou priestess who had accepted Christ after we brought the gospel to her a little over a year ago) had been aggressively evangelizing every vodou priest and priestess she could find in her area and beyond it. Sano, Lukson, and Latigue (3 vodou priests that had accepted the Lord through the ministry), had also been evangelizing the surrounding mountain communities. Latigue had even gotten on a boat and travelled to a mountain community 6 hours away to bring the gospel there after it was brought to his attention that this area had no church or witness for Christ! So we are blessed to have literal soldiers for Christ on the ground entering into the spiritual warfare of Haiti every day performing evangelism that increases the power and efficacy of this ministry exponentially. Thus, when we returned in January we had a lot of work to do.

Theological equipping

While all of our above-mentioned converts/evangelists can relay their testimony and a simple gospel message, they haven't yet reached the point of being able to engage in a theological conversation and answer questions with Bible references. Therefore, it is still necessary that I go to ensure that the complete gospel is shared and all questions answered through the use of Scripture.

Joy and I were very excited about all of this and we hit the ground running as soon as we arrived back in January. Usually, when we bring the gospel to a vodouist the response is either an overt rejection or 'give me some time to think about this and come back later'. But

occasionally we get the joy of witnessing God placing His saving, regenerating grace into an individual's heart, and the infrequency of this is to be expected when considering Scripture:

“For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few.” –Matthew 7:14

Burning vodou paraphernalia

This year has begun differently though, and Joy and I feel so honored and blessed to be front row spectators of the work God is doing. Nearly every vodou priest that Deba has brought me to this year, after hearing the entire gospel, was ready and willing to burn all of their vodou idols and paraphernalia and surrender their lives to Christ! This amazed me because vodouists will commonly say that they want to come to Christ, but want me to give them something (i.e. money) before they do. It is only when they are willing to burn their vodou objects without asking me what I can give them that I know their repentance is genuine and that their hearts are truly being regenerated.

Burning their objects of worship and incantation/magic books (that are valuable in the occult world) permanently rids their homes and lives of the ability to practice vodou. The burning of their occult items serves as a powerful declaration of surrender and a genuine expression of faith as these converted vodou priests must now turn to Christ for all things in their life as their dependence that was placed 100% in a demon is now placed wholly in their Savior! This is also seen in the book of Acts when the hearts of those who served demons in Ephesus were moved by the gospel preached by Paul:

“Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”
–Acts 19:18-20

Speaking to these men and women who were repenting and turning from spiritual darkness to light, I clearly discerned that deep down they were truly desperate to know God, because serving Satan, who is a vicious taskmaster, was both physically and spiritually destructive. So, as I sat with them after burning their vodou idols my mind was filled with amazement at their willingness to give away everything to follow Christ! Honestly it shamed me when I considered our 'salvations' in the States that come at absolutely no cost to us (which begs the question of authenticity of salvation but that is a different conversation for another day).

Support after leaving vodou

Immediately following salvation I always speak with them to set up weekly discipleship meetings in which we study Scripture and Christian living. I also inquire about what they want to now do to support themselves. After I hear what they want to do I make a commitment to help them get started in whatever small business enterprise they desire to enter. On average this cost is around \$500-\$600 US dollars, after which they can maintain their lives and earn enough money to eat and keep up their households.

I found myself thanking God every day for His saving grace that He was pouring out upon these vodou practitioners. It is awesome to Biblically consider what is really going on. God, in His eternal Sovereignty, knew before time began that these men and women were numbered in His elect and thus their salvation had already been eternally secured. All they needed was to become aware of this themselves, and this awareness came through hearing the gospel which holds the power to regenerate the hearts of the elect in an irresistible way. So even when they were serving the devil and making sacrifices to demons God knew they were amongst His elect—what an awesome truth! We see this truth in the words of Paul found in Galatians 1:15-16, (remember Paul spent the first part of his life zealously persecuting and imprisoning Christians):

“But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles I did not immediately consult with anyone.”
–Galatians 1:15-16

Even when Paul was torturing, imprisoning, and murdering Christians, God still saw him as one He had set apart for election before he was even born—how great is that to meditate upon! This shows us that no one, absolutely no one, is beyond God’s grace and because we don’t know exactly who the elect are, we should passionately pursue the souls of men through evangelism!

