

In light of the tragic earthquake that hit Haiti, we are providing the following resource to enable Sunday school teachers and small group leaders to help their adults make a real-life application of Christian compassion.

Use the background article below to bring your group up-to-date on the events and the call for Nazarene response to the situation. Show the attached video(link on last page of lesson)if possible. Then have the group discuss the specific suggestions and prayerfully consider what their response will be.

Crisis in Haiti

We have all heard the phrase, "Bad things happen to good people." It is true. Being a Christian does not insulate anyone from suffering. Disease, destruction, and death happen to human beings, regardless of their Christian beliefs.

That is a hard thing for some people to accept. We would prefer that being Christian would keep us safe from the ills of this world. If it worked that way, everyone in the world would want to become a Christian. Evangelism would be easy, and our lives would be a whole lot less stressful.

Though some people may try to hide from bad news by turning off the TVs or staying off computer news sites, the actuality is that bad things are happening to good people all the time. As citizens of this planet, we are connected to a global economy, which is more than simply money; it affects the air we breathe, the natural resources we share, and the overall safety and well-being of the human race. As Christians, we are connected to a global community of faith. As Nazarenes, we are connected to a church that serves people around the world.

From early in our history, human beings have wrestled with the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" When Cain posed that question, he was trying to avoid his responsibility for the welfare of another person. However, throughout the history of the people of God, and especially during the past 2,000 years for Christians, the answer has been a resounding "yes." We are responsible for the welfare of others.

An event that happened last Tuesday is a golden opportunity for us to realize that we are connected around the world to other Christians, and find ways to put our faith in Jesus Christ into action through our Church of the

Nazarene. This resource is an opportunity for your group to discuss what it means to bear each others burdens as it relates to the earthquake in Haiti.

Haiti as a Country

In economic terms, Haiti is among the poorest countries in the world. Haiti is a Caribbean nation of 9 million people who speak mostly French or Creole. A predominate number of Haitians are Roman Catholics (about 80 percent). Protestants make up about 16 percent of the population. Voodoo is also practiced by an undetermined number of people.

The people in Haiti live in an area that is roughly equivalent to the size of the state of Maryland.

Haiti as a Mission Field

The Church of the Nazarene has had a fruitful response to the message of the Gospel in Haiti. While there are presently no global missionaries present in the country, there are currently over 110,000 members of Nazarene churches in Haiti. Some of them have relatives who live and worship in the United States, so the effective size of the Church of the Nazarene among Haitians is even larger than the statistical membership.

Working with the Caribbean Regional Office and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, the Nazarenes in Haiti have several life-sustaining programs in place. A program of child development helps to educate Haitian children. The church provides a feeding center, where children with limited resources can receive health-sustaining food.

The Present Crisis

On Tuesday, January 12, "a major earthquake measuring 7.0 magnitude on the Richter scale hit Haiti. . . . The initial quake lasted about a minute, followed by strong 5.9 and 5.5 aftershocks. The epicenter of Haiti's earthquake was six miles west of Carrefour, just outside the capital city of Port-au-Prince."¹ At least one-third of the population has been affected by the earthquake.

General Superintendent J.K. Warrick was in Haiti when the earthquake struck. He was on his way to conduct district assemblies, arriving just hours before the quake hit. Dr. Warrick had this to say about the situation:

"The earth became like an angry ocean--it was quite a ride.

"We drove around the city of Petionville (Tuesday evening) where the Nazarene seminary campus is located.

Large buildings have collapsed and there are thousands of people in the streets.

"They were using headlights to look into the rubble of a Catholic church and a four story grocery store. The search for trapped victims and bodies has hardly begun. It is heart-wrenching to see the devastation and to know of the suffering of the people here."²

Our Response

From the scenes of devastation, Dr. Warrick issued this call for help: "Nazarenes everywhere need to rally to the needs of Haiti. This is the time for action. I plead with our people to respond with prayers, financial gifts, and other types of assistance as may be appropriate. I am sure it will be worse in the daylight."³

Every Christian can pray. Pray for the victims, pray for the missionaries, pray for the rescuers, and pray for the volunteers that will be working tirelessly over the next months.

God may move some of us to give financially. Persons and churches wishing to make a donation online can do so through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries at ncm.org or can mark their checks "Caribbean Disaster Response ACM1204" and mail them to the Global Treasury Services, PO Box 843116 Kansas City, MO 64184. In Canada, checks should be made payable and sent to the Church of the Nazarene Canada, 20 Regan Road, Unit 9, Brampton, Ontario L7A 1C3.

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, the arm of the church that deals with such disasters, advises that the Caribbean Regional Office will be making specific needs known in the days and weeks ahead. They will be mobilizing local volunteers in Haiti to help with the rebuilding. The money donated to the disaster response will be utilized in the rebuilding efforts and to continue the child development and feeding center programs.

Discussion

Lead your adults in a discussion using any or all of the following suggestions. Then close with a time of prayer, asking for God to guide us in our responses.

1. *Have the following scriptures read aloud to the group:*

- Galatians 6:2
- 2 Corinthians 9:6, 12-13
- Matthew 25:35-40

Then ask:

- In what ways do these scriptures teach us that we are

responsible for the welfare of others?

2. Place 82 cents on a table. Then ask:

- What could you buy with this amount of money?
- How much food could you buy for this amount?
- Do you have any idea how much it costs per day to sponsor a child through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries? (If no one guesses, the answer is 82 cents.)

3. If you have the capability, project the following websites for your group. Then ask them to think about which response would be most appropriate for them individually and/or as a group.

<http://www.ncnnews.com/nphweb/html/ncn/article.jsp?sid=10000023&id=10008831> (NCN news story, note especially the last paragraph for donation information.)

<http://www.ncm.org/> open "Child Sponsorship window)

<http://www.nazarenemissions.org/> (click on "Global Information Network" and go to "Caribbean" region and click on "Haiti." There you will find a range of information about the Nazarene work in Haiti.

<http://www.nazarenemedia.org/MediaView.aspx?mediaId=b3f40231-89bd-4aca-9f04-aa83cf2005df>

This link will allow you to view and download the video.

Sources:

- 1 www.ncnnews.com, January 12, 2010. "Catastrophic earthquake hits Haiti."
- 2 www.ncnnews.com, January 13, 2010. "On-site in Haiti, General Superintendent J. K. Warrick calls on Nazarenes to pray and act."
3. *Ibid.*