

Pentecostal Minister Builds Homes for Haiti

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 An Assemblies of God chaplain is helping Haiti rebuild, one prefabricated home at a time.

Denny Nissley, founder and executive director of Christ in Action ministry in Manassas, Va., plans to ship 5,000 prefabricated homes to earthquake victims in Haiti. The first shipment of 500 homes is to arrive in Port-au-Prince by late March.

Photo: Denny Nissley (left) during a recent visit to Haiti

Volunteer crews in South Carolina, Texas and Virginia are building the \$600 home kits, which include four walls, a roof and a pressure-treated floor. But Nissley is still raising the \$3 million needed to complete the Homes for Haiti project.

“God put this Haiti project on my heart, but it takes the body of Christ to bring it to reality,” he said.

Christian builder Ed Lloyd, who designed the 12-by-8 wood frame structures, said he developed the idea in less than 30 minutes while sitting at his kitchen table. “I had done mission work in Haiti before and helped build a church in Rosie, [Haiti],” he said. “I know what the people needed, and I’m just trying to show the love of Christ in a practical way.”

Capable of sleeping up to eight people, the homes will be erected on blocks or the ground and can be assembled in about

two hours using a cordless drill.

Morningstar Christian Academy in Port-au-Prince will be the first to receive some of the dwellings. Other building sites have yet to be selected, but Nissley is considering erecting several hundred homes around a church location, or planting new churches and Christian schools with small clinics around the homes.

Though Christ in Action volunteers from the U.S. will help assemble the homes, Nissley said he will hire local people to do most of the work. "This will help the workers buy food for their families and will be a testimony of God's practical love," he said.

Nissley has received about \$300,000 in commitments from churches, businesses and individuals, which pays for 500 homes. "Even Sunday school classes are raising funds for the homes," he said.

Nissley founded Christ in Action with his wife, Sandy, in 1982 originally as a street evangelism ministry. The couple converted a semitrailer into a stage with a 14,000-watt sound system for inner-city preaching and concerts, and gave away hot dogs and hamburgers. A board member prompted the Nissleys to shift to disaster relief work.

After the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the couple fed emergency crews at the Pentagon and Ground Zero. And today, the ministry owns \$1 million worth of trucks, tents, chain saws, and cooking, refrigeration and washing equipment capable of serving 15,000 meals daily.

It has served victims and emergency workers at 12 major disasters, including providing more than \$100 million in goods and services for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

In 2006 the White House asked Nissley to organize a coalition of faith-based groups and individuals to respond to disasters

in the Capitol region, and to form a national disaster response network.

Nissley also has launched a Faith Based First Responders course that has trained more than 1,000 laypeople in Critical Incident Stress Management.