



**NATIONAL CONVOCATION  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**  
P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206  
(317) 713-2406 -- FAX (317) 635-3700



## **MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** Sunday, January 17, 2010  
**To:** Members of the National Convocation  
**From:** Viann D. Bristow, President  
**Subject:** Under the Streetlight on 1-15-2010

Good Day my Sisters and Brothers!

Despite the cold, rain, snow, due bills and any other shortages, it is a beautiful day!!! God is blessing us with another opportunity to share our witness and give HIM glory! I am referring to the devastation in Haiti that the papers, radio, TV and internet are reporting. Thanks to my two brothers, I was encouraged to write you what has been placed on my heart.

Those of us who have been victims of any type of abuse or neglect, those who have served in the wars and even those who think that they have “silver spoon” lives KNOW that the next moments are NOT promised. As a result of what we have experienced, what have we done to make a difference in the lives of others or even our own? Will HE say well done or even welcome us home?

I have listened as folk have shared stories of their visits around the country, abroad and even to Haiti! I can still remember the impact made on my senses while with a diverse group of African Americans on a May 2009 study tour to Haiti sponsored by a grant given to DOM. We experienced:

- The squalor, devastation, shortages of water, unequal access to education, inadequate housing and unlivable communities (by some standards) in US, Africa and Haiti which did not start last week!
- I still wonder what happened to the older, dusty, naked woman on the street that was huddled in a fetal position in a corner and everyone just passed her by.

- The women washing clothing in a creek down stream from those bathing themselves was uncomfortably surprising.
- It was gut-wrenching to see the solitary grave where 1000 nameless Haitians were dumped like yesterday's trash.
- It was reported that 10% of the population controls 90% of the wealth and the lighter skinned people of Port au Prince receive more attention and opportunities than those in Haiti (part of the same island).
- We saw the beautiful, well landscaped homes in the hills and an exquisite restaurant with service by various hues which were in stark contrast to tightly compact, concrete, shotgun homes with NO inside plumbing and 10 or more family members!
- Even so, the inside of the homes and the churches was well kept and brightly decorated.
- The orderly, respectful, relaxed, bashful behavior of the children in schools, intelligent questions from the teens and seminary students (in rooms with no a/c or windows, high humidity and hot!), the immaculately starched white shirts of the men, the happy songs of confidence and looks of hope made ALL the difference!
- They DO care about themselves and expect to see heaven on earth!
- Somehow they were able to daily demonstrate eagle mentality in the face of little. Do we who claim to be Christians do that? Who is our neighbor?

What are we to do?

- **“PRAY without ceasing”** for holy boldness to speak out for justice and an end to discrimination everywhere!
- **Send financial contributions-a tithe of our monthly tithes-** to *Week of Compassion* in a certified check or money order as another sign of our “living sacrifice”. This way we avoid the money that banks will take from the credit card contributions.
- **Call or email Rev. LaMarco Cable with DOM/Global Ministries**

(317-713-2574) who has been to Haiti, is immersed in social justice (for our overseas partners) and needs our written support to send to Washington lawmakers on specific issues. Ask for someone in your congregations to be point person with him so that information can be disseminated more efficiently and expediently across our country. We are not to be ignorant!

- **Call or email Rev. April Johnson (317-635-3100) with Reconciliation and Rev. Sekinah Hamlin (336-254-5836) with SERF's Anti-Racism/Reconciliation** ministry to get suggestions as to what YOU/WE CAN DO in the Haiti situation, the South Carolina issue, our own church, etc. We are our brother's keeper!
- **Contact Bro. Hilary O. Shelton**, Director of the Washington Bureau for the NAACP (202-463-2940), to get copies of the legislation that affects immigration, healthcare reform, housing, payday lending, drug sentencing, etc and see how your particular legislators voted.
- **Pray for those in leadership!**
- **Participate in the Census!** Policies, grants, legislative districts, funding to states and a bunch more things are based on the completion of this paperwork! "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is His."
- **Remind the GMP, Dr. Sharon E. Watkins**, that her positions on national boards and visibility with Washington should give her "starch" to stand and declare often that God is calling for justice NOW. She, like Isaiah, said "Here am I, send me".
- **Humble ourselves and PRAY** that God will have mercy on us for not doing what we could for the "least of these" AND then turn from our wicked ways, seek His face so that HE will heal our land and forgive our sins. II Chronicles 7:14.

The light is still shining, the finger is writing and I do not want us to be weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Still on a Sincere Journey Toward Wholeness