



Photo by St. Petersburg Times



Photo by St. Petersburg Times

Mistane Louis, 25, is fed juice by George Falcone of CC Old Bridge, NJ, after she had her arm amputated at Jimani Public Hospital. Her arm had been crushed.

After passing out food, Gene Espinosa, left, and Patti Height, both from Calvary Chapel Old Bridge, NJ, pray for a patient at Jimani Public Hospital, just inside the Dominican Republic border. Teams from Calvary Chapels ministered to the hurting.

A 7.2 Earthquake Rocks Haiti

Sharing God's comfort with the hurting

Story by Debra Smith

Mistane Louis, a 25-year-old Haitian, pressed her parched lips to the small straw. "She drank that juice like it was the best thing she had ever had," said George Falcone from Calvary Chapel Old Bridge, NJ. Carefully avoiding disturbing the stump of Mistane's right arm, George wiped her face and remaining hand with a towel. He asked permission to pray and gently laid his hand on the girl. "I prayed that her mother would be strengthened and able to encourage her,"

George said. Mistane's mother sat beside her makeshift cot at Jimani Public Hospital, nodding as she listened to the English words. She understood little but knew the prayer was directed to Jesus.

Four days after Haiti's catastrophic earthquake, a Calvary Chapel team of 13 landed on the island's eastern side, in the Dominican Republic. Quickly assembled via phone and email, the group was sent from CC Old

Bridge, NJ (CCOB); CC Aventura, FL; CC Fredericksburg, VA; and Cornerstone CC, NJ. The immediate response meant they had few plans established upon arrival, but the team discovered abundant opportunities to serve: They transported food, medicine, and supplies by truck, plane, and ship into Haitian villages, orphanages, hospitals, and a prison—and encouraged and prayed with hundreds of people. Most team members stayed for more



Photo by Eric Quintero/IFRC

Large parts of Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince and its surrounding areas were destroyed by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake.

than a week, and new volunteers have since flown in to continue the efforts.

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no."

Luke 13:2-3a

Visiting the Sick

Within days of the earthquake, hundreds of wounded were transported to Jimani Public Hospital and Good Samaritan Hospital in Jimani, Dominican Republic. These facilities near the Haitian border performed amputations and other urgent care, such as injecting powerful antibiotics to halt the spread of lethal gangrene. On the next Monday evening, team members moved from room to room, encouraging and praying with patients.



Cesar Espinoza of CC Old Bridge said that as he walked by, this mother requested he pray for her child at Jimani Public Hospital. Photo by Jason Tickle

At Jimani Public Hospital, Frank Duarte of Cornerstone CC approached a 12-year-old boy with both feet amputated. His Bible open to John 14, Frank intended to share the Gospel and pray with the child. But the boy waved him on. Thinking he was angry, Frank explained in Spanish that he wanted to pray. "No, you don't have to pray for me," replied the boy. Pointing to his heart, he continued, "I have Jesus here, and—" pointing to his missing feet, "this is nothing

because I know where I'm going when I die. But talk to my friend over there. He's not a Christian; pray for him."

Another Haitian in his early 20s was walking around offering to translate. He had a white bandage on his hand and was elevating it above his heart—"Evidently doctor's orders," said George. "I asked what had happened, and it was the same answer that many gave: 'The building fell on me,'" George said. "The guy on his left and right had both died, and he said he was spared for a purpose. He knew Jesus but hadn't been walking with Him. He said, 'God left me here for a reason; I'm going to preach the Gospel.'"

As people nearby listened in on team members' conversations with victims and families, the Americans quickly became overwhelmed by requests for prayer. Soon, the believers found themselves addressing entire rooms at once. "You'd walk into a room and see 15-20 patients on mattresses on the floor and family members gathered all around," explained George. "Most people's injuries were from having concrete buildings fall on them. I'd say, 'Hi, my name is George. I come from America, and I'm here to encourage you. It's through struggles and tribulations that we draw closer to God, and He has a plan in all this.' Then I would pray with them, acknowledging that God, as a Father, loves all His children and has a purpose for everything He allows to happen, even the tragedies. I would ask Him to use these injuries for His glory and their good, according to His promise in Romans 8:28. And I would ask Him to meet all their needs."

Team members were overwhelmed by the gratitude of the Haitians. George said, "When I would say to a room, 'If your trust is in Jesus Christ, you know that you're going to get a glorified body one day,' people would yell 'amen' and clap." Some victims joined in praising God aloud as George prayed, he said. "That was amazing to me."

