

Haiti Pastors National Conference Call Transcript Friday, January 15, 2010

THANK YOU! More than 800 pastors joined Bill Hybels, Max Lucado, WVUS President, Rich Stearns, and WV Canada President, Dave Toycean, who called in live from Haiti.

RICH: The internally displaced people in Port-au-Prince now are literally over one million people that are displaced and out of their homes. That is creating a massive humanitarian crisis, much more so than it would in a rural area. Also because of the many multi-story buildings and apartments the infrastructure damage has been even more severe in Port-au-Prince.

Number two, access to Port-au-Prince has been extremely difficult. It is an island. The port has been destroyed and is not operational right now. The airport is struggling. It is open and closed at different times and the roads to and from Port-au-Prince are largely blocked. We have had communication problems in Port-au-Prince. Most cell phone service has gone out. Electricity is down and so communications have been very difficult as well.

And finally, one of the differences with this emergency is this is a disaster in which the responders – people like the NGO staff, World Vision staff, Compassion staff, Samaritan's Purse staff, and all of the other NGOs including the United Nations – they have been victims as well as responders. So the very people we are counting on to respond to this are dealing with their own issues as victims with missing family members, collapsed homes, etc. As an example of this, the World Vision offices in Port-au-Prince were pretty damaged and our staff are largely operating out of the parking lot next to the office at this moment. So there are a lot of challenges right now in this disaster.

Now, one of the questions we hope to deal with on this call and to help you with is that question that is on your mind of how can you respond; how can your church respond? There is tremendous interest in the faith community around this disaster. Haiti is very close to the United States. There are many connections from churches here to Haiti through so many different partnership and church partnerships. All of you, I know, want to respond.

Right now, our advice to you is to leave this to the professionals. The military is there, the Red Cross, large NGOs like World Vision and others; Care, Red Cross, other relief specialists, the United Nations. These are the people right now that are operational on the ground and really need the space to do the kinds of urgent things that need to be done to stabilize the population. This is not the time, generally, to go or to send volunteers, unless they have search and rescue capability or specific medical school skills that they can use and also a place to plug in and deploy those skills. If you have partners in Haiti, organizations that you partnered with over the past, now is the time to support them and support their needs – both financially and in prayer and emotionally. If you don't have a relief partner in Haiti, I would urge you to find one. I would urge you to get a relief partner that you can work through and with during this disaster.

Finally, this weekend is obviously a perfect opportunity to take an offering in your congregation when the concern and the awareness and the media around this issue is at its peak. Right now the most urgently needed resource for Haiti is cash so that the organizations responding have the resources to do that. Now, later on there should be, and will be, opportunities for you to respond and engage more directly in Haiti by sending delegations, but that will be weeks, if not months down the road as we move into the rebuilding phase in Haiti helping all of your partners get on their feet and get re-established.

Well with that brief introduction I would like to see if we can go to Dave Toycen, President of World Vision Canada, who is in Port-au-Prince for a report from Dave. Dave, are you there? (pause) Give us a moment here we are trying to get Dave connected. (pause) While we are waiting to connect Dave, and I apologize for the technical difficulties, let me just say a couple of other things about the response. The first phase of the response right now, and what you're seeing on CNN, is the emergency search and rescue; literally trying to save lives of people that are trapped in buildings, the grizzly details of burying the dead and trying to get injured people to a place where they can get some treatment. And we anticipate that that will go on for the next few days. But very quickly it will transition into social recovery and community stabilization. There will be at least a million people, and perhaps more, that will need temporary camps to live in. They will need shelters; they will need emergency access to food, to water, to health, to sanitation as we try to stabilize the populations in Haiti of displaced people. And this is typically the kind of thing the United Nations and the large NGOs help to organize in the first week to ten days of a crisis like this. Once that occurs, and that will be an ongoing need, we will move into the recovery phase of the disaster and that is economic recovery, it's infrastructure recovery and rebuilding, it's helping to rebuild homes and schools and clinics and important buildings. And that phase, as we've seen in past disasters, can go on for two to three years down the road.

Right now as we try to work out our problems with Port-au-Prince we're going to go to Bill Hybels and hopefully be able to get Dave Toycen patched in after Bill. But, Bill, can I turn to you to make a few remarks along the lines we discussed yesterday about how churches might respond to this and your perspective.

