

## Haiti Disaster Relief - SCBC Updates

January 22, 2010

### **SBC Disaster Relief Assessment Team will meet in Florida next week**

**A Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief Assessment Team, currently on-site in Haiti, will leave the country on Monday and meet Tuesday with Florida Baptist Convention leaders.**



Cliff Satterwhite, director, Disaster Relief Group, SCBC, said today the assessment team, while in Haiti, has met with Florida Baptist Convention staff and partners, developing a Southern Baptist plan and protocol for moving volunteers and aid into the country. Florida Baptists have long had a presence in Haiti, starting 842 churches in the past 15 years, and providing salary for seven Haitian missionaries and 15 additional Haitians who work in the convention's guest house and on its security force. There are 305 Haitian churches in the Florida convention.

"After Tuesday, state conventions and Southern Baptists will know our short- and long-term priorities and what we can do," Satterwhite said. "We want to get in there and minister, but there are security issues and travel problems that are prohibitive. We do have two doctors, within the SC Disaster Relief Medical Team, who have gone to Haiti as part of the United States government's relief effort." For others, the situation is too unstable for travel.

Satterwhite said the airport into Port -Au-Prince, Haiti, has closed, and that the airport in the Dominican Republic is presumably closing next week, too. "We understand, from reports, that there is a travel bottleneck in the Dominican Republic. There are refugees trying to get out of Haiti through the Dominican Republic, and there are people trying to get from the Dominican Republic into Haiti. "In some cases, independent volunteers are going down through their own relationships, and many are finding that there is no place to stay and no transportation," Satterwhite said. "These well-meaning volunteers then become refugees themselves and require aid from those there to serve the country."

Satterwhite said Red 24, a global security specialist organization, has placed Haiti in its category of places "too dangerous to go into" because of devastation and violence in the aftermath of the recent earthquake

Donations may be mailed to South Carolina Baptist Convention, Disaster Relief Fund, 190 Stoneridge Drive, Columbia, SC 29210. Donations may be designated for Haiti and 100 percent of funds will be used in Haiti relief.

"The SBC Assessment Team is reporting that the situation in Haiti is very fluid right now," Satterwhite said. "Things can change 10 different ways in a single hour. The greatest, immediate need is for medical teams, specializing in trauma, anesthesia, and orthopaedics."