



From the Moderator of The General Assembly, Rt Rev Dr Stafford Carson

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Dear Colleague,

Moderator's Appeal for Haiti

We have all seen the pictures of death, injuries and devastation that have followed the earthquake in Haiti. I am asking that your congregation be given an opportunity to contribute to our special Moderator's Appeal at your services in the next two or three weeks.

Since we have no church partner in Haiti, we will be supporting the two Christian agencies, Tearfund and Christian Aid, whom we fund regularly through our World Development Appeal. I know from first hand experience this past year that these organisations will do an excellent job in seeing that your contributions are used wisely and well for the relief of those who are in greatest need and for rebuilding broken lives.

Eight in every ten Haitians lived in desperate poverty before the earthquake struck. Many had recently rebuilt their homes after the 2008 hurricane destroyed them. Today the majority of homes are gone. The emotional and spiritual turmoil is growing.

Medical staff with a **Tearfund** partner in Haiti are working around the clock treating hundreds of people with earthquake-related injuries.

The King's Hospital, run by World Relief, is one of the few places offering treatment in the capital Port-au-Prince after escaping the tremors with just a few cracks to the walls. It's been operating since last Tuesday's quake killed between 50,000 and 200,000 people. Broken bones from falling masonry are among the main injuries doctors and nurses are dealing with.

Dr Hubert Morquette, World Relief's country director for Haiti, said, 'We've treated hundreds of injuries as well as countless open and closed fractures.'

'We work all day and late into the night as patients continue to flock to our facility. There's a lot of suffering and we go above and beyond trying to save lives but at times they still succumb to their injuries. We bless the Lord's name for the medical supplies we've received over the last couple of months which have enabled us to provide care to our numerous patients.'

More medical staff are needed, particularly surgeons, and there's also a shortage of antibiotics and pain-killers. Dr Morquette added, '*Port-au-Prince is in total despair. The major governmental institutions have crumbled. It is a major catastrophe.*'

Christian Aid and its partners are sourcing emergency relief items for distribution to more than 15,000 people in eight communities. It is targeting areas that are getting little help from other agencies.

Five partners hope to provide food, tents, hygiene kits, blankets, jerry cans for water and water purifiers. One of these partners, AproSifa, is a specialist healthcare organisation, and will also be providing medical support.

Christian Aid plans to source food from markets in Haiti if possible, but all other items will definitely need to come in from outside. Food is the urgent priority, and partners will begin distributions as soon as they can.

The team in Haiti is coordinating closely with colleagues over the border in the Dominican Republic to source materials there where possible. As from Saturday last, every single one of Christian Aid's partners in the Dominican Republic is assisting in the relief effort in Haiti.

Please encourage your people to pray for the people of Haiti and to give as generously as they can to this appeal. Don't leave it to others. We need to respond to God's call to reach into the dust and debris, to raise up the broken and to clothe the naked. We need your help.

When congregational contributions are finalised, they should be returned as promptly as possible to the Financial Secretary's office, and not later than the end of February 2010, with cheques made payable to 'The Presbyterian Church in Ireland' and marked 'Haiti Earthquake Appeal'. Where possible, members should be encouraged to contribute under the Gift Aid Scheme. Alternatively, people may give directly to Tearfund and Christian Aid. Details are available on their websites.

Thank you for your help with this.

With every good wish to you in your ministry,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stafford Carson".

Stafford Carson