

IN FOCUS: Step up to provide hope for Haiti

January 29, 2010

These past weeks have been heart-wrenching as we have watched the events of the unprecedented tragedy in Haiti unfold. Families have been torn apart. People are desperately searching for missing loved ones. These victims need the most basic things that we take for granted—food, water, medical assistance, shelter.

Latest estimates put the death toll at 200,000; about 70,000 already have been buried in mass graves. More than 1 million Haitians were left homeless. It is estimated more than 1 million children have lost at least one parent. Between 60 percent and 80 percent of the buildings in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, which bore the brunt of the earthquake, were destroyed or rendered unusable.

Randel Everett

Port-au-Prince continues to be plagued by food and water shortages. Fuel, also in short supply, has quadrupled in price. "There are extremely long lines at the few petrol stations" that are opened, said Bela Szilagyi, director of Hungarian Baptist Aid and a leader of the BWAid Rescue24 team.

In a disaster of this magnitude, much will be needed. You may be asking how you and your church can be part of the effort to help. Our Disaster Response Haiti Earthquake page on our website, www.texasbaptists.org, will assist churches and individuals to connect with these needs. Click on the Give, Go, Pray and Connect boxes to see how you can assist.

- **Give:** *This will help you make donations that are crucially needed. On Monday, Jan. 25, we sent a medical team from Temple Baptist Church in McAllen and medical supplies from Baylor Health Care System as the*

first of our relief teams. Mike Roberts, a member at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, donated use of his company jet. Recordings of the New Testament in Haitian Creole were included in the shipment. The BGCT also has supplied \$80,000 to Texas Baptist Men to send 5,000 water filters and buckets that are ready to be shipped. Texas Baptists working through our Baptist hospitals, child-care institutions, universities and Texas Baptist Men will continue to discover ways to stay involved.

- **Go:** *At the “Go” box, you can note your interest in volunteering. Our Church2Church Partnerships office will be in touch as opportunities arise. Currently, we are in the response phase that requires military and professional teams. When we enter the recovery phase, many others will be needed. Volunteers will be required long after the media have left.*

- **Pray:** *This box will include specific prayer requests from Haiti. I believe this is the most important part of our commitment. Pray for God to give strength, hope and courage to the victims and the workers.*

- **Connect:** *This will provide information for in-kind donations that are urgently needed.*

Gil Lain, pastor of Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo, told me their church decided to donate their entire offering from the Sunday after the earthquake, which totaled more than \$60,000. Whether our gift is \$10 or \$10,000, our prayers, time and money are needed for our hurting brothers and sisters.