



## Pastor's Page

### **When Disaster Strikes**

A spokeswoman for the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs said aid workers were dealing with a disaster "like no other" in UN memory because the country had been "decapitated". She was speaking of course about the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti last Tuesday which was the worst for more than 200 years. According to Haitian Interior Minister Paul Antoine Bien-Aime, 50,000 bodies have been collected, but the total number of dead could be "between 100,000 and 200,000". These are mind blowing figures and yet we are talking here about people who all have names! People with names who are suffering in ways that most of us can not even imagine. One of these people is Jeanne-Charles who works at the Good Samaritan Mission of International Nursing which was flattened in the quake. More than 200 people died in that building and for days they'd been trying to get to the others who are trapped inside. A few had been brought out but without equipment they could do little more. As she tearfully spoke to a British reporter she gave him a list of everything they need; Bulldozers, diggers, medicine, doctors, food, water, shelter, money. And then she asked a simple question. "What can you do?"

Let me suggest some answers to Jeanne-Charles' question;

We can Give – money is needed and it will make a difference. Many have already given, in fact people across the UK have contributed £12m so far for victims of the earthquake but more is required. If all of us reading this gave £10.00 each that would be about £400.00. That will provide 1 day's drinking water for 960 families or temporary shelter for 8 families. To give contact; **Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), 1st Floor, 43 Chalton Street, London NW1 1DU Registered Charity No 1062638 A company limited by guarantee and registered in England No 03356526** or go on the website. Jesus said, *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink....whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me"* (Matthew 25:35 & 40)

We can Pray – yes prayer too does make a difference. As a writer for Tearfund says; "Prayer can stir up hearts - Prayer can change lives - Prayer can end poverty How? God does it. Prayer works because of the one we're praying to. And it gets us closer to God too. No wonder Jesus told his disciples to do plenty of it (Luke 18)" Yes God cares and contrary to what the American TV Evangelist Pat Robinson says about the earthquake being God's judgement on Haiti Jesus clearly teaches that there isn't a link between disasters and sin – Luke 13:1-5. God cares for those who suffer (Psalm 86:7) and so should we.

We can go! Well it might be impractical or impossible for us to go to Haiti now but is the Lord calling some of us to (one of us?) to get involved in relief work with Tearfund or Christian Aid or some other relief organisation? We often sing;  
"I will go Lord, if you send me, I will hold your people in my heart"  
Perhaps now is the time for sending rather than singing!

17<sup>th</sup> January 2010