BILL: I'd be happy to, Rich. First of all I would like to thank you Rich for taking leadership in a situation like this. We have enormous confidence in you and in World Vision and so I'm excited to partner with you again. As far as how our church responds, I think what I'm most concerned about is that everybody wants to do something and they want to do something quite quickly. You'd have to have a heart of stone not to be moved by the images that we're seeing on CNN. Many of us have ministry partners and loved ones in Haiti. I've been there several times and we have partnerships there and there is something visceral and geographically proximate to this disaster. And so we've been having leadership meetings here at Willow and I think one of our biggest challenges to underline what Rich said a few moments ago is to convince people that they shouldn't try to go there, that they shouldn't try to interfere with what the professionals need to do in this first phase. I was contacted by a pastor right after the disaster and he said he was organizing his youth group, his high school students, to go down there and try to help out and I had to tactfully try to redirect his strategy there and say that is probably not the way to do the most good at this phase in the disaster.

What we're doing at Willow is this weekend we're going to be announcing the commitment, the first phase commitment that our church is going to make for disaster relief in Haiti. And then we are going to invite everybody to do what I think is the most important thing to be done at this phase and that is to give money, to give cash. And there are always people who say "I want to do something other than that." And I'm going view this as a teaching moment and say if you are really concerned, and if you want to do the most good at this phase right now, the most good you can do is to give a generous offering. And I'm going to challenge everybody to do something. I know we are still in a recession and I know January is not necessarily the best time for special offerings. But we're going to challenge people of minimal means to do something minimal and moderate means to do something moderate and we're going to challenge those with a lot of resources to do something incredibly generous. We're going to put that in a Haiti disaster fund and as the dust settles a little bit we're going to work through World Vision and Compassion and our regular partners in local churches there that we know to try to route our resources to people who are doing great work in the first phase and the second phase and as Rich

was saying in the rebuilding phase. I don't think this is the time to shrink back from asking people to be involved. Our phone lines have been lit up here at Willow. We have had people from our community, who don't even attend Willow, but know of us and they are saying "Certainly Willow will be doing something, what can we do to help whatever Willow is going to do to address this?"

I was just alerting our people early this morning in an e-news that I send out to our entire congregation – you are going to think I'm making this up, but I'm not! – I reached for my Bible this morning to do my regular Bible reading and it fell open, literally fell open, to Zachariah. There was a couple of verses in Zachariah in Zachariah 7 that I had underlined many years ago and they just caught my eye as my Bible fell open. Zachariah 7:9-10 - This is what the Lord Almighty says, "Administer true justice. Show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other."

And I read that several times and prayed and came to work today purposing in my heart to use whatever platform God has given me to try to inspire people to show mercy and to show compassion in the middle of this horrific disaster. Those of you who are pastors on the line, sometimes we shrink back a little bit from challenging people to respond in a situation like this. My recommendation would be – don't shrink back. It is in the hearts of people to want to be involved and get on the solution side of this. I'll stress this one more time, and then I'll turn it back to you Rich, this is a teaching opportunity to explain to our congregation that we need to do well at doing good. We need to stay out of the way when we need to stay out of the way, we need to give cash when it's time to give cash, we need raise up volunteers and expertise and equipment when that phase comes. Jesus said "Be wise as serpents, gentle as doves." I'm certainly going to trust Rich's counsel and the counsel of experts in this field to know how to engage at each phase of this disaster. So Rich, having said that, I'll turn it over to you.

RICH: Thank you, Bill, and we appreciate that word. We're still having a little technical difficulty trying to get Port-au-Prince connected. But I want to say a few words about the World Vision response to what is going on in Haiti. It's important for you to understand that World Vision has been in Haiti for 31 years. We have 800 full time and contract staff on the ground in Haiti. Our annual program there is in excess of \$50 million a year that we have been undertaking there. What does that mean? It means that we were very, very well positioned to respond literally within minutes to the crisis because we have such a deep presence in Haiti over such a long period of time. We have relationships there with churches; we have relationships there with the government and many other partners on the ground. What we are doing now is we are obviously deploying those staff from their development work, their longer term development work, to the relief/response in Port-au-Prince. We have other advantages; we had prepositioned supplies in Haiti. We have a warehouse there, we had prepositioned medical supplies and we'd actually brought in quite a few supplies during the hurricane season in anticipation of needing them in that season. So we are off to a good start there. We also have a very large program and staff component in the Dominican Republic right across the island. We're able to draw on those staff as well who were not affected by the earthquake because they were on the other side of the island.

