

Where It All Begins

By

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News today recapped a flood in a remote area in Africa. Hundreds killed and millions homeless. Fields are ruined. Famine ensues. Trepidation intensifies as I realize this is where thousands of United Pentecostals worship. The newscaster tells of a pregnant woman who climbed a tree to escape the flood, gave birth to her baby there and was later rescued. As the reporter switches to a mudslide in Mexico, and suicide bombers in Southeast Asia, I'm left with haunting thoughts. "Can we separate caring for their lost souls; from caring for them?" "I wonder what Jesus would do? Would He be 'moved with compassion' or adopt a 'none of these things move me' attitude?"

I'm deeply concerned with our ability to respond to acts of destruction and devastation. They arise swiftly, and require equally speedy action. We need to be ready. We cannot spend money we do not have. Our annual February Compassion offering is so important. It shows our love. It provides opportunities. It enables us to meet needs. I'm not talking about adopting a social or humanitarian gospel. I speak of balance; not only *presenting* the Gospel, but *preserving* our membership in need, and *providing* compassion. I want to show the world the Christian stuff we're made of. We demonstrate God's love and declare His Word. We show our concern and our witness.

Sixth graders gave a skit. Four girls wore scarves and sat on a prayer mat. Two "preachers" came by to hand them tracts and to share the Good News. Here's the conversation. "Jesus loves you!"

"I'm hungry!"

"God is good!"

"I'm hungry!"

"Trust the Lord!"

"I'm hungry!"

"Have faith!"

"I'm hungry!"

One UPCI missionary kid reflects, "There are people in my country who have lost everything—and they didn't have much to begin with. Because of flash flooding people are homeless and hungry. They have needs we can fulfill which could possibly lead to the fulfillment of the greatest need ever—the salvation of their souls. We find it so easy to be the mouth of Jesus. I'm asking you to be His hands. Help them know that more than a far away, hard to imagine God loves them, we love them too. That's where it all begins anyway, isn't it?"