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“The cartels have taken over our city...” exclaimed one of our church members! My reply was an immediate “yes, it seems that way!!” but after acknowledging the desperate situation I reminded not only her but had to remind myself as I tried to comfort her with the words, “But God is still on the throne!” Many cartels and petty gangs have ravaged our city forcing businesses to pay a “vacuna” or vaccination to keep their business operating. Much like the Mafia would make businesses pay for “protection.” Even though businesses would pay they still would not receive protection, which has been proven recently on the streets of our city of Guayaquil. One of the major cartel leaders escaped prison and immediately ordered his gang to wreak havoc on the city causing commotion, shooting randomly and at individuals in all major areas of the city. Some members of one of the gangs even took over an Ecuadorian TV station during one of their broadcasts. It made such an impact that the event was shown on the Evening News in the US. Needless to say many were contacting me to ask if we were OK. I, as well, was texting and calling many people in Ecuador to find out if they were OK. All of the church members reported being OK, but some of their friends were not so blessed as some of the hospitals and schools were taken over by gangs, and they killed some of the students as well as some of the parents, mostly by stray bullets, trying to pick up their children. The city has just recently lifted some of the lockdown restrictions after the military was called upon to help restore order. Please continue to pray for safety as “survival mode” has become a way of life for many.

Thank you all for the recent Christmas offerings. It has been our pleasure to serve with you this past year and we appreciate the end of the year kindness you have shown to our family.

God bless,

Richard and Anna

“I have set thee to be a light . . . unto the ends of the earth.” Acts 13:47