

NEWS RELEASE -- January 21, 2010

International Ministries Haiti Earthquake Response – A Call to Action

*New Haiti flyer for churches available on 1/21/10.
Click on "Haiti Information Flyer" on the Haiti Earthquake page.
www.internationalministries.org*

American Baptist International Ministries (IM) missionaries, Christian partners and U.S. and Puerto Rico congregations are continuing to mobilize and respond at historic levels to the 7.0 earthquake that struck Haiti and devastated its capital Port-au-Prince and the surrounding area on January 12.

To date IM has provided a total of \$65,000 One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) funds for Haiti.

IM missionary **Dr. Steve James** and IM's Christian partners, including the Haitian Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, are collaborating to provide medical care and relief supplies at Christianville, the quake epicenter approximately 20 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince. **Nancy James**, a registered nurse, is in Haut Limbe in the north of Haiti, maintaining the critical communication link with her husband Steve and the outside world.

Kristy Engel, a pediatric nurse practitioner serving in the Dominican Republic (a country that borders Haiti), has taken a 75-person team, including 30 medical personnel, into Haiti. The group, which includes **Ketley and Vital Pierre**, IM missionaries to Nicaragua, traveled into Haiti on January 16 to provide emergency care at three clinics and to distribute six truckloads of food and medical supplies.

In the meantime, IM missionary **Madeline Flores** and Dominican Republic partners are providing medical care, shelter and relief supplies to quake victims arriving at the Contreras Hospital in Santo Domingo. Madeline is also coordinating relief effort teams entering Haiti from the Dominican Republic. One such team from First Baptist Church, Greensburg, Indiana has just arrived.

Jose Norat-Rodriguez, IM area director of Iberoamerica and the Caribbean, states: "We are witnessing a monumental effort that is marked by a historic collaboration between IM global partners and missionaries from a variety of countries."

Thousands of **American Baptist congregations** from the U.S. and Puerto Rico are responding through prayer and giving. Offerings are being received through One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), which is a vital way for Christians to respond to people, regardless of faith tradition, in the grip of disaster. Lisa Rothenberger, ABC Relief Officer who oversees the use of OGHS funds, recalls the Asian tsunami in 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005: "American Baptists gave \$6 million to those two relief efforts within the scope of just 12 months. That's incredible! It's my prayer that even in these economically challenging times for us here in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, the response to this earthquake will be equally generous."

IM partners such as **IMA World Health** and **Church World Service** provide additional opportunities to get involved. For example, those wishing to donate medicines for Haiti relief may do so through IMA World Health. If your church is interested in donating hygiene and/or baby kits or blankets, you can visit Church World Service's website, www.churchworldservice.org for instructions and guidelines.

Reid Trulson, IM Executive Director, states: "International Ministries will be working with our Haitian brothers and sisters both now and far into the future. American Baptists have been engaged in ministry in Haiti since 1823. In knowing and loving the people of Haiti, we are uniquely positioned to be used by God in helping them rebuild their lives."

Volunteers who wish to be a part of the ministry efforts of Steve and Nancy James, Kristy Engel and Madeline Flores-Lopez may contact the IM Volunteer office to complete applications and be included on an availability list that is continually updated and sent to the missionaries. Go to the website: BIMvolunteers@abc-usa.org or send email to: BIMvolunteers@abc-usa.org

A three-year plan for recovery and rebuilding phases will be developed in early February. The planning team will be named soon.

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with eight out of ten people living in extreme poverty, is about the size of Maryland, and is located on the western half of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. The Dominican Republic is on the eastern half. The northern portion of Haiti, where most of IM's mission work has been located, is approximately 100 miles from the earthquake's epicenter.

Emergency donations are desperately needed and can be made on the IM website. Go to www.internationalministries.org/items/80 or write a check made payable to "One Great Hour of Sharing – Haiti Earthquake Relief" and mail to:
International Ministries,
P.O. Box 851,
Valley Forge, PA 19482,
or make a check out payable to your church and write "Haiti Earthquake Relief" in the memo section.