Spiritual warfare as a missionary

Week after week we were witnessing scores of vodou priests surrender their lives to Christ. As an aside, this has absolutely nothing to do with me as I don’t have the power to convert people. But ALL glory to God for this harvest in Haiti, and Joy and I were overjoyed seeing this incredible display of Divine grace and salvation! Something you learn to appreciate when you are a missionary is spiritual warfare! Great victories for the Kingdom of Christ attracts the attention of Satan, and he will not allow you to work unopposed. Satan and his demons will oppose you with everything they have within the allowance of God, and thus when the opposition begins we should be expecting it.

When this opposition starts I strongly believe that God, who has allowed it to occur, is looking solely at you—His missionary, son, and servant—to observe your response. Every response to Satan has

two components; WHO and WHAT. WHO will you run to when Satan attacks? Will you run to a human, a Christian leader, your own thought up strategy—or will you run to Christ?

Secondly, WHAT will you do? Will you listen to your instincts, your common sense, or human advice, or will you place your faith in God and not allow carnally driven solutions to dictate your response? I write newsletters for two reasons; 1) to inform you all of what is going on in the ministry to raise your awareness; and 2) to maintain transparency so that you all can benefit from reading about both our successes and our failures—and I’m sad to say that this particular newsletter reveals my failure. Now in the middle of all of these miraculous, daily conversions and victories over Satan, the political violence discussed above began to break out.

Responding to fear

When I, as the leader of my family, looked at the overall situation in Haiti and considered the violence, danger, and potential harm to my family that could result, I made the decision to leave. I can’t imagine that many of you reading this would disagree with my assessment and subsequent decision. During this time though, I had a very powerful worldly triad serving as advisors to my mind as the influential suggestions offered by common sense, practical thinking, and logic were all urging me to leave, and their flesh catering recommendation found a friend in the worldly aspects of my nature. Their seductions were successful and I packed up my family and flew back to the U.S.

As soon as we landed my spirit began to experience a very unsettled feeling. As I laid in the hotel bed that first night back I sensed God’s displeasure with my decision, and He immediately placed His truth into my mind by directing my thoughts to Scripture. Throughout Scripture there is a very clear and frequent command to not fear. Several of those Biblical references follow:

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” –2 Timothy 1:7

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” –Joshua 1:9

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” –Psalm 23:4

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” –Psalm 27:1

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” –Isaiah 41:10

There are many additional verses I could cite here, but the teaching is clear—the Christian life should be completely devoid of fear. We see this in Scripture through observing the lives of the prophets, Christ and the disciples/apostles. They did not fear beatings, scourging, tortures, being sawn in two, or being crucified. Why didn't they fear these things? Because they believed and obeyed the words of Christ. They saw themselves as citizens of heaven, their hope was in Christ alone, their strength was through God, and thus their earthly lives were not viewed with eyes focused toward self-preservation.

If we really think about it all, fear is founded in the concerns surrounding self-preservation and uncertainty—both things that Christians should not concern themselves with. Our fallen nature is obsessed with self-preservation but this old nature should be crucified as we live in the joy of our new Christ-centered nature! Uncertainty reigns supreme in the life of an unbeliever who has no confidence in where their soul will go after death, while the believer is absolutely certain that he/she will spend eternity in Divine paradise in the presence of God! So we, as Christians, do not consider anything from a perspective of self when it comes to obedience in Christian living, and there are not many men in history who modeled this better than the apostle Paul who said:

“But I do not consider my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” –Acts 20:24

The false doctrine of self

This verse should show us how far our minds have fallen from Biblical thinking. Can the average Christian in America relate to any part of this verse, or has our self-obsession robbed us of fruitful, Biblical, God pleasing living? Everything is self-based in America—we are self-secure, self-serving, self-glorifying, self-righteous, self-absorbed, self-comforted, and controlled by our sense of self-worth. We have created a society in which self transcends God and this is why we are as guilty of idolatry as the vodou priests are. Considering this, the vodou priest

is in a better predicament than we are because I can go and burn his idols, but it would be hard for us to burn our biggest idol because to do that we would have to set ourselves ablaze!