World Vision is very much on the job right now. Our international relief specialists from around the world have mostly made their way now to Port-au-Prince from Africa, Latin America and other places in North America and the response is well under way. We are anticipating that we will need a significant amount of resources to mount this response. Just for comparison the World Vision response to the Asian Tsunami required more than \$350 million of resources before we were done to complete the work that we had over there. We think this is a disaster of similar scale to the Asian Tsunami in terms of the humanitarian impact on the population and on people. We anticipate a very deep and a very long response period to this particular crisis. And because it is so close to us, it's going to be very much a part of the headlines in the United States over the weeks and months ahead and we have a lot of Haitian

Americans that live in South Florida and other places around the country that are very interested in this. So we are anticipating a very deep and long response. We absolutely want to work with churches and our church partners. As more information becomes available we will be hoping to give you more information of the condition of churches and faith-based organizations in Haiti that were impacted by this as well.

What I would like to do next is ask if Max Lucado could share a few words with us and hopefully when he's done we'll be able to get Dave Toyce on the line and if not we will begin to take some of those questions. Let me ask, Max, are you there and can you bring a word to us?

MAX: I am. Can you hear me okay?

RICH: I hear you well.

MAX: Okay. Well, hello, Rich and hello, Bill and hello, to all of you. Of course, with all of you my prayers have been going up for the last few days for the people of Haiti and I am wondering if I could encourage us. Many of us are going to be leading groups of people this weekend whether in worship services or in bible classes or small groups. And we're going to be helping people process what they've been watching on the news over the last few days. And I appreciate so much what Bill has said about calling on people to be generous and what you have said, Rich, about having a processed response to this. Not over reacting in the sense of hurrying down to Haiti, but more in the sense of responding financially and responsibly. As leaders, I think we need to be careful, too, to help people respond to this theologically.

It's not the time to draw judgment, as in all disasters, you know, when we need to understand that God's ways are higher than our ways. Isaiah 55 just simply tells us that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and when Jesus healed the man who was born blind, prior to the healing the disciples asked why he was blind and Jesus just said so that the works of God could be revealed in him. And this is an opportunity for us to see the works of God revealed in Haiti. And I think we can assure our churches of that. I think we need to tell them that this is the time for God's works to be revealed. It's not given to us to know all the answers as to why this or if any other natural disaster occurs. But we do know this is a chance for us to see the works of God revealed.

I encourage us to pray specifically, pray deliberately, that we could ask God to be with the families that are separated from one another. Children, parents, grandparents, and extended relatives – that they could be quickly reunited. Pray the God of comfort would surround the people of Haiti. Pray for the relief efforts and safety of the governments and the aid agencies. Pray for increased coordination on the ground with no duplication of efforts. Pray that supply chains are clearly established. We have many things we can pray for. Let's pray for justice. Let's pray that the bands of injustice, that have afflicted many of the people in Haiti, could be loosened. And, let's pray for a new day for this country. Let's ask God to take what appears to be a tragedy, and certainly is, but turn it into something that is really good.

And then lastly, I think it's a great time for us to teach our churches how to respond to not just this tragedy, but any poverty or any injustice. Acts 6 gives us that picture when the widows in the church in Jerusalem were overlooked in the daily distribution of food, the whole church reacted. Acts 6, verse 2 says that "the 12 called a meeting of all the believers", this is a time for everybody to get on board. The problem of inequity or poverty deserves a church-wide conversation. And the leaders in Jerusalem wanted every member to know that the church took poverty seriously. And I think this is a chance for us to communicate to our churches that we take this tragedy seriously. And then secondly and lastly

from my teaching here, let's let the brightest among us direct us – and that's what they did in the Jerusalem church. The apostles said give us your seven best men and turn them loose on this problem.

And that's exactly why I believe so strongly in World Vision and other relief organizations. You know, we simply don't have access to the tools that World Vision does. But, we can come along and get behind World Vision or Compassion or Samaritan's Purse or Red Cross, any of these other specialist organizations and give them all the support that we can. And I think that's exactly what our initial response should be. That of prayer, that of encouraging people to see this theologically and correctly, then lastly getting everybody involved to be as financially generous as they can.

