

# COCOA

Churches of Christ Overseas Aid

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## News!



## Churches of Christ Overseas Aid Appeal - Haitian Earthquake

A 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the nation of Haiti on Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> (local Time). The epicentre was less than 16 kilometres from the capital Port-au-Prince which has born the brunt of the earthquake. Tens of thousands have been killed and many important institutions have been destroyed. By all approximations, as many as 3 million people have been impacted by this devastating quake. Panic-stricken people in the streets were screaming “Jesus, Jesus”, not knowing where to run. Offices, hotels, houses and shops collapsed, the presidential palace is in ruins, and many churches have been destroyed.



Information from Port-au-Prince remains scant, as phone lines are down. What is clear is that a major humanitarian situation has arisen. The city is without electricity, the telephone network has broken down. The UN headquarters has collapsed. People are sitting in the streets with nowhere to go. Slum areas have been as badly affected as well built-up residential areas.

Looting has already started, with fears the security situation will worsen. The city is ill-equipped to handle the massive search and rescue operation required. The fate of people in outlying and remote areas of Port-au-Prince is unknown and there is fear that coverage of the disaster in Port-au-Prince might divert attention from other areas affected.

Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance staff members in Haiti are unaccounted for, others are scrambling to find loved ones, and still others are in shock after surviving building collapses. Although communications from the Port-au-Prince are scant, ACT members working in the country are worried about the fate of their colleagues.



“One of our staff was found alive but wounded and two are still missing,” Dick Loendersloot of the Inter-church Organisation for Development Cooperation said, “People still don’t know if their families are okay and are out looking for them.” Nigel Timmins of Christian Aid reports that their offices have been destroyed.



This tragedy is particularly devastating for Haiti, as it is one of the poorest countries in the world and the poorest nation in the Americas. Because it has struggled for decades with political instability and natural disasters, 60 percent of buildings were shoddily built and unsafe in normal circumstances, according to the mayor of Port-au-Prince. It lacks infrastructure, resources and capacity to respond.

### **Churches and Agencies are Responding**

- The Disciples of Christ\* aid agency 'Week of Compassion' is raising funds for material supplies such as tarpaulins, as well as blankets, hygiene kits, food, and baby supply kits. This is the first stage of what will be a long term need. They are working with partners in the Dominican republic to provide relief.
- ACT International has also begun to respond to this situation. ACT is the largest alliance of Christian humanitarian agencies in the world and has teams of people on the ground assessing the best ways to provide immediate relief.
- Churches of Christ Overseas Aid is receiving gifts in response to this emergency and will send funds on to Week of Compassion, and Action by Churches Together. Donations can be made on line at [www.inpartnership.org.au](http://www.inpartnership.org.au) through Pay Pal (indicate Haiti Appeal), or by completing in the appeal form and sending it to PO Box 6454 Halifax St, Adelaide, SA 5000 or by phone to 0882124446.

### **Prayer Support**

- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has more than 40 Haitian Churches in the United States and Canada. As is the case for many people living in far from home, news like this is devastating and affects close family members. Please pray for all Haitian people, their churches and their pastors.

\*Disciples and Christ and Churches of Christ in Australia share the same 'Stone-Campbell' heritage.

**Donations of \$2 or more to this COCOA Haitian Earthquake Appeal are tax deductible. If the appeal is fully subscribed any excess donations will be directed to development projects in the affected areas.**



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