



NEWSCOPE

THE WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR UNITED METHODIST LEADERS

UMCOR Joins on-the-Ground Relief for Haiti

The UM Committee on Relief and a host of other faith-based groups are on the ground in Haiti as they determine how to assist earthquake survivors. With more than \$2 million in donations received by Jan. 20, UMCOR already has provided emergency grants to the Methodist Church of Haiti and GlobalMedic, a Canadian relief agency, to address immediate needs. An assessment team led by UMCOR's Melissa Crutchfield was gathering in the Dominican Republic Jan. 20 and preparing to enter Haiti. She is accompanied by five others with the relief agency, the UM Board of Global Ministries and UM Communications. Other UM-supported organizations, including Church World Service, Action by Churches Together International (ACT) and Stop Hunger Now, also are responding with aid.

ACT has deployed a "rapid support team" to Haiti, which will work with members with offices already in Haiti. UMCOR is a pending member of the new ACT Alliance. UMCOR's partnership with GlobalMedic will focus on the distribution of clean drinking water, says the Rev. Tom Hazelwood, an UMCOR executive. It also will provide medical attention to earthquake survivors. A water distribution hub will provide 65,000 people daily with clean drinking water.

One of the tasks for the UMCOR team in Haiti is meeting with Gesner Paul, who leads the Methodist Church of Haiti, to assess how best to work with church members there. Mission volunteers from The UMC have been a strong presence in Haiti for years, so another priority is organizing for future volunteer teams. "We know the (immediate) need is for medical volunteers," Hazelwood said. "We're looking at trying to centralize the volunteer process." Bishop Joel Martinez, interim general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries, is advising volunteer teams not to set out for Haiti immediately. "The time for volunteers will come, and their assistance will be crucial," Martinez said.

Church World Service has sent Don Tatlock, its Latin America and Caribbean program manager, to coordinate its efforts in Haiti. Church World Service relief kits and blankets are being distributed in Port-au-Prince, and the agency's partners in ACT are bringing in water and sanitation equipment.

A planeload of 80,000 pounds of water, medicine and medical supplies organized by Stop Hunger Now is being distributed in Haiti, says the Rev. Ray Buchanan, the UM pastor who is the food aid group's founder and president. Meal donations have come from a variety of sources, including a Jan. 18 packaging event in Lynchburg, Va., organized by the Rev. Larry Davies, the UM district superintendent there.

Volunteers also are needed in the United States to help assemble health kits and other relief supplies for Haiti at UMCOR's two supply depots—Sager Brown in Baldwin, La., and UMCOR West in Salt Lake City—as well as other church-owned regional warehouses. Those interested in volunteering at UMCOR West can contact Director Brian Diggs at (801) 973-7250, or e-mail WestDepot@umcor.org. To volunteer at Sager Brown, call (800) 814-8765. Gifts to support UMCOR's Haiti Relief efforts can be made to Haiti Emergency, UMCOR [Advance #418325](#). Checks can be made to UMCOR with "Advance #418325 Haiti Emergency" in the memo line. Checks can be put in the church's offering plate or mailed to: UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087. The entire amount of each gift will be used to help the people of Haiti. —Linda Bloom, *UMNS*