

UMMA UpDate #68, January 31, 2010, Haiti Earthquake
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

Glimpses of Mission Workers After 7.0 Earthquake in Haiti

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[1] Under Earthquake Ruins 55 Hrs. by Elliott Wright & Christopher Heckert

From an interview with James Gulley on the night of January 16, 2010

New York, NY, January 19, 2010--"Praise God from whom all blessings flow...." The words could be heard by anyone standing near the rubble of the Hotel Montana in the small hours of the morning, January 15, 2010.

"Singing the Doxology was our instant response when we heard the French firemen say, 'We have come to rescue you,'" the Rev. James Gulley recalled in a lengthy telephone interview. He was one of six people trapped close together under tons of concrete when the hotel collapsed in the January 12 earthquake in Haiti.

All six people were alive when the French rescuers arrived. Four would survive the ordeal; badly injured, two others would die, one before rescue and another later on in a Florida hospital.

Gulley was in Haiti as part of a three-member team from the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church on a quest to improve medical services and agricultural practices in Haiti, one of the world's poorest countries. The other two were the Rev. Sam Dixon, head of the denomination's humanitarian relief agency, and the Rev. Clint Rabb, who led its office of voluntary mission service. Dixon and Rabb would not survive.

Gulley, 64, a former missionary in Nigeria and Cambodia, is a specialist in sustainable agriculture. In addition to his professional mission service, he has worked for the US Department

of Agriculture and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan, Nigeria. He is now a consultant to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), which was headed by Dixon, with a special focus on Haiti and the improvement of its health services and agricultural future.

"It all happened so fast," Gulley said of the earthquake. "We arrived at the hotel [from the Methodist Guest House] to meet with a team from Interchurch Medical Assistance (IMA)." Sarla Chand, one of the IMA officers, was a good friend and had worked for Global Ministries. She had brought along Rick Santos, the chief executive of IMA, and Ann Varghese, a representative [program officer] in Haiti.

"We were walking across the lobby near the registration desk going to have a bite to eat when the tremor hit. The ceiling fell on us, and large concrete support pillars tumbled around us. We all went down. Everything was pitch dark. The hotel was on the top of a steep hill and was four stories high. It seemed to be solid concrete.

"Some of us had cell phones that provided limited illumination. When the dust cleared, I could see that five of us were in a space of about 8 ft. by 8 ft., and that we had any room at all was because some of the pillars were leaning at an angle against the registration desk. Ann, Rick, Clint, Sam, and I were in the same chamber.

"Sam said, 'My legs are broken.' Clint said, 'My legs are broken, too.' Ann, Rick, and I would move around a bit, would sit up. My head was bleeding. I finally got it stopped after about an hour.

"Sarla was on the other side of one of the pillars. She found that she had some space to move around but there were no openings she could find. We could talk with her but not see her, except for her hand in one place. She had no illumination from even a cell phone light.

"Sam and Clint were side by side with large pieces of concrete across their feet and legs. Clint was lying on his side; Sam was flat on his back. It was like they were in a queen-sized bed." [But it was a tiled lobby floor littered with plaster chunks, dust and gravel.]

Gulley described the 55 hours spent with no water and no food except for a lollipop that Santos had in his briefcase, reserved for his children. He now shared this with the others.

They heard a helicopter, but it went away. They yelled and tapped, the only responses coming from other persons trapped nearby. "We made voice contact with Dan Woolley, an employee of Compassion International, based in Colorado, where I also live," Gulley said. "Dan had jumped into the cab of the elevator when the building shook. A colleague of his who was not in the cab was not so fortunate. Dan tried to climb up the elevator shaft, but it was blocked. He was able to talk with a hotel employee trapped higher up.

"Sam and Clint were both in such pain. Sam was at an angle that put strong pressure on his legs, so we used laptop computers to brace his back. It would help for a time, and then we would have to rearrange it. Rick had some Aleve, which provided a little relief of their pain.

"At one point we heard voices that seemed to come from outside. Sarla was close enough to speak to them and say we were trapped, but the people never came back."

Time passed. Gulley was able to sleep for a short period of time. At one point he slithered under one of the downed columns but only found himself in another small space blocked by more large blocks of concrete. He went back to the group.

"We talked about faith, prayed together, and sang," Gulley said. "We sang 'Peace Like a River' several times. By the second morning, those trapped could hear aircraft and explosions, which Gulley assumed were part of search and rescue efforts. The day moved on.

Gulley credited Chand, who was nearest to the outside, with helping the others to be found. After she was freed, she insisted that the rescuers keep digging. "Then French firemen took our names and gave us water. I myself gave water to Clint and Sam, who were weak but still alive. Clint and Sam were also given medication and pain-killers.