With all of this swarming through my mind I became very convicted and knew that I had sinned by allowing the spirit of fear to overtake me and lead me away from obedience as I failed to place all of my faith in God. I had allowed my family to become an idol, and my fear to become a temporary god that directed my decisions and actions. After discussing this with Joy she said that she was feeling the same way, and so we returned to Haiti 5 days later even though the State department was still placing Haiti in a level 4 category.

The greatest harvest in Charis history

Since we returned we have honestly had the greatest harvest in the history of Charis! Vodou priests and priestesses are daily coming to Christ, and at their request we have burned vodou items almost every day. At the time of my writing this, I just yesterday burned a great volume of vodou paraphernalia, including a tree that had served as a 'home' for the demon served by the respective vodou priest. Just this morning a young man who works with us came and told me that following a Bible study I did yesterday in the mountain, 11 people heavily involved in vodou had their hearts pierced by the Word of God and want to remit all of their vodou items to burn this week! To think that I would have missed all of these opportunities if I had continued to allow fear to rule over me.

Appointed before time began

As you all read this it is my prayer that you are inspired and motivated by my mistakes. God has work for every one of His children (those who are saved) on this earth that He appointed before time began (see Ephesians 2:10). Are you aware of God's will for your life? Geographically are you where God has called you in this world? Or, are you allowing fear to masquerade as God and lead you into a life of self-determined religious efforts that assure your safety and comforts?

If so, please determine today to find God's will for your life through prayerful inquiry and be prepared to be stretched and challenged beyond anything you thought yourself capable of. If you want God to truly rule over your life you cannot allow fear to supplant Him. Countless people in the world are waiting for you to show up at their doors or in their villages—please don't make them wait any longer! Enter into the spiritual warfare that our salvation has armed us for, and don't allow fear to deter you from obedience like I did!

ACTS 26:18 Ministry

What follows is a list of former vodouists that have chosen to follow Jesus Christ. When a Haitian leaves vodou, it often means losing their primary income and means of survival. Charis is beginning a recovery ministry to help our new brothers and sisters in Christ become self-sustaining.

A special thank you to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran church in Austin, TX for their support in helping us jump start this recovery ministry. Anyone who would like to give towards this program, please mark "ACTS 26:18 MINISTRY" on your on-line donation or on the memo line on your check.

Make checks payable to "CHARIS" and mail to: CHARIS, 3015 E. New York Street, A2-295, Aurora, IL 60504

Vodou Terms

HOUGAN

Vodou Priest/Healer

MAMBO

Vodou Priestess/Healer

SORCERER

Someone who uses magic and spells

MALEFACTOR

Evil Black Magic Practitioner

DIVINER

Conjurs demons to predict future events



FORMER MALEFACTOR

Sergot Jean Baptist

Needs to pay for his son's school (\$300) and would like to start selling meat as a Butcher (\$500 US).

\$800 US

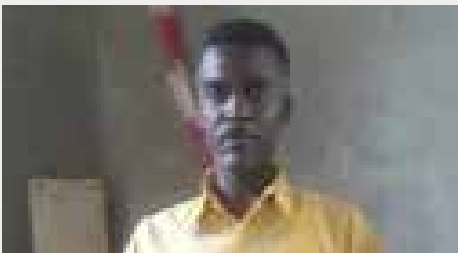


FORMER HOUGAN

Larousse Severe

Wants to be a motorcycle taxi driver (needs a new motorcycle with license and registration).

\$900 US



FORMER HOUGAN

Samuel

Would like to start a little business selling electronics.

\$500 US



FORMER HOUGAN

Lukeneer Marcelin

Would like to sell cell phones, batteries and chargers.

