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## SPECIAL EDITION OF NEWS BRIEFS - HAITI RELIEF

### United Methodist Volunteers in Mission – Information in wake of Haiti Disaster

We know that many individuals and congregations are deeply wanting to journey to Haiti in response to the Haiti disaster. While such desire is appropriate and a picture of Christian love and unity, we deeply discourage such action at this point.

Here is a portion of a memo sent by Bishop Joel N. Martinez, Interim General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries:

“We know that the church seeks to respond to the great crisis in Haiti. We are in touch with many persons and groups wanting to reach out in tangible ways to provide relief for suffering people there. We have already received an outpouring of inquiries and offers for volunteers to provide a variety of services.

While we are encouraged by this spirit of support, we strongly advise that teams and others not set out for Haiti at this time.

There will be great need for short-term and long-term volunteer mission groups in due course—for medical care, rebuilding, and responses to many other needs. However, the current state of Haiti is not conducive to the safety and welfare of the volunteers; security is a major concern; infrastructures are shattered. There is little access to water, power, fuel, and even roads.

An UMCOR Team is on the ground, coordinating with relief partners on appropriate courses of action. As you know, the United Nations (representing government) and the Red Cross go into massive disaster areas first. This is long-established international protocol. Church-related and other relief organizations follow. Objectives of our initial team include the assessment and organization for the reception of volunteers.

In collaboration with jurisdictional coordinators of UMVIM, we are making a registry of potential individual volunteers and teams. The time for volunteers will come and their assistance will be crucial.”

If you would like to volunteer now, the MERCI Mission Center is receiving names of those who would like to serve in the center to help coordinate our disaster response and relief efforts that will be ongoing for several months.

If you have specialized training in the medical field, there are international disaster response/medical relief agencies working in Haiti that might be able to use you. Please call or email the MERCI Mission Center (888-440-9167 or email [merci@nccumc.org](mailto:merci@nccumc.org)) and we will help connect you with those agencies.

It will be some time before there are opportunities to send United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) teams into Haiti. UMVIM, SEJ is maintaining a list, however, of persons interested in volunteering in Haiti once the situation has stabilized enough for UMVIM teams to enter. Volunteers will be contacted with more information as it becomes available. To register, please visit UMVIM, SEJ at [www.umvim.org](http://www.umvim.org). The director of SEJ UMVIM and chair of UMVIM, NC are in discussion regarding UMVIM training specific to the response efforts in Haiti. We believe we will have more information in this regard in the near future. If you are interested in attending an upcoming session of Team Leadership (Basic or Advanced), or Early Response (ERT) Training offered through UMVIM, NC, please visit [www.nccumvim.org](http://www.nccumvim.org) to register.