RICH: Max, thank you so much for that word. We really appreciate the support of folks like you and Bill Hybels in this time of need. Just to build on one of the things you said, when we think of the role that we play, World Vision with the church, we call ourselves "an expression of the church on special assignment with the poor". Our hope is that we represent the church of Jesus Christ in all the work do. We're on special assignment just like Steven was with the poor. Loving our neighbors as ourselves and reflecting that concern of the church for the poorest of the poor. Now we don't do that alone. We do that with the church and with many, many churches and we do that we many other wonderful Christian organizations as well.

And I want to urge you, I want to emphasize on this call, that certainly World Vision is organizing this call and we're going to try and provide some resources for you. But, we also realize that there are fine Christian organizations: World Relief, Compassion, Samaritan's Purse that you can partner with and we urge you to find the right partner for your church to get involved in this relief response through that partner. So we really want to urge you to do that.

And also, Max, as I think the opportunity here to lift up the gospel in the darkest places in the darkest times, the light of Christ and the light of the gospel shines most brightly. So, this could be and hopefully will be the church's the finest hour when it comes to the nation of Haiti. I hope we can bring some hope and some light into the darkness that they are experiencing right now through what we do over the next days and weeks.

I want to remind everyone too that after this call we will continue to post resources on our website, www.worldvisionchurches.org. There are already bulletin inserts there that can be downloaded, there is video resource, there are information sheets and we will be updating that as we get the latest from the disaster zone. So, as you are looking to communicate information to your constituencies and congregations we're hoping that website can be a resource to you for downloads and information going forward.

I am going to shift now to a few questions that have come in. and it's looking unlikely right now, we're still trying, that we can re-establish that call with Port Au Prince in Haiti, I think we are using a satellite phone and we are having trouble. But here are a few of the questions that have come in that I would like to at least answer before we close today.

One of the questions we've been asked is, "We've seen the news reports that it is very difficult to get aid into the country. Has World Vision been able to get aid into the country?" And the answer to that is, what I said earlier, that first of all we have some 800 staff prepositioned there, we already had warehouses with food and medical supplies already in them and so we were able to respond immediately. We have been able to get our relief specialists into the country over the last 2 days from around the world. We had a plane full of supplies that left Denver early this morning and it's en route to Port Au Prince right now. We believe we will be landing at the Port Au Prince airport this afternoon

unless for some reason it's diverted because the airport is closed. We have supplies on the way, literally in the air as we speak.

This will continue to be challenging. We received a call from the US Government today, the head of USAID called and is convening a meeting at 12:45 today to talk to myself and the heads of other large organizations helping to coordinate the US government's response. And, as you know we and many other organizations are partners of the US government in relief operations like this as well. We think now that the US military is involved, some of the logistics will improve as roads are cleared and hopefully the port is reopened and those are things we hope happen in the days ahead.

Right now it is pretty difficult to get supplies and people into the country. Another question was this: "What does World Vision do specifically to help children?" One of the things that is often overlooked in disasters like this is the impact on children. We are a child focused agency. Obviously we are so well known for our child sponsorship programs. So, we see all of this through the lens of "how does it affect children". One of the things that we are aware of is that this event was very, very traumatic to children. Children have lost parents. I heard a report yesterday of children sleeping next to the bodies of their mother and father by the side of the road. The children survived and the mother and father did not and the child has nowhere to go and ends up sleeping next to the corpse of their mother or father, just unbelievably tragic photos and pictures that are coming out. Children have been separated from parents, parents are looking for children, they were separated at the time of the earthquake. Maybe the children were in school and the parents were at work. One of the things we try to do is look out for children. We create what are called "Child Friendly Spaces", where we set up tents and bring in counselors and we bring children to those places. Number one, to protect them if they are alone and number two to try and counsel and deal with their grief; and then ultimately to reunite them with parents. So World Vision is very much looking at this through the lens of the impact it's having on children and in the weeks ahead trying to help children deal with those traumas and we have programs to do that.

We'll be developing, I'm pretty sure, a program called Promise Packs, where we'll be assembling and probably asking churches to help assemble these Promise Packs which would be backpacks filled with supplies that would be good for children to get. Things that help them deal with this, replacing school supplies, some personal hygiene items and basic things like that. You'll be hearing more about that on our website in the days ahead. Please be praying for the children as well, in Haiti, as we go forward. We hope to provide some spiritual components to our work with children as well. Providing children's bibles and bible-based training and working with the churches to provide that as well. So, those are some of the things we have been doing and will be doing with children in the future.