\$700 US



FORMER DIVINER

Frenchy

Wants to go to school to learn agriculture/ laying tile floors.

\$500 US



FORMER MALEFACTOR

Racine Pierre

Wants to raise and sell animals (goats, pigs, chickens).

\$350 US



3 DAUGHTERS OF A HOUGAN

Silfanise, Maniese, and Gervena Louis

Want to run a little porch store together at their house.

\$500 US



FORMER HOUGAN

Theodore Adruin (Edwin)

Wants to be a motorcycle taxi driver (needs a new motorcycle with license and registration).

\$500 US



FORMER MAMBO

Marcella

Needs a safe place to live. Wants to start teaching the children's group in her community.

\$200 US



FORMER MAMBO

Ketellie

Needs help paying for her 2 sons' schooling this year.

\$300 US



FORMER HOUGAN

Romansiye

Very old man who would just like to be supported each month with food and medicine.

\$300 US



FORMER DIVINER

Leslie

Wants to start a business selling radios and electrical items.

\$300 US



FORMER DIVINER

Nadege

Wants to start selling clothes and dishes.

\$250 US



FORMER HOUGAN

Saint Luke

Lukeson's dad. A very old man who would just like to be supported each month with food and medicine.

\$250 US



FORMER HOUGAN

Ulrich (Eric) Benoit

Wants to start a business selling telephones and chargers.

\$400 US



FORMER DIVINER

Rene Jules

Wants to be a butcher and sell meat in the market.

\$500 US



FORMER MAMBO

Madam Eliston Jean Baptist

Wants to sell snacks and cold drinks.

\$300 US



FORMER VODOUASSAINT
Nerlande Deleis

Wants to sell children's clothes and shoes.

\$250 US



DAUGHTER OF A HOUGAN
Darlene

Wants to complete school and needs a safe place to live.

\$300 US



FORMER HOUGAN
Oxerann

Needs 6 car batteries & paint to fix up and run his barber shop.

\$1,000 US



FORMER ASSISTANT TO A HOUGAN
Andre Louis Pierre

Wants to start a motorcycle wash (needs a generator and power washer).

\$350 US



FORMER MALEFACTOR
Ousann

Has land and wants to plant 150 banana trees.

\$300 US



FORMER HOUGAN
Lukeson

Wants to start a motorcycle parts shop.

\$400 US



FORMER MAMBO
Margaret

Wants to sell dry foods (flour, beans, sugar, etc.).

\$350 US



FORMER MAMBO
Tamara

Wants to sell laundry soap and hygiene products.

\$300 US



FORMER HOUGAN
Celestin Herve

A very old man who would just like to be supported each month with food and medicine.

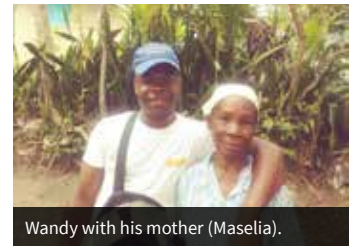
\$600 US



Hallelujah! Sergot turned his life to Christ!



The utter of a female goat, hung in a tree to attract demons to the ceremony.



Wandy with his mother (Maselia).



The community of Laroka turning from darkness to the light of Jesus Christ!



This represents a crossroad, instructing a spirit to run a person over with a car.



Samuel and his snake



Part of a voodoo ceremony set up.



Jessibon burned all of his voodoo stuff in front of his family and community.



Nadege, Ulrich, Lorvelie and Peter this week at church! Praise the Lord!



Wosman, Sonson, Willanier, Mayrel, Kristo and Ellisen also gathered together and burned their items in Laroka!

Mission Statement

Charis (Greek for God's Grace) operates in complete obedience to God, giving Him His rightful place in determining the path and goals of His ministry that He has, by grace, allowed us to perform. Charis primarily focuses on the unseen spiritual needs in Haiti, and secondarily on the seen physical needs, always remembering that our success is completely dependent on the will of God, the gospel of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit working effectively through us, His willing servants.