Rising from the Dust

It has been over a year since Haiti was upturned by a 7.0-magnitude earthquake. The Church continues to assist Haitians in their relief effort.

The director of Humanitarian Services commented, “The Haitians are doing everything. They are amazing. There is a Haitian pediatrician who is helping coordinate what our doctors do. She runs it. The man running the warehouse is a priesthood leader in Haiti. The guys driving the trucks are from Haiti. The people distributing the food are Haitian. There are just a couple of us there to keep things going.”

The Haitian members of the Church have played a key role in making decisions that are best for their unique situation. Within a short time after the disaster, a special Haitian-led emergency-response committee was formed under the direction of the Area Presidency. Men and women alike are active participants. Every decision made by the committee has a similar objective: to help the Haitian members become self-reliant.

Through assignments given to local Haitians, the committee has organized medical treatment services, started an employment program, provided trauma counseling training for bishops and ward specialists, and established an operating storehouse.

The local Haitians knew where the Church could get a warehouse to store food and supplies, which enabled the Church to lease and begin using the warehouse just one week after the earthquake.

Church Humanitarian Services staff trained volunteers in the basic skills needed to run a warehouse. They taught them how to organize the warehouse, keep an inventory, place an order, and drive the delivery trucks. Now Haitian members are running the warehouse entirely on their own. Thousands of Haitians are being supplied with food through this distribution project.

After returning home from Haiti, a representative of Humanitarian Services remarked, “The [Church] welfare program in the United States developed over several years. The circumstances these leaders face has required them to implement the full program in one month—zero to sixty in seconds! They are doing it.”