Now, I've just been told that we think we have a connection with Dave Toycen and I am going to try to do this connecting his cell phone to our speaker phone here. So, hold on, here's Dave.

RICH: Dave, are you there?

DAVE: Yes, I am.

RICH: Okay, I think people can hear you. I'm holding a cell phone up to our land line here and they should be able to hear you. Why don't you try it and we're testing the signal here.

DAVE: Okay. Well, I appreciate the opportunity to be speaking today. I'm simply driving to the airport to meet the first plane flight coming out of Denver with relief stuff from World Vision and we're obviously excited about that. And we're basically running out of things at the moment. We pretty well

exhausted the water we were distributing, blankets, and medical supplies, so this will be very helpful to us.

The severity of the situation here, I really think the pictures of the media have been faithful to the reality. I've been involved in disaster situations the last 30 years, and this one is definitely a major one. World Vision has categorized this one as a Category 3, Level 3, which means among other things, that at least a million people have to be affected and the number the Red Cross is using here is around 3 million. And it needs to be significant repair and significant financial commitment – certainly tens of millions of dollars in terms of World Vision's investment here.

The human toll is really quite powerful. I was talking to one of our senior staff and he told me “you know, most of my life I've been a helper, but now with this earthquake, even though I haven't lost a life of anyone in my family, I feel like a victim.” And he said that's a “different reality”, and I think in the earthquake zone that's one way to talk about the trauma that we're all feeling. Because we all have extended family or friends that have been killed or injured in this disaster.

I think what makes it so extraordinary and difficult is that Haiti had intense challenges prior to this quake and in fact the last 6-7 months things were getting a little bit better. We received some financial support from the international financial institutions and that's very helpful. And there's been civility in the country, so for this to happen is really unfortunate in terms of the timing.

Much of the infrastructure has been broken, governance, land rights, transportation – all of this creates an environment of extreme _____. And of course when you see the people, loss of families, when you see the children – your hearts are particularly touched. My sort of moment was yesterday. We have some World Vision volunteers from churches here and they just want to help. They received a little bit of health training and they've been going around dressing wounds, delivering medical supplies, aspirins, just basic drugs they're short on in this area. So I was there, all of the patients were out in the sun because you cannot go inside the hospital. It's been so compromised and dangerous. There are literally hundreds of people out on old gurneys, cots, mats, all getting treatment out in the sun. And there is only one doctor most times, to cover all these patients. So I was watching him administer to people very tenderly.

As I was doing that, a man walked up with a child, that must have 8 or 10 years old, that was just skeletal. Obviously this child had problems before the earthquake. And so, I was watching this and a little bit later, I just turned my head and there was a caravan following a coffin of a family government died. Then I turned my head a little bit further to the left and there were two young men walking and one was just weeping profusely on the shoulder of the other. And then I turned my gaze a little bit further and there was a young woman whose body was lying next to the street, and she had been dead for hours. A hospital, that most of the time is a place of hope and healing, in this case, is also a place of profound despair. And I just relay in some way that really complicated and yet in some ways explains and clarifies the type of life people are struggling with here.

Yet I don't want to give the impression there's not hope. Patients have been generous to each other. They've been sharing space, We have staff for example are that have 15-20 people living in their house. Sleeping under guard and they have friends, extended family that don't have anything. Our biggest concern still are just the basics of life. We are appreciative of this point. The American military has taken over responsibility for looking after the logistics around the airport that have been very problematic. So we're really encouraged by that. The churches have been certainly been involved and there's been a very spiritual element to this. People gathering, singing choruses, praying, crying out to God to minister to them in this particular time in their nation and their personal experience. I was trying to think, reflecting

and praying about this, I guess the thought that came to mind was the story of the widow who goes before the unrighteous judge. (Can't hear this section) And this judge doesn't want to give her justice. At the end because of her patience, he sees her desperation, he grants her wish. And Jesus then closes the parable by saying we should never give up faith, we should never give up hope, that God is there and that God will provide. So I think with those remarks I'll stop and I'm happy to answer any questions that would be helpful. Thank you Rich, and thank you everyone who has taken the time to be a part of this.

RICH: Well thank you Dave, I think we'll let you go back to your work. We're glad we finally did get in touch with you. Thank you for that update, and you will be in our prayers too, Dave, in the days ahead.

Let me conclude with a few things. I want to take maybe a couple more questions and then Max I might ask if you would be willing to close us in prayer at the end, cause certainly we need to be in prayer over this.

