



To Haiti, with love: Help, aid flow following quake

Say you're in a high school ethics class, and it's your job to choose who goes and who stays when loading a commercial plane heading for an earthquake-ravaged country; say, Haiti.

Your Choice: a medical group with two surgical teams, or a group of political types, namely, members of the U.S. State Department.

Well if it's real life, the politicians get the seats and the medical teams are forced to find another way.

That's just what happened this past weekend when a group of physicians and nurses sponsored by Mission Possible, an agency long ago established in Haiti, attempted to fly to Santo Domingo on the East coast of the Dominican Republic. It was the only airport on the island of Hispaniola that was open to commercial flights. The medical team got bumped for some governmental players.

It worked out better than



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planned, actually. The Mission Possible medical team was offered a small private commuter jet flight directly into Port-au-Prince airfield, and the physicians are probably already overwhelmed with assisting Haitians whose bodies have been wracked by falling concrete.

On Monday, a man who refused to stop pleading finally convinced people to help him find his wife, and when a reporter put a microphone cord down near the rubble, her words were translated as, "Some water would be a pleasure," and to her husband, "No matter what happens, I love you."

She was in pretty good shape

after six days in the pitch dark under the earthquake debris.

But such stories are getting rare amid footage of looting, missing American students, and mass graves of the "Haitians who disappeared," as CNN's Anderson Cooper described them. Assuredly, families from other countries will begin after weeks and months to resign themselves to the probability that their family members may have had similar fates. One CNN reporter outside the city told of two Haitians who had gathered the body of a deceased man and was simply looking for a place to put him, giving him some dignity rather than leaving him for the bulldozers.

"The only thing they knew about him was that he was Canadian," the reporter said.

"People have to realize that people can die on the streets of Port-au-Prince on a good day," said Rev. Sadie Goldsmith of Laurens, who has been to Haiti and the Dominican Republic off

and on for a dozen years and has dear friends on the island. Rule over the years by regimes with little care for its own people has produced a country lacking in infrastructure and cushions we consider the most basic.

So do we help financially? Yes, that's what we do, and we do it well.

Do we weep for Haiti? Who can see a picture of a pile of bodies with a chubby child's hand sticking out and *not* weep? Compassion and prayers for the poor and struggling should always be at the forefront in our homes and churches.

And eventually when the medical crises have passed, some gifted in other ways will go help. Dozens of Laurens County residents have been making trips to Mission Possible schools there for 12 years already, and those trips and undoubtedly others will continue.

What we should *not* do, however, is forget.

Robert F. Lee and the lingering South

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