



Cross Connection

a Texas Annual Conference publication
an edition of The United Methodist Reporter

Two Sections, Section A

076000 Volume 156

Number 40

February 05, 2010

What's Inside

TAC Member Elected
President of UM
Church Foundation 2