

Youth Culture Lesson
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Helping Haiti

Great Need Sparks Great Giving

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What Happened:

On Jan. 12, 2010, a massive earthquake struck Haiti, its epicenter just 10 miles south of the nation's capital, Port-au-Prince. The loss of life was staggering. By Jan. 23, the official death toll had climbed to 150,000 in Port-au-Prince alone, and some believe the toll could climb to 300,000.

"I don't think we will ever know what the death toll is from this earthquake," Edmond Mulet, head of United Nations operations in Haiti, told *The New York Times*. "People are burying bodies by themselves, many have been thrown into dumps outside the city and an untold number still lie under the rubble."

In the aftermath, those staggering numbers threaten to be far worse. Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries; and survivors were left without much food, water, shelter or medical care.

The world jumped in to fill this gaping maw of need. More than \$1 billion has been pledged by the world's governments, with the United States spearheading relief efforts. By Jan. 24, 20,000 U.S. troops were in the country, helping in rescue and reclamation efforts and coordinating resources.

Money donated by private citizens may rival those official numbers when all is said and done. "Hope for Haiti Now," a star-studded charity event held Jan. 22, raised nearly \$58 million. Faith-based relief organizations such as World Vision and Compassion International are making a huge difference on the ground. Literally thousands of churches across the country have helped raise money.

We may never know how much money people around the world are giving to Haiti or how many lives will be saved because of it, but there's no question: Those who've given of themselves have made a difference.

Talk About It:

Have you given money to Haitian relief efforts? Has your family? Your church? Your school?

How else have you helped people in need? Do you give your time? Your money? Your attention? Does it make you feel good when you're able to help?

Haiti deservedly is getting a lot of attention right now; but there are probably people in your own community who could use some help, too. Can you think of an organization or issue that could use your time, talents or finances?

What the Bible Says:

“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord and He will repay him for his deed” (Prov. 19: 17).

“If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday” (Isa. 58:10).

“For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed, they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings” (Rom. 15:26-27).

“ ... they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do” (Gal. 2:10).