



[Crisis team meets to frame Haiti earthquake response](#)

PC(USA) awaits official word on mission workers and New Jersey and Virginia mission team; Atlanta mission team okay

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Presbyterian News Service

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LOUISVILLE - The crisis response team of Presbyterian World Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is meeting at the Presbyterian Center here today (Jan. 13) to assess the situation in Haiti after an earthquake devastated much of the country Tuesday afternoon, killing thousands, injuring countless others and causing billions of dollars of property damage.

Of immediate concern is the condition of PC(USA) mission workers in Haiti [Sharyn Babe](#) and [Mark Hare](#).

The Presbyterian World Mission security team reported late this morning that "Sharyn Babe, the PC(USA) mission worker closest to the earthquake's epicenter, and her husband, Rodney, have been located and we are continuing to monitor their situation. Mark Hare and his wife, Jenny, live about 100 miles from the epicenter. We do not believe the Hares are in danger, but we are seeking to make contact with them."

A PC(USA) mission team - from First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta - has reported that they are all safe and unharmed. That group was on La Gonave island, just off the coast of Port-au-Prince.

Another group - a 20-member mission team from Lawrenceville (N.J.) Presbyterian Church -arrived in Haiti just hours before the quake for a previously arranged medical mission trip scheduled to run from Jan. 12-17. The group, which included three doctors, was set to travel immediately to the mountain village of Thoman. Initial reports indicate that mountainous areas of Haiti fared better than coastal areas.

Leaders at the Lawrenceville Church are in touch with the U.S. State Department, volunteer David Wall told the Presbyterian News Service early this morning, to determine the whereabouts and well-being of the Lawrenceville team.

A third group, from a congregation in Virginia, is also reported to be in Haiti at this time. That group includes a member of PDA's Disaster Response Team. [Pix Mahler](#), the PC(USA)'s partnership facilitator for Haiti is trying to reach all three mission teams.

General Assembly Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, General Assembly Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow and General Assembly Mission Council Executive Director Linda Valentine issued a call to prayer this morning:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is responding to this earthquake through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and its partners. Presbyterian World Mission is gathering

information on the safety and status of our mission personnel and ecumenical partners in the area. For updates on the earthquake and the church's response, please visit the [PDA home page](#). Initial reports indicate a large number of casualties and widespread damage especially in the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

You, too, can be part of God's answer to prayer for those affected by this disaster. Information on the situation, prayers, and worship resources are available through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Funds from One Great Hour of Sharing are already helping with the initial response. [Give to the ongoing relief](#).

The Associated Press is reporting that the Haitian capital, Port au Prince, has been largely destroyed. The epicenter of the 7.3-Richter scale quake was just 17 miles from the capital.

The United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is classifying the destruction as "widespread." At least 100 people are believed buried in rubble of the U.N. headquarters building in Port-au-Prince. The head of U.N. mission is among the missing.

Electricity is not available and communications are difficult. Immediate needs are rescue and evacuation of victims. National Public Radio reports that many Haitians are digging through the rubble with their hands trying to free victims.

United Nations agencies, as well as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society are preparing the deployment of teams and humanitarian assistance, notably from their regional hub in Panama.

The U.S., France, China and Dominican Republic are all sending search and rescue teams to Haiti. A U.S. military official says tentative plans are underway for the hospital ship USNS Comfort to dock off the coast of Haiti to assist the sick and wounded.

"We're continuing to assess the situation," said Donna Derr of Church World Service (CWS), an ecumenical relief agency that is a key PC(USA) partner. "CWS staff here in the U.S. and in the region are attempting to contact our long-time partners in Haiti - Service Chrétien d'Haiti, Christian Aid SKDE, and the Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice."

Officials with Action by Churches Together (ACT), a global alliance of churches - including the PC(USA) is already involved in responding to the earthquake. The ACT secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, is now coordinating a global response involving its member churches to the catastrophe.

A special [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) (PDA) account has been established to receive donations for immediate relief work in Haiti. Contribute through local church channels, or call PresbyTel at (800) 872-3283 or visit the PDA [Web site](#) to make credit card donations. The account number is "Haiti - DR000064."

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2010/10032.htm>

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