

Aiding an Ailing World

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

We read the paper and learn of deprivation we will never see with our own eyes. It is hard enough to help a neighbor; how can we imagine helping people in other lands, who speak a different language and live in a foreign culture?

The opening sentences of the Torah are intended to combat just this parochialism. All human beings are kin; we all share in the Divine spark. When volunteers from Jewish World Watch aid refugees in Sudan, they do so as Jews. When I travel with congregants after *Sukkot* to Thailand with American Jewish World Service, we will dig and build and study as Jews. Judaism taught the world that we all share a humanity that we can betray but never destroy.

So almost uniquely among religions, Judaism celebrates the New Year not when Judaism itself began, but when the Torah teaches the entire world was brought into being. We would not wish for one type of person or one form of tradition. Our task is to feed the hungry, to uplift the fallen, to liberate the enslaved — wherever they may be. We commit to this task because we are children of God. We commit to this because we are the Jewish people. *Shana Tovah*.