



*If not you, then who?*

*If not now, then when?*

27 January 2010

Greetings, fellow workers.

I am sure you have been following the news which continues to come out of Haiti and that you are aware of the ever-increasing severity of the plight of our Haitian brothers and sisters. Latest estimates now place the *projected* death toll in excess of 500,000. Aid is pouring in from around the world, but bottlenecks hinder the distribution of that aid. We heard from Luc Deratus that as of the 21st of January no aid of any kind has found its way to Cite Soleil where his church collapsed on worshippers and the school buildings were completely demolished. Leurboug has received no assistance to date, as is the case for many communities surrounding the devastated Port-au-Prince metropolitan area where most of the aid effort is focused.

The media, while helping in getting the news out, is falling victim to its own penchant for graphic headlines in its reporting -- as if the crisis at hand is not sufficient to placate its thirst for sensationalism. Reports continue to be disseminated about "looting and looters" amid the most destructive natural disaster in Haiti's living memory. Some people who have been without food and water for many days are taking what they need from stores, that's true. But some compassionate understanding might be a welcome relief from the headline hunters.

After all, wasn't it right here in civilized America where we trampled our our own neighbors to death in the quest for Beanie Babies? Every society has some unrestrained personalities, including ours. But our general populace is not trampling its neighbors, and in a crisis most people come to the aid of their fellow man as witnessed on 9/11. So, too, in Haiti. The Haitian people are remarkably well mannered in the face of this disaster and should be recognized for that.

Also, I heard on CNN last Friday morning that people should be wary of giving to charities which claim that one-hundred percent of the donors' monies go directly to the cause for which they gave it. "After all, everyone has overhead." was the claim implying that the promised one-hundred percent turnaround of donated funds was not true. This blanket evaluation was broadcast after the commentator claimed that she had researched many charities to arrive at this conclusion.

Well, I suppose that getting hired to speak to cameras doesn't immunize one from being wrong. After we re-ran the segment implying that those charities were dishonest, my wife said, "You better let our supporters know again how we handle their contributions."

So, once again, let me tell you how our overhead is paid. First, none of our board members or volunteers receive any salary of any kind. We have NO paid employees - except for the Haitian teachers we pay to teach in the Haitian schools. Everyone who works with and for Practical Compassion stateside does so for free and because they care. We don't provide health insurance or retirement accounts. We don't buy cars and vans, or purchase television time. We don't pay politicians or celebrities to promote our organization. Our overhead is low because we don't spend your money building our organization.

As advertised from the beginning, there is one organization and several of our own volunteers who underwrite the entire overhead for Practical Compassion. This leaves us with the luxury of being able to use 100% of YOUR DONATION to help complete the work for which it is given. So, while it is true that all organizations have overhead, the CNN misinformation was in representing how that overhead is paid. Some organizations DO use ALL of your donations for the purpose for which it was given. There aren't many, to be sure, but Practical Compassion is one of them that does.

Thank you for letting me get this off my chest and for allowing me to respond to the unfortunate reporting from various news sources, including CNN.

Your servant,

George Zimmerman

— expressing nobody's opinion but my own.