As George prayed in one room, he felt a hand on his shoulder. Looking up as he finished, an American doctor was standing behind him smiling. "God bless you. Now the ministry starts—this is the important stuff," said the doctor.

He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Luke 9:2



Photo by Jason Tickle

Gene Espinosa and Cesar Espinoza of CC Old Bridge unload goods.

Feeding the Hungry

On the team's second day, several members traveled to the Dominican Republic border where trucks of food and medicine were departing for Haiti. "A lot of convoys were on their way in," said team member Jason Tickle from CC Fredericksburg. "They told us we'd have to wait till the afternoon, when we could travel with a UN convoy for security." Protection was needed to carry supplies, explained Jason, because of the danger of thieves, who could sell the precious goods for enormous fees in the disaster-stricken area. "Without the UN convoy, you can go in," a guard told Jason, "but we can't guarantee your safety."

As the believers waited, team member Patti Height from CCOB began to talk with two women who were also seeking to enter Haiti. They had connections with another believer who had a truck, food, and driver but needed help distributing supplies. The CC team wanted to serve but needed transportation. Soon it was decided they would go together to deliver the food to an orphanage near Port-au-Prince.

The group set out the next morning and sped over the torn-up roads. After a few hours, the road became impassable. Seeing a policeman, the team slowed and asked him for advice about distributing their supplies. He counseled them to give the food away from the nearby police station. As the loaded truck pulled into the lot, onlookers



Outstretched hands and cries for help greet and juice to a park in Petionville, Haiti. Once being used as a tent city for thousands

the relief team from Calvary Chapel as they bring crackers, bread, water, the private yard for the prime minister of Haiti's office, the area is now displaced by the recent earthquake. Photo by St. Petersburg Times

crowded in from every direction. Police emerged, cracking long whips. As the people began to form a line, the team started handing a snack and a juice box or water bottle to each person. "This was almost a week after the quake," said Jason, "and we were told these were the first relief supplies to reach the area."

Meanwhile, Patti and team members Gene Espinosa of CCOB and Pastor Vic Batista of CC Aventura, FL, visited a nearby jail and carried water to the thirsty inmates. Gene prayed with the men while Patti and Vic talked with the only female prisoner. The woman said she had killed her husband. Patti told her about forgiveness through Jesus and then put her hands through the bars and prayed with her.



Photo by Jason Tickle

Pastor Vic Batista, right, of CC Aventura, FL, prays with a soldier who was overwhelmed by the devastation. Vic grew up in the Dominican Republic.



Photo by American Red Cross

A Haitian woman receives supplies at an American Red Cross distribution site.



U.S. military personnel attempt to aid a Haitian girl after the earthquake. Many children were orphaned and thousands of Haitians were left homeless. Many now sleep in makeshift refugee camps. Photo by Fred W. Baker III, DOD



Dr. Les Cochrane of CC Murrieta, CA, examines a baby with a respiratory infection. This medical outreach served victims near Hinche, Haiti. CC Murrieta has partnered with Haiti Endowment Fund for many years to serve Haitians with Christ's love.

Photo by Brian Bell

The LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted ...
Isaiah 61:1b

Sailing to Jacmel

The team learned that an orphanage in Jacmel, Haiti, desperately needed food and medical supplies. The road was impassable, so four team members drove to a Dominican coastal town and sought to hire a boat to Jacmel. The small boat captains were still arguing amongst themselves when an officer of the Dominican Republic Navy heard the group was taking relief supplies into Haiti.

Team leader Lonnie Vargas from CCOB commented, "We were about to take a costly, dangerous trip in a small boat when the naval officer offered to take us on a naval ship the next morning." The voyage was free and the believers could take as many goods as needed. So they dropped off the supplies they had brought, drove back to their base in Barahona for more, and returned in a van heavy-laden with medical necessities. The next day they sailed to Jacmel and delivered the supplies to a local hospital, two orphanages, and a packed surgical clinic.

This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life.

Psalm 119:50

Medicine for Amputees

Doctors in Jacmel utilized the supplies immediately and needed much more. The team had met an American pilot using his personal plane to deliver aid, so he and Gene flew back to the Dominican Republic to pick up the requests. That evening, a clinic in Jacmel called the team. Thirty-one children required amputation, and morphine was desperately needed. "There was a tremendous shortage of morphine," said team member James Loures, retired from 20 years in emergency medical services. Because there was no anesthesia, he explained, doctors amputated with morphine—when it was available. If there was none, amputees received insufficient pain medicine, such as aspirin or Novocaine.

