**Larema Speech [EZ Speech No. 16296]**

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Remarks by Momo Larema at the first annual meeting of the Buduburam Refugees Association concerning the plight of Liberians now living in the Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana.

[IF YOU WERE INTRODUCED] THANK YOU, [NAME OF INTRODUCER] FOR THAT WONDERFUL INTRODUCTION; I FEEL ENORMOUSLY BLESSED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FELLOW LIBERIAN-AMERICANS, AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS . . . I STAND HERE THIS EVENING WITH BUT A SINGLE PURPOSE IN MIND. THAT PURPOSE IS TO REMIND YOU OF THE DESPERATE PLIGHT OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS STILL STRANDED IN THE BUDUBURAM REFUGEE CAMP IN GHANA, AND TO URGE YOU — WITH ALL MY HEART AND ALL MY MIGHT — TO CONSIDER HOW we MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP THEM.

THESE LOST SOULS NEED A HOME. MOST OF THEM WOULD PREFER THAT HOME TO BE IN LIBERIA. BUT THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT’S ABILITY TO HOUSE THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF POOR, UNEDUCATED, and largely unemployable REFUGEES IS VERY, VERY LIMITED. REPATRIATING THEM . . . RESETTLING THEM . . . AND ULTIMATELY REINTEGRATING THEM INTO LIBERIAN SOCIETY WILL TAKE A LOT OF RESOURCES — RESOURCES WHICH, AS I’VE SAID, THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT IS EITHER NOT INCLINED OR IS not ABLE TO PROVIDE.

I, LIKE MOST [OF YOU], HAVE LIVED AS A REFUGEE. I, LIKE [MOST OF] YOU, HAVE GONE HUNGRY MANY TIMES IN MY LIFE. AND I, LIKE [MOST OF YOU], have ESCAPED THE POVERTY AND THE SQUALER AND THE DEPRIVATION OF THE CAMPS. BUT MANY of our brothers and sisters COULD NOT. INDEED, AS I SPEAK TO YOU THIS EVENING, THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED [NO.] LIBERIANS STILL LIVING IN BUDUBURAM, EVEN THOUGH THAT CAMP’S OFFICIALLY BEEN CLOSED AND PRETTY MUCH NEGLECTED FOR THE LAST [NO.] YEARS.

THESE PEOPLE ARE “US,” LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. THEY’RE OUR kin, OUR AUNTS AND OUR UNCLES, OUR COUSINS, NEICES AND NEPHEWS. AND THEY NEED OUR HELP — DESPERATELY.

therefore, *YOU AND I* ARE THE BLESSED ONES now, FOR GOD HAS presented US with THE most SACRED of TASKs, namely, to be of service to OUR FELLOW MAN. SO TONIGHT I IMPLORE YOU TO look inside yourselves, EXPLORE all the dimen-sions OF YOUR IMAGINATION, AND FIGURE HOW YOU, *PERSON-ALLY*, CAN HELP ERASE THAT SMUDGE ON THE MAP CALLED BUDUBURAM. and please be creative!

CAN YOU SPARE SOME ACTUAL CASH? YOU CAN SEND all MONETARY DONATIONS TO [PROVIDE NAME AND ADDRESS].

IF YOU’RE IN THE MEDICAL FIELD AND CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON SOME SURPLUS OR DONATED MEDICAL SUPPLIES, PLEASE CONTACT [NAME] AT [TITLE, CONTACT INFO] TO FIND OUT HOW AND WhERE THESE DONATIONS SHOULD BE SENT. A CASH DONATION *TO DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS* WOULD ALSO BE A GREAT IDEA, FOR AS YOU KNOW, THIS WONDERFUL ORGANIZA-TION HAS WORKED EXTENSIVELY IN BOTH LIBERIA AND GHANA FOR MANY YEARS. and incidentally, i wonder if any of you medical professionals out there have ever considered donating a week or a month or a year of your time and talents to with dwb?

DO YOU KNOW A LIBRARIAN OR A BOOK PUBLISHER OR THE OWNER OF A BOOKSTORE? HAVE THEM GATHER UP AS MANY BOOKS AS THEY CAN — WITH A STRONG EMPHASIS ON SHOOLBOOKS — AND then SEND ‘EM ON OVER TO THE CAMP. YOU CAN CONTACT [ETC.] FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO SEND BOOKS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS TO BUDUBURAM.

are money, medicine, or books not your thing? well then, can you at least write some letters? write a letter to your representatives in congress. write to the drug companies. write to the fortune 500s. tell them of the plight of these neglected souls of budubu-ram and what we’re trying to do as an organization to lift them up.

do you live in a largely liberian neighborhood? organize a fund-raiser once or twice a year — an outdoor barbeque or a picnic, a “millionaires” night at your club, a marathon, a theatrical event — whatever you can think of. As I am imploring you here tonight, implore your neighbors to remember where they came from and to be glad for an opportunity to give back to the land of our birth.

needless to say, i think this is sacred work, for AS CHRIST SAYS IN MATHEW 25:40: *“TRULY I TELL YOU, WHATEVER YOU DID FOR ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE BROTH-ERS AND SISTERS OF MINE, YOU DID FOR ME.”*

thank you so much for listening.

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