

GAIN representative reflects on his week in Haiti

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10:03 AM

"Friends:

It is Saturday morning. I am now in Montreal awaiting my connection to Vancouver, after leaving Port au Prince Haiti yesterday. The sun is just coming up and it is cold here. Life in Canada and the U.S. is so far removed from the plight of the people in Haiti as a result of the earthquake. The sunrise here speaks of hope, a new day. In Haiti, the sun is also coming up, but there is little hope in this sunrise except to survive until the next day.

When the earthquake struck so many buildings were destroyed, lives lost, injuries, both physical and physiological, received. The collapse of so many buildings must have put up large clouds of fine, white concrete dust. It coats everything. I can't seem to get it off my boots, now a constant reminder of the devastation in Haiti.

An entire society has been knocked to its knees, gasping for air, struggling to survive this assault, ill prepared, and in trembling fear of another assault. They are reminded of their frail condition and the uncertainty each hour brings as aftershocks continue to happen almost daily. They live in fear of being inside, fearful that the earth will shake again and that the building will collapse crushing them just like it did to so many they once knew and loved.

There are vast numbers of men and women without food, water and shelter. Then there are the children...oh, the plight of these little ones.

The latest UN update stated the following: "Sexual and gender-based violence was already a serious concern in Haiti prior to the earthquake, and will need careful monitoring. Enslavement of children and trafficking were also existing problems and could easily emerge as serious issues over the coming weeks and months." Already many young girls, orphaned and alone are being raped.

Yesterday, when we were in the large park opposite what once was called the "White House of the Caribbean" with its back now broken and its oval office in ruins, you see thousands of people actually living in the park under sheets, tin or cardboard. Privacy and personal hygiene are not possible. They have been robbed of their humanity. These women, children and men have lost their loved ones, homes and possessions.

Many of the people in this park are children. You see them here and in the

streets, by themselves, hardly making eye contact, without shelter, food security or clean water. They play in silence and alone. There is no squealing for joy or laughter. They have no one to comfort them in the midst of the chaos, they are frightened and confused.

I think of my grandchildren, and the love, safety and security they have with our family. I cannot help but weep for those in Haiti who have lost this. I want to hug my grandchildren tightly, letting them know they are safe and loved. No one should have to suffer such horribleness.

How do I turn off the images that have been burnt into my mind over this past week? I do not know. But one thing that I do know is that God commands us to care for those who cannot care for themselves. I will not allow myself to forget these children, these people who are suffering as I go on with my life. The Global Aid Network (GAiN) will demonstrate to the people of Haiti that God has not forgotten them, that He loves them and His people can be depended upon to meet them in their hour of need.

We need your help. I know that many of you have already given. But the need continues. Can you do more? Can you help us bring life, hope and security to the people of Haiti during this greatest time of need?

I ask myself, what if these were my children, my brothers and sisters, my friends. How would I respond?

What if?"