

2021 October 22

Thoughts on the kidnapping of October 16

There have been reports during the past two years of gangs shooting American mission team members or trying to abduct them, but those have been relatively infrequent and closer to the major cities compared to what the gangs were doing to their own people throughout the country. This past weekend, the criminal activities were taken to a new level with the kidnapping of the team of twelve adults and five children (sixteen Americans and one Canadian) who were returning from a project at an orphanage, and then the outrageous ransom demand.

Earlier this week, I did not think the 400 Mawozo gang would actually kill these people since the outcry was so great both nationally and internationally. Now, after reading about Herod and John the Baptist in the Gospel of Mark, I am not so sure. Herod was willing to sacrifice John the Baptist because of pride and the possibility of losing face before his officials. The same thing may happen with Wilson Joseph, the leader of the gang. He has stated on a social media that he will kill the missionaries if his \$17 million demand is not met. He may be willing to sacrifice these people to his pride rather than back down. It is not clear what will happen to the Haitian driver. It is also not clear whether or not the international community will actually get involved in the chaos that now characterizes Haiti even if these people are killed or tortured.

The situation reminds me of 2004 when the country was near civil war and gang activity was common, although nothing like the scale of this time. The missionaries in our area were divided about whether or not to leave. For some, it was clear that they should leave; for others, like me, it was clear that we should stay. What was a great blessing at that time was that each group prayed for the other to know God's will for each person and did not judge. Those of us who stayed rejoiced when plane flights immediately became available for the others, and those who left prayed for continued wisdom and protection for those who stayed. It is a good reminder now that we are not to judge the Lord's servants.

Here are the prayer requests that have been on my mind.

- I have been praying that each of the team members who is old enough to understand truly has a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. This situation would be a hard way to learn of one's need for salvation, but each of these people needs to be prepared for eternity.
- These people need God's peace in the midst of this terrible storm. The parents need to be calm for their children.
- As God wills, that the entire team and their Haitian driver will be released unharmed.

Thanks for praying for these people. God already knows the outcome, not just for this group, but for the entire situation in Haiti. The heart of man truly is deceitful and desperately wicked. That is why people need the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In our Lord's service,

*Dr. Anne*