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Charles Midkiff

E-mail:cmidkiff4@radford.edu

On March 11, 2011 one of the greatest national disasters in the new century occurred when a 9.0 magnitude undersea earthquake shook the foundations of the island nation of Japan. The earthquake eventually caused a powerful and devastating tsunami that killed over 12,000 people, and over 15,000 people are still missing.

In the aftermath of the disaster, trains went missing only to be discovered the next day; derailed. 100,000 children are estimated to be homeless. Trade into and out of the island has been disrupted. Even state of the art nuclear plants are malfunctioning, creating the potential for even more damage.

As Americans, disasters like these seem so far from home and out of mind. We see the devastation, the pain, the suffering and say 'oh, that's too bad' or 'god, those poor people,' but we rarely do something about it. We rarely stand up and say 'I want to help those people. I want to help provide them a better tomorrow.' But, that's what we should be doing as the richest, most powerful country in the world. We have a responsibility to help those in need, no matter what country those people live in.

Of course, some may say that it is not our responsibility to help no matter our wealth or strength. The disaster is horrible, but it is not our business. We should help only when tragedies like this affect our fellow Americans. But are we all not humans? Do we not breathe the same air and drink the same water? We are all people, we are all equal and nationality does not determine whether or not someone needs help.

I find it important for all people to be treated equally, to have the same chance for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. No matter where they may require help, the US can provide assistance to those going through a tragedy. We do, of course, have problems of our own. We have our own hungry, our own homeless and even our own tragedies and we should help those in our own country as much as we possibly can. Yet, there is enough good will in our hearts to help those that do not speak our language or salute our flag. We can, as a people, help put those 100,000 children back in homes or give those 4.4 million Japanese

electricity again.

Countless Americans have helped the people of Japan during this time of need. They have sent food, amenities and money to charities in the hope of making a difference and helping their fellow man. I salute those people for showing what we as a citizenry are capable of and encourage everyone to give to the people of Japan. Whether it's sending a blanket, bottled water, or just money to charities across the US it makes a difference in people's lives and I know they appreciate it more than we could ever know.

To help out, go to americares.org or any charity listed as a reputable charity at www.charitynavigator.org.