Let me just _ a few more questions, one came in that said, "What are we doing about medical personnel, if we have medical personnel that would like to go to Haiti to deploy?" Right now WV is not deploying anyone other than our internal staff. But I did have a communication the other evening with International Medical Teams, they are out here in Portland, Oregon. They are a Christian organization with a specialization in deploying medical teams, nurses and doctors, in disaster situations. Their website is medicalteams.org. And I would urge you to get in contact with that organization if you have a group of doctors or even a single doctor that is available to go and wants to make a difference. (Name) the president of Medical Teams International told me the other night that they have already sent some teams and others are deploying this weekend. So they are very much on this.

The other question I've been asked is, "What are we specifically going to do to help churches in Haiti?" And I will list some general things we will be looking at. We don't have a lot of details yet as to the needs of churches and the actual programs that are going to be needed. Things like, temporary worship spaces, to provide tents and places where churches that have been destroyed or damaged, where the congregation can still come together. Our hope, of course, is to mobilize some of these churches to be responders to their own people and their own congregations by coming alongside them, as well. There will be a need, down the road, to do a rebuilding of churches; to replace bibles, to replace hymnals. There will be opportunities to bring in Gifts-in-Kind and supplies to churches that they can use as they minister to the people in their community. So, we're hopeful. Things like replacing church furniture and things of that nature. We're hopeful in the days ahead we will have more information about those needs and those partnerships on our website for out for you to become involved with in the weeks ahead.

I also would remind people, there is a tremendous amount of money going to the Red Cross and going government-to-government; but we also have to realize the faith community needs a supply of resources as well. The Red Cross is not going to be helping churches financially; they are not going to be helping Christian organizations financially. So, one of the reasons you may want to pick a faith-based partner for your relief donations is that way you can ensure that the churches in Haiti and the faith community and a Christ-centered response is being funded as well. And that's where faith-based organizations like World Relief and World Vision and Compassion come in a situation like this.

In any case, I think this call has probably gone long enough, given some of our technical difficulties. I hope it's been helpful to all of you and we may do another call down the road, once we have more information. We'll let's you know about that if we do. Please visit our website, www.worldvisionchurches.org for those resources and updates I mentioned. I'm going to do a quick check; I don't know if Max is still on the call, if he's not, I'll close in prayer. Max, are you still with us? (pause) I think Max has had to sign off for something else, so let me just close with a word of prayer, if I

might. Thank you for joining this call. I think we had almost 1,000 churches on the call, which is a record. We have never had that many people call in for something like this and I think it's a measure of the level of concern out there in the faith community. God bless all of you pastors and church leaders for your leadership during this time and your leadership into the future.

Let's close with a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, our hearts are just broken by what we see on the TV and on the media – the dead bodies in the streets, the families that have been ripped apart, the tragedies that are being reported by the hour in this country of Haiti. We lift up, Lord, the people of Haiti in their grief. We lift them up and pray your spirit would be among them, especially among the churches; that you might encourage and provide hope in a time of hopelessness for them. We pray for the relief workers – secular and faith-based, we pray for the United Nations, the U.S. Government and military, the Red Cross workers, the NGO workers who are struggling to respond; many of them victims themselves and trying to deal with their own losses in the midst of this tragedy. We lift them up, Lord, and pray for courage, for strength. Father we do pray the many churches that have lost buildings and members and maybe pastors. We pray for the Roman Catholics, who have lost the Arch Bishop, he died in the earthquake. Lord, we just pray that this would be a moment where your people could bring light into a dark place. We pray that we could bring the hope of Christ and the hope of a better future to the children and families and the people of Haiti in the weeks ahead. Lord, we also pray for wisdom and discernment for all of us in the United States who are listening and desperately wanting to respond in an appropriate way. We pray that you would give us clarity in the days ahead; decisiveness in knowing how we can best be used; how the gifts of the church of Jesus Christ can best be used to respond to this terrible tragedy. Lord we lift up the situation not even knowing how to pray for some of the things happening there. But, we trust your guidance, we trust your sovereignty and we ask that you would use us – use us as your hands and feet in this time of need for this country so close to our shores. Lord, we lift this up in the precious name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

With that, I will say good-bye and thank you for participating in this and we hope to be in touch with you in the days and weeks ahead. God bless all of you and may you have God's wisdom as you lead your congregations in this. Thank you.