

WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

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Our Common Humanity

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Like many of you, I was stunned at what I saw on last Tuesday's evening news. The devastation in Haiti following a tragic earthquake looked like a scene in a science fiction movie. Only this one is real, it is very real. Port-au-Prince, the nation's capital in which thousands of people worked and lived is the site of crumbled buildings. Government buildings where thousands worked were leveled with the only saving grace being that workers had left for the day. The National Palace is a pile of rubble. The U.N. Peacekeepers Compound, a five story building where international partners worked for peace has collapsed.

I cannot even imagine the terror felt by thousands of men, women, and children when this 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck their communities. There was nowhere to run, nowhere to hide from the cracking landscape causing walls to crash down around them in the darkness of the day. On Tuesday night, anticipation of what the morning would bring loomed heavy. A clear view of reality was evident on Wednesday morning.

United Nations officials and countries all over the world are mobilizing to provide assistance, working out ways in which to land supply airplanes at an airport that is unstable. These kinds of disasters have a way of bringing together the people of the world. Hostilities seem to fall away, or do they?

In the midst of this terrible tragedy, we can't seem to help ourselves from hostile attacks on one another. Electronic media is a wonderful thing. We can read up to the minute reports of events occurring in every part of the world by just going to the internet. I went there early Wednesday morning to read the latest news. The response blogs to these stories were filled with compassion, but many filled with anger, resentment, and disrespect.

The exchange of messages going back and forth was disheartening to me. I fully advocate for every person's right to his or her opinion; however, I was stunned by the cold detachment expressed by some. The most troubling of the blog messages were those who complained about our tax dollars going to help those from another country. One said, "Americans first. When we have what we need, then we can help those in other nations." Really?

Our most important mission right now is to do all we can to support the rescue efforts. We must put our hostilities and resentments aside and step up to the task of helping our neighbors in their recovery efforts. Haitian brothers and sisters need us now. Those who suffered the devastating earthquake need food and water. Their families living there and in other parts of the world, searching for their loved ones, need our support and prayers. Rescue workers need our prayers. Even if just for a few days, let's concentrate on the urgent need right now. We can talk about the other stuff later.

We must claim our common humanity regardless of our national heritage. We are citizens of the world together. We are bound together as children of God, who is loving, generous, and just. You can make a secure donation by going to <http://www.ucc.org/disaster>.

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