"Four of us were put on stretchers and taken into the open where French doctors checked us over. Then we were turned over to the Americans, who provided further medical attention and gave us cell phones to call home. After a while we were taken to the US Embassy. It was about 3:00 a.m. when we left the site."

Gulley said he assumed that Dixon and Rabb would be freed and follow them. "We waited the next day, but they did not show up," he lamented. After arriving back in the US, Gulley would learn that Rabb was brought from the ruins and sent to a Florida hospital, where he died on the morning of January 17. Dixon, according to several reports, did not survive until he could be pulled out.

"Neither Sam or Clint ever lost consciousness when I was there," Gulley said. "They were calm in the last few hours but responsive."

*Elliott Wright is an author and consultant to the General Board of Global Ministries. Christopher Heckert is the director of Mission Communications and Marketing of the General Board of Global Ministries. http://gbgm-umc.org/global_news/full_article.cfm?articleid=5636

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Celebration of life services were held for the **Reverend Sam Dixon** in Raleigh, North Carolina on January 22, 2010 and for the **Reverend Clinton Rabb** in Austin, Texas on January 23, 2010. On February 11, 2010, a service of remembrance will be held in the sanctuary of Riverside Church in New York City for Sam and Clint. It is being planned by GBGM as a time for staff

and ecumenical friends to gather and celebrate the lives of Reverend Sam Dixon and the Reverend Clinton Rabb, two revered leaders in the community.

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Paul Jeffrey entered Haiti shortly after January 17th, 2010 as a member of the first response team of Action by Churches Together (ACT) in which UMCOR participates as part of the “ACT Alliance.” Paul is expected to return during the first week of February.

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[2] *Back Home in Frisco, Colorado, Monday, January 18, 2010 by Jim Gulley*

Dear Family and Friends,

Last night was my third night in bed with Nancy at home in Frisco after being extracted from under the collapsed ruins of the Montana Hotel in Haiti, the result of a 7.0 earthquake on January 12th. My “bed” for the previous 55 hours of continuous night was a tiled lobby floor littered with plaster chunks, dust and gravel under a 8 ft.x6 ft. cement slab canopy.

At nearly midnight I opened my companion laptop for the first time in a week to start reading through email, scrolling tediously with fumbling fingers that do not fly across the keys with their bulky bandages. Growing weary, I paged and discovered 460+ new email since Jan 12, the day of the earthquake. Having kept Nancy partially awake long enough, I headed for a downstairs chair where I persisted reading until 4:00 am. By then, I had answered only a few email.

It was then I abandoned hope of answering each of you individually and resorted to a common reply to let all of you know that I am alive, well and thanking God for the gift of new life that I have just received. A head wound, lacerations on my hands and a slightly chipped tibia all are minor injuries and are healing well.

Sadly, at the same time, my heart aches for the families of Rev. Sam Dixon and Rev. Clint Rabb, my colleagues in faith and mission through the General Board of Global Ministries, who did not escape that same concrete canopied space soon enough to save their lives. I pray that their wives, Cindy and Suzanne, along with their children and grandchildren, may be comforted by the loving God who called Sam and Clint to lives of self-giving service of Jesus Christ and who has received them into loving arms that never fail. I thank God for the years of service which we shared, for the opportunities and support which Sam and Clint gave to me and most of all for their faithful friendship.

I pray for the people of Haiti, that they may endure the tortuous loss of tens of thousands of lives as well as the destruction of so much of their meager material possessions. I pray that they may never lose their faith and hope in God’s power to transform the hearts and minds of individuals and their own capacity to become a new people of hope, purpose and performance.

Last, may the new circumstances brought about by this earthquake force those in power who have exploited the people of Haiti for so long to change. May a common determination and solidarity be forged out of the ashes of this disaster. Together, let us create new structures that empower Haitians to exercise their tremendous human resources in ways that bring new hope, health and well-being for all Haitians.

Oh Lord, hear our cries to you.

Jim

P.S. Since UMCOR's administrative costs are covered by other church funds, 100% of your contribution will go to support relief and recovery in Haiti. If you wish to help the people of Haiti, you may confidently do so by giving to UMCOR's Haiti Emergency: Advance #418325 via <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/>

James L Gulley
Advisor, Agriculture and Community Development
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
PO Box 1660, Frisco, CO 80443

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"My heart is moved by all I cannot save. So much has been destroyed. I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world."

- Adrienne Rich

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[3] UMCOR in Haiti

United Methodists have had a long-standing relationship with Haiti through the Methodist Church of Haiti. The strong ties between the Methodist Church of Haiti and UMCOR helped facilitate United Methodists' response to hurricanes in recent years.

