

Brian Houston: How the Church Should Respond to Typhoon Haiyan

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

It's with broken hearts that we watch again as yet another nation is devastated by natural disaster. The strongest typhoon to ever hit land impacted the Philippines over the weekend, and from all reports, damage and loss of life is catastrophic. The limited news reports that have been broadcast are predicting the death toll will reach tens of thousands, and we will never hear all of the stories of the nearly 25 million Filipino people who will be forever impacted by this **storm**—not to mention the countries that are still in its ongoing path.

It can be disheartening living in days of such loss and heartache. And it can be easy to let fear and sadness rob us of our joy as we look for answers amongst the unimaginable. But the Bible tells us that our God is a **God of hope**.

The Bible also tells us that the heart of God is toward people—all people. And that as His church, we must display what we know of God's character toward humanity: His kindness, compassion and generosity. It is through the actions of the local church that others, too, will find peace, comfort and help in times like these.

Our team has been speaking to agencies since we heard the news, and I wanted to let you know we will be partnering with World Vision Australia in order to most effectively meet the needs of those impacted by **Typhoon Haiyan**. World Vision currently has close to 600 staff on the ground in the disaster area and sent 20 of its emergency response teams from

Australia into immediate action. The organization's longstanding record for integrity and diligence in a crisis gives me the utmost confidence in their ability to steward your generosity.

Below is a clearer picture from **World Vision** about what they are doing practically to help bring much needed aid through their Typhoon Asia Appeal. It is with all sincerity and urgency that I ask you, Hillsong Church, to open your hearts and incline your ears to God at this time, to dig deep and make a difference in the lives of so many who are in desperate need.

And more than that—*pray*. **Pray** for the men, women and children who are yet to be rescued. Pray for the governments and agencies that are working to bring solutions, that they would be well equipped with strategies and finances to make a difference. Pray for relief teams, for medical professionals, for wisdom and expertise beyond their natural abilities. Pray for the children of the Philippines, that in a time when they are most vulnerable they will find protection and comfort. Pray that chaos will cease and our combined strength will make a significant difference. Pray for miracles.

"They cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed" (Ps. 107:28-30).

[Click here to donate to the World Vision Asia Typhoon Appeal](#)

What is World Vision doing to help?

World Vision is on the ground determining the needs and the full scale of the response. In disasters like this, food, clean water, essential household supplies, hygiene kits and emergency shelter are the most urgent needs. Due to the recent string of emergencies in the **Philippines**, families are already living in cramped conditions in evacuation centers. They are exposed to extreme weather, which can lead to many health

problems. One of the most extensive needs will be assistance to recover livelihoods, as much farm land has been destroyed, buildings blown away and businesses destroyed. **World Vision** is there and mounting a massive response. With 55 years of experience in the Philippines and staff members based throughout the country, we are currently working closely with national and local government disaster response teams to assess both immediate and long-term needs. Our goal is to help 2 million people (400,000 families) with life-saving essentials such as hygiene kits and emergency shelter, as well as ensuring safety and protection for the most vulnerable, especially women and children.

This article was originally posted on the Hillsong Church website.

Brian Houston, lead pastor of Hillsong Church, is highly regarded for his boldness, innovation and vision. He is well respected for his passion for the cause of Christ and the local church, and for preaching messages that change mindsets and ministries.