

Billy Graham Rapid Response Team Leaves Haiti

The Billy Graham Rapid Response Team has completed its 22-month deployment to the earthquake-stricken country of Haiti. Chaplains first arrived in Haiti within 24 hours of the Jan. 12, 2010, disaster that is estimated to have killed more than 300,000.

More than 120 chaplains ministered in the impoverished nation during the nearly two-year-long endeavor, and those trained chaplains prayed with and comforted 35,420 Haitians and relief workers. Individual chaplains typically spent two to six weeks at a time in the country before rotating out.

“We have witnessed the best and the worst that this world has to offer as we’ve ministered in Haiti,” says Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. “We’ve seen pain and grief on an unimaginably massive scale, and we’ve seen beauty, hope and joy in the spirits of the Haitian people that defies all explanation in the midst of such a hard place.”

Recognizing the ongoing need in Haiti for spiritual and emotional support, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has implemented many of its other ministries in the country over the last several months as well, including a Franklin Graham Festival held in January, a *My Hope* World Evangelism Through Television program that reached the entire nation through grassroots efforts, and *The Greatest Journey*, a special educational program for children. A Creole translation of the youth training course *Dare to Be a Daniel* is also in the works for Haiti.

The deployment to Haiti was the second-longest outreach in the history of the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team. Following

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, chaplains immediately deployed to the Gulf Coast and had a presence there for two-and-a-half years until concluding the effort on March 14, 2008.

The Billy Graham Rapid Response Team is a nationwide network of chaplains across 44 states that are specifically trained to deal with crisis situations. Since the ministry was launched in 2002, it has responded to more than 120 natural and man-made disasters, including hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires and shootings.