



Making a Difference

Dear Friends,
In Matthew 25, Jesus' scathing rebuke of those who ignore the needy tells us something critically important about the heart of God; God is concerned about the poor and oppressed.

So, as Christians, it shouldn't take an earthquake to open our hearts. In the wake of the Boxing Day tsunamis, the tidal wave of public outpouring has been phenomenal, and I suspect the same is occurring in the Christian community as well. Thousands of ordinary people have opened their hearts and their checkbooks.

And yet as devastating as this crisis is, its numbers are relatively low compared with other ongoing tragedies that occur each and every day of the year.

Between 20-25,000 children die EACH DAY from starvation, cholera and dysentery associated with unclean water. AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are happening in epidemic proportions.

The images we see of orphaned Sri Lankan and Indonesian children left in the wake of the tsunamis are multiplied a dozen times over in nations such as South Africa and Botswana because of the AIDS crisis there.

There are hundreds of thousands of abandoned children all over Eastern Europe, and the number is rising.

Unfortunately, most of the children

dying or orphaned come from obscure places, so they get little attention.

We in North America have essentially become "shock-aholics". Short of a catastrophic event and the ensuing media blitz, we've become indifferent to the death and destruction that is common in many parts of the world.

But we shouldn't need something dramatic to happen in order to get our attention and kick-start us into action.

None of us can do everything. But each of us can do something.

The death of a African child from AIDS is as painful for a family as the death of a child in a tsunamis, or a child dying from tuberculosis in Ukraine.

We Christians in North America, living in the most blessed countries in the world, should use this moment of collective grief and reflection, to become conscious of all the disasters happening every day in our global village.

The effectiveness of our Christian witness in the world rises and falls with our willingness to make care for the poor a foundational element of our Christian walk.

When we consider the massive needs of billions of impoverished people, the task can seem overwhelming - even depressing. We may be tempted to ask, "Can I REALLY make a difference?"

Please remember this. None of us can do *everything*. But each of us can do *something*. You CAN make a difference.

Many organizations like HART that are committed to assisting and empowering the poor and could use your support.

The West's generous response to the tsunamis proved that geography needn't be a barrier to our collective compassion.

And as Christians, we must not allow apathy and indifference to prevent us from being our brother's keeper during times of need - for in some parts of the world, the time of need lasts 365 days per year.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Cenaiko, President HART