

January 21, 2010

Letter From the Dean

Well, I'm sitting here thinking about the earthquake in Haiti, and my heart aches at those awful scenes of disaster. How are those people ever going to be able to go on with their lives? How will they ever make sense of what has happened to them? Where will they find the strength to move forward in life? When something goes wrong, that always seems to be our first thought. How could this happen? What kind of world do we live in?

These are the questions of someone in a moment of doubt. What we're really asking is how could God allow such a thing to happen? Funny that we never seem to ask those questions, whenever lady luck smiles upon us. No one ever seems to ask why me, Lord, when they win the lottery. We are always too excited in the moment. The simple truth is that good and bad things happen to all of us at some time in our lives. We roll with the good and get bogged down with the bad. We question the master plan, like the person in the "Footprints in the Sand".

The people of Haiti have been tested for some time, and unfortunately our country has most often been part of the problem and not part of the solution. The Haitian struggle with poverty and all the heartache that comes with it did not begin with the earthquake. These are a proud people, who's first great leader, Toussaint L'Overture, led the rebellion which freed them from European slavery. There will be more tests, and somewhere on that island are more great leaders waiting to be born and accept the challenge of those tests.

I'm not sure that it was a total accident that Haiti's earthquake came last week, as we were about to celebrate our Martin Luther King holiday. Martin faced problems and heartaches which might have broken his spirit. However Martin could see the truth. He could see God's dream for all of us. Most importantly he understood that the dream would not be complete, until it was embraced by all of us. I can't help but feel that Martin's spirit is alive somewhere in Haiti right at this moment, especially at this moment when God's work is needed the most.

The simple truth is that we will always have God's work before us, because we can never create heaven here on earth. However that can never mean that we should not try. Every day of our lives needs to be dedicated to building that dream of perfect community. The horror of the earthquake brought doubt and fear. Yet the scene of the young boy being pulled out of the rubble a week later could not help but bring hope and courage to face the day.

We dedicate our lives to our children because deep down inside we know that one day they will be that leader. They will be a Toussaint L'Overture or a Martin Luther King. It may only be for a day or even for a moment, but it will happen. They may not free a people or lead a famous movement, but their moment of charity will be like a taste of heaven for that needy person in his/her moment of sorrow and need. The person who found and rescued that little boy will probably never be famous, but they will always be a hero to that boy.

On February 8th we will have our school wide day of service. All of the students will be going out into the community in the spirit of the mission. They may not be going to Haiti, but they will be making a difference for someone in our community, and for one beautiful moment they will be a hero to one fellow traveler. I can't think of a greater lesson for any of us to experience!

With love & respect for our brothers & sisters in Haiti
And all around the world

Bob Ratto
Dean of Students