But morphine is a controlled substance, and it was a holiday in the Dominican Republic. Cesar Espinoza from CCOB didn't care. "I'm a grandfather," he said. "The thought of my grandson, who's 11, having his leg removed without anesthesia ..." The team drove to a Catholic hospital where they had procured medicines the day before. The head nun told them it was impossible to give them morphine. In Spanish, Cesar explained the situation—31 children needed to have limbs removed and there was no pain medication. The nun said she was sorry, but she could not release the medicine. Cesar asked if he could pray. "She said she was touched by the prayer," said Cesar. "Then she reached down to a little safe at her right side, and she handed me eight shots of morphine."

The team continued their search. Another hospital director turned them down. Cesar spoke up: "Do you have children?" he asked her. "I got kind of emotional," Cesar admitted. The director relented and released more medicine to them. Finally, with medicine collected from hospitals, pharmacies, and a private individual, the team met Gene and the pilot on the runway a few hours later. In addition to morphine, they had gathered drills, bits, pins, bone screws, external fixtures, and powerful antibiotics—medical supplies that would enable doctors to save some limbs from being amputated.

Delivering the supplies to the three surgeons in Jacmel was exhilarating, said Jonathan



An injured Haitian girl is rushed to an awaiting Coast Guard helicopter by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jose Estrada. The Coast Guard and Navy both provided air crews to medevac the injured to Milot, Haiti, to receive additional assistance.

Colbeth from CCOB. "It felt like 'mission accomplished,'" he said. "Seeing God direct us to get the job done was so satisfying."

Team member Raul Nassar from CCOB added, "The doctors were amazed we were able to get it. Since it was a holiday and

everything was closed, they were really shocked. The Lord orchestrated everything."

Pastor Vic concluded, "It was a miracle—God worked it all out. He had us meet at the right time; stores that were supposed to be closed were open. It was truly of the Lord." ☞

Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandyn Hill, U.S. Coast Guard

The Way Forward in Haiti

Different CC ministries come together

CC Fort Lauderdale, FL, (CCFTL) and Parakletos International, a disaster relief ministry of CC Costa Mesa, CA, are partnering with other Calvary Chapels to facilitate the movement's response to Haiti's earthquake victims. "This is an opportunity for us as a body of believers to impact an entire city and even a nation for Christ," said Tim Wylie of Parakletos International.

Tim and Chet Lowe, CCFTL outreach pastor, recently returned with other CC leaders from Jacmel, Haiti, where they began planning long-term outreach to the disaster zone. "We met with the mayor's assistant," reported

Chet, "and they are ready to receive us and utilize our efforts to help." Most relief efforts from other organizations have focused on Port-au-Prince, he explained; yet the earthquake gravely impacted many other areas. Chet added, "Pastor Bob Coy senses the Lord's leading for CCFTL to aid in spearheading a Calvary-led initiative."

A site is being secured in Jacmel to serve as a base of operations, Chet said. Jacmel has a functioning seaport to receive goods and is ideally located for ministry to the devastated towns and villages. Parakletos International and CCFTL plan to establish this base site in the next few weeks. "Jacmel is small enough that we could have a major impact on that area, and teams could utilize Jacmel as a base to get into other areas," added Chet. "The needs and ministry opportunities in Haiti are limitless."

Once logistics are in place, teams and individuals from all over the Calvary Chapel movement will be welcome to join the efforts to serve in Christ's name from this base camp. Opportunities include medical and social work, cleanup, rebuilding of homes and orphanages, distribution of food and medical supplies, counseling, and VBS-style children's ministry.

Tim Wylie from Parakletos expects the project to continue for several years. "Right now we are overwhelmed with people wanting to go serve," he said. "We're asking people to realize their skills will be needed over a long period of time." There is an immediate need for tents to shelter the victims who currently line the streets, sleeping under tarps, blankets, and newspapers. "The rainy season hits in two months," said Tim, "and that's not going to work then."



Photo by Brent Kaser

Dr. Yong Park, right, of CC West Grove, CA, stitches a cut on a victim's head. A flashlight is needed because the earthquake disrupted electrical power.

Tim added, "It's overwhelming—and I believe the Lord wants us there. It's an astronomically large problem, but we serve an astronomically large God. We're asking Him to give us the resources and the wisdom to win these people to Him. I really believe this is Haiti's hour: It's going to be the rebirth of a nation." 🙏

Parakletos International

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On facebook, search for *Parakletos International*.

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Haiti is 750 miles southeast of Florida. Several CC teams have ministered in various areas since Haiti's earthquake.



Physical therapist Scott Holman of CC Murrieta aids an injured man from Port-au-Prince.

Photo by Brian Bell