



DO NOT STAND IDLY BY

## **Lessons to be learned**

### **RWANDA**

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The Jewish World Watch, a grass-roots synagogue organization dedicated to protest and prevent genocide everywhere in the world launched its first public forum here at the Skirball Cultural Center. This opportunity and venue was due to the generosity and ethical conscience of its founder Dr. Uri Herscher. On behalf of the beleaguered and persecuted of Darfur, Sudan we thank you.

Our globe has been deluged by tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes and hurricanes. These acts the philosophers divided into natural evil and moral evil. Rwanda, Darfur, Niger and Congo among others, belong to moral evil.

In either case the theological question “Where in all this is God?” leads me to the conclusion that whatever may be the cause – shifting plates beneath the earth or meteoric anomalies or moral callousness, greed, pride, human mendacity is not the place to look for God.

God is not in the cause. God is in the response. How do we answer evils?

What have we, men and women of conscience who have pledged “Never again” re-learned from Rwanda.

Universal consciousness of genocide was dramatized by the Rwanda atrocity.

What have we learned from Rwanda?

First and foremost that God must not be segregated.

That God cannot be confined to part of the world, to a particular country, land or continent.

God is without borders.

God is global. To narrow the domain of Godliness is to make ourselves small. To shrivel God is to diminish our human dignity.

That spiritual apartheid humiliates and isolates God from his creation.

God must not be torn apart. God who created the world and all of us embraces every race, religion, creed and national expression.

God is colorblind. Godliness transcends dogma, doctrines and catechisms. God is the life and the love of the world and we are the allies of Godliness. We are the hands, legs, feet, eyes and spine of Godliness. We are God's organs.

Eyes have we and we have seen the relentless torture of innocence.

Ears have we and we have heard the cries of children's fear and of abandonment.

Hands have we and we are mandated to lift up the fallen.

Voices have we and we are commanded to raise a sacred scream that will penetrate the steel walls of institutional apathy.

Legs have we and we can march before consuls, embassies, fortresses.

Spines have we and we must not bow to the killers of the dream.

We gather together tonight in recognition of the heroism of one courageous man who spoke to power and put his body on the line for the protection of the betrayed and abandoned.

Paul Rose Sagabina has reminded us: that silence in the presence of cries of children is lethal. Apathy in the face of cruelty is mass murder.

Our Sages taught us one individual can save a world. Paul saved many worlds.

The world must not be abandoned, left to the devils on horseback.

Humanity is the language of God.

Let our voices be heard in the corridors of power.

Let us disturb the torrid sleep of indifference. Together we can shake the paralysis of governmental will and wake the dormant conscience of a listless world. On the eve of a New Year bring newness and hope to a trembling universe.