

Scroll down to see FBC Plano member Mike Oliver at work building a water purification unit in Haiti with the Texas Baptist Men.

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Nearly three weeks after an earthquake left an estimated 200,000 people dead, life in Haiti remains in as many pieces as the buildings toppled throughout Port-au-Prince.



Carroll Prewitt (2nd from right), a Texas Baptist Men volunteer from Lindale, leads in prayer at a makeshift medical clinic across from the collapsed Haitian palace.

In large pockets of the city, the needs are as basic as the struggle for life itself—water, food and shelter.

Residents have erected impromptu communities of sheets, blankets, sticks and strings in many places across the nation’s capital. At least one of these areas is serving as the makeshift home for more than 19,000 people.

Despite the efforts of nonprofit groups, few of the tent cities have access to clean drinking water. Residents take showers in front of their blanketed shanties. At best, the water they collect in buckets comes from dirty pipes, water trucks or wells. At worst, they draw it from streams polluted by sewage.

Two weeks after the disaster, at least 31 orphanages lacked food, water or both.

“I see people here wanting hope, wanting to live.” said James Cundiff, a disaster relief veteran from Dallas and [Texas Baptist Men](#) volunteer.



Mike Oliver, a Texas Baptist Men Volunteer from First Baptist Church in Plano, works on the water purification system for an orphanage outside Port-Au-Prince.

Yet it's here in the orphanages that hope has started to blossom as spontaneously as the disaster that rocked this nation. A team of Texas Baptist Men volunteers arrived Jan. 29 and within days had installed a water purification system that provided drinkable water for more than 100 orphans and hundreds of relief workers in the area around Grace Village, a church-run orphanage and hospital here.

Shortly after the water system began running, Cundiff helped arrange for the delivery of more than 27,000 meals for the orphans and the 19,000 people in the makeshift city around the orphanage. The meals came from the U.S. Marines who also agreed to continue providing food for the tent city as long as it was needed.

"God has provided today," said Carroll Prewitt, who is leading the TBM team. "He has provided food and water."

Cundiff praised the ministry of Texas Baptist Men and the military's decision to provide food as "miracles" that would save lives now and into the future.

Christian groups are traversing Port-Au-Prince, providing clean water, distributing food and staffing medical clinics.

One woman from the Dominican Republic with connections to [Youth With A Mission](#) came to Port-Au-Prince with a pair of tents, a desire to help and a prayer that God would show her how to do that. The result has been the birth of a multiple-location medical clinic where doctors from around the globe are serving more than 600 patients a day. Medical supplies daily arrive as answers to prayer.

Doctors from Texas Baptist churches serve in medical clinics, and medical staff and supplies from [Baylor Health Care System](#) are aiding the relief effort.



Carroll Prewitt (center) of Lindale and James Cundiff (right) of Dallas talk to a U.S. Marine about getting food for 19,000 people living in a tent city around the Grace Village orphanage and hospital in Carrefour, Haiti.

Mike Roberts, a member of [Park Cities Baptist Church](#) in Dallas, donated the use of his corporate jet to the Baptist General Convention of Texas to transport supplies, disaster relief volunteers and medical personnel. Roberts said he wanted to help hurting Haitians however he could. He took the first group of doctors to Haiti Jan. 26.

“When you’re able to genuinely help someone from your heart and they know you are out of your heart, that’s Christ like,” Roberts said of Christians serving others.

In one week, medical personnel coordinated by Texas Baptist disaster response leaders treated several thousand patients in clinics and a hospital near Haiti’s capital. In some cases while working in the emergency room, Texas Baptist doctors saved Haitian lives through their work alongside the [Baptist World Aid Rescue 24](#) team.

“They’re fighting for survival,” said Matt Johnson, a doctor and member of Baptist Temple in McAllen who served in a hospital alongside a Baptist World Aid team. “They’re fighting for basic things.”

The actions of Christians speak volumes to people, Cundiff said. People understand who is helping them and want to know more about what motivates them to serve.

Christian groups often have been among the first to respond to needs here, said Cundiff, who was in Haiti six days after the earthquake. They are on the frontlines assisting people, often responding before other relief groups.

“It is the faith community” helping, Cundiff said. “Where has their help come from? Where has their food come from? Where has their water come from?”

Texas Baptists committed to serving in Haiti until they are no longer needed. With the lack of clean water and working sewage systems in the tent cities, that could be quite a long time. The city shows little sign of picking up the rubble. Some people simply refuse to return to living inside any building, fearing another earthquake.

TBM already has an additional 11,000 water purification filters, including 5,000 purchased by the BGCT, on the way to Haiti, and the mission's organization is prepared to send more if needed. TBM volunteers will train Haitian Christian leaders how to operate the filters and then give them responsibility for distributing them.

The TBM water-purification team serving in Haiti has begun working on a new project that will provide clean drinking water for hundreds more people and has chosen other locations where they can help by providing clean water.

"Their homes are all destroyed," Prewitt said of the area around the orphanage where his team installed the water-purification system. "This whole section is flattened. All the homes are not there anymore. They're all living here. They have no means of support. They have no money. They're completely dependent on what we can provide through Texas Baptists and through the resources God has given us."

Disaster response financial gifts through the Baptist General Convention of Texas support a variety of Baptist partners, including Texas Baptist Men. Those donations can be made at www.texasbaptists.org/give or through the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation by sending a check marked "disaster response" to Texas Baptist Missions Foundation, 333 N. Washington Ave., Dallas 75246.

To support Texas Baptist Men directly, visit www.texasbaptistmen.org or send a check designated "disaster relief" to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas 75227.