



A Time for Respect and Justice

Much attention is being paid to the ideals of respect and justice for individuals and groups in the USA and around the world as our world, as we have known it, is changing with the onset of both natural and man directed events. Millions of people are being displaced by hurricanes, floods, and fires. Others by violence, war and mass shootings.

In some cases great compassion and resources are being provided through organizations, governmental entities and individuals. Children and Families are receiving temporary housing, food, clothing and education. In other cases people are being left without support, even projected as evil, criminal, less than human. Children are growing up in refugee camps, detention centers, war torn environments and in extreme poverty. All basic needs such as adequate housing, food, clothing and education are not being provided.

In all cases children and families are left experiencing the elements of trauma; unsafe conditions, lack of control over the situation, loss of loved ones and possessions, sense of helplessness and hopelessness. However, those children and families receiving compassion and support have a greater chance for recovery and healing. For the others, living in a state of trauma becomes a way of life. When that occurs the whole world suffers.

Often, we feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the situations and the limit of our own resources. However, beginning with this holiday season, each of us can do something where ever we are to create a culture of respect and justice for all people in all situations.

Let's consider the opportunities we all have:

- 1) We can all, each in our own place, cultivate an environment of respect by modeling a positive regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of others. We can ensure that our attitude toward other persons, known and unknown, is compassionate and understanding.
- 2) We can model justice in our words and actions with everyone we encounter by being fair and reasonable in our relationships and interactions.
- 3) We can educate ourselves on the traditions, beliefs and cultures of others so that our interactions and relationships stem from a point of knowledge and not ignorance and bias.
- 4) We can promote respect and justice towards others in our homes teaching our children the importance of showing understanding, acceptance and tolerance of all other persons.
- 5) We can speak out against words and actions that disrespect others and cause injustice, violence and destruction of people, cultures and beliefs.
- 6) We can join with others to advocacy for just laws and practices that cultivate respect for others and ensure dignity and justice.

“Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.”

Benjamin Franklin