UMCOR's emergency response team has already been in Haiti to make an assessment with the Methodist Church of Haiti (MCH) and other partner organizations who have been working with UMCOR in Haiti in health, agriculture and care for children. Haitian youth from the MCH have volunteered to package and distribute food on behalf of UMCOR. These small-scale efforts will be scaled up and broadened in the days to come.

Paul Jeffrey, long-time missionary and UMMA member, has sent this link to a YouTube video of a slide show he just put together for ACT (Action by Churches Together). UMCOR is a partner with ACT. The video could be useful in worship, committee meetings, or meditation and is available on the RMCUMC web site: <http://rmcumc.org/rmc/news/567-haiti-videos.html> (also on the Home and News pages). It is also available on YouTube here: www.tinyurl.com/acthaiti

Donations to support UMCOR's Haiti Relief efforts can be made to **Haiti Emergency, UMCOR Advance #418325**. You can **donate online** or checks can be made to **UMCOR with "Advance #418325 Haiti Emergency"** in the memo line. Checks can be put in the church's offering plate or mailed to: UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087. The entire amount of each gift will be used to help the people of Haiti.

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"We are urging every United Methodist to encourage their folks to be in prayer, to stand in solidarity and to give as generously as possible through UMCOR."—Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops

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[4] Thomas Kemper Welcomed as General Secretary by Norma Kehrberg

January 15, 2010

Mr. Thomas Kemper

United Methodist Church – Germany Board of Mission

General Secretary of the Commission for Mission & International Church Cooperation & Head of the Office for World Mission

Hollaendische Heide 13

42113 Wuppertal, Germany

Dear Thomas:

What a roller coaster week for the General Board of Global Ministries! The members of the missionary community had heard rumors that an announcement of the new General Secretary was imminent. However as events unfolded during the week, our hearts, prayers and thoughts were on the people of Haiti and with members of the staff of the General Board of Global Ministries who were missing in the earthquake.

Without the earthquake, and with the announcement of your appointment, you would have already heard from the Rev. Jim Gulley to welcome you to the position of General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries in his role as chair of the United Methodist Missionary Association (UMMA). However, Jim too, was buried in the rubble of Hotel Montana. Today, we give thanks to God that they have been rescued [The news of Sam's and Clint's deaths had not yet reached us at the time Norma was writing.]

Now, personally, I want to welcome you to the position of General Secretary of the GBGM. In the midst of the emails flying back and forth around the world during the past few days among the missionary community, when news broke of your appointment, every missionary that I received news from regarding the earthquake welcomed and gave support for your appointment to the position of the General Secretary. As a layman, and having served as a missionary you will be able to bring a perspective that is different from the past leadership. Also knowing GBGM intimately through its recent turmoil as a director, you have an inside knowledge but will also bring new understandings of mission with an outside point of view.

I know you have been supportive of the issues that UMMA has been trying to put before the board through your many contacts with Howard Heiner, James Dwyer, past chairs of UMMA and with Jim Gulley. We are encouraged with the openness that we have found recently through Bishop Ough's leadership. Under your direction, we hope that we will be able to continue to bring everyone together as one family in the mission of the church working toward "*missio Dei*" through different strategies and in differing communities around the world. Thank you for offering your skills, your spirit and your life to this task ahead.

Yours in Christ, Norma Kehrberg

cc: Bishop Bruce Ough, President of the General Board of Global Ministries

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We join you in working for a just and peaceful world, standing with the marginalized, caring for the earth, and, as Dan Berrigan says, "restoring hope by doing hopeful things."

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[5] From Thomas Kemper, *New General Secretary of GBGM, January 21, 2010*

I was thrilled and very happy last week with my election as the new general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries. I felt God's calling and presence in this decision. What a shock when almost immediately afterwards the news arrived about the earthquake in Haiti and that three of our close friends and colleagues were missing. How could this happen? How could God let this happen?

I cried out to God, asked him to walk with me in this time, and to walk and be with Sam, Clint, and Jim. I cried to the God of life who walks with us in disasters, pain, and right into death. Jesus Christ was crucified as an ultimate sign of his solidarity and love for us. I am very sure that Clint and Sam in their last hours and days, even under the rubble, felt that God was with them.

Now let us leave the image of entrapment for one in which we see Sam and Clint in a good and secure place—in God's hands, and covered by his love. Let us give them a place of compassion, love, and yearning also in our hearts. My thoughts and prayers are with Sam's and Clint's wives, their children, relatives, and friends; may they feel that God is walking with them through their sorrow and pain, may they reach through to the image of Sam and Clint safe and secure in God's hands.

I have known Sam for a long time in various situations and capacities. He was one of the people at the board whom I most admired for his dedication, experience, and always smiling openness to all of the people around him. He filled the room not only by his size but by his tremendously positive presence. His last email to me, welcoming me as the general secretary-elect, ended: "There will be many tough days to be sure, but I, and others, are with you all the way, Sam." How could he, or I, have known that the "tough days" were so close, and that he would not be with me. It is so sad to lose him. I had so much looked forward to working with him. We cannot answer "why?" but we know that God is with us in this time of fear, tears, and sorrow.

Sam and Clint, you will not be forgotten, and we are so immensely grateful for your lives. We promise to keep your legacies very much alive in the work of the board, sharing God's love and transforming people and the world.

[6] *OUR READERS WRITE & Significant Quotes to Keep Us Going*

Dear UMMA family, We have known the whole gamut of emotions as we have followed the monumental tragedy of Haiti in the last few days. We cannot countenance the judgmental words of some who see in such events a punitive divine hand. For most of us, I think, this is unacceptable and even blasphemous. Still, we have been carried high on the crests of joy when the news was good, and have foundered in faith when the crest pounded us on the craggy shoals of current events. In all of these turbulent and eddying currents, we have been sure of one thing, and that is love. This love is first that of God for all people in all places, Haitians and non-Haitians, all our brothers and sisters. We knew relief and thanksgiving when the news that came forth was that of life such as we felt when Jim Gulley was pulled out, injured but alive, from the wreckage. Yours in love, Hugh Johnson

* * *

Hi Hugh, Thank you for these eloquent words. It has certainly been an up and down few days. You have articulated well many of my thoughts and prayers. To those who claim that the earthquake is God's judgment I am consoled by 1 Kings 19: 9-13 "God was not in the earthquake," He calls Elijah out of the cave through the silence to be faithful in a hurting world. May we all feel God's presence after the earthquake, like Elijah, calling us to get out of our caves and do prophetic justice. Phil Wingeier-Rayo, Assoc. Professor of Religion, Pfeiffer University

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*"Happiness keeps you Sweet, Trials keep you Strong, Sorrow keeps you Human,
Failure keeps you humble, and Success keeps you glowing, but only Faith &
Attitude keeps you going..."*

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[7] RETHINK MISSION Conference, October 14 - 17, 2010 by Norma Kehrberg

Plans are continuing for the "Rethink Mission Conference" at Scarritt Bennett Center. A full program is planned which includes extended time for reflection in working tracks to reflect on mission issues and strategize for mission in the future of the United Methodist Church. Doug Wingeier, Professor Emeritus of Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary will guide the process for the working tracks. Dr. Dana L. Robert who is the speaker for the opening session of the official Edinburgh event in June (and the only speaker listed thus far for that event) will also open the Rethink Mission Conference in Nashville. Speakers in addition to Dana Robert include Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, Glory Dharmaraj, Lois Dauway, Robert Hunt, Phil Wingeier-Rayo, Paul Jeffrey, Janet Lahr Lewis (missionary in Palestine), Sofia Fosua, Kwasi Kena, Wesley Ariarajah, and Daryl Balia, executive director of the international Edinburgh Event. (Others have been requested but confirmation is pending.) Plan now to attend. Your registration for deposit is needed in order to complete arrangements at Scarritt Bennett Center. Contact Richard Vreeland as Registrar. Click <http://www.umma-global.org/pdf/rethink10.pdf> to get details and print a registration form.

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"Some day, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness... the energies of love. And then for the second time in the history of the world we will have discovered fire." -Teilhard de Chardin

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[8] THIS IS YOUR INVITATION to Join or Renew your Membership

We hope you will include the work of UMMA in your prayers and consider one of the following new options for membership: If you are not yet a member, we hope you like this *COMPLIMENTARY COPY* of UMMA UpDate and will want to join or keep up your professional membership dues. If you have paid already, Many Thanks.

--- Please fill in this form, cut off here, and send to address below with your dues ---

Your Name (Given, SURNAME):

Spouse's Name (Given, SURNAME):

Address:

City:

State/Province:

Zip:

Country:

Email:

Phone:

Please list the country(s) where you served as a GBGM missionary, including USA:

Professional membership dues payment options. Check one [box]

Membership for a couple: \$40.00; Lifetime membership for a couple: \$800

Individual membership: \$25.00; Lifetime membership for an individual: \$500

Affiliate membership (no vote—just interested in mission work & UpDates): \$15.00

Please make checks payable to: "UMMA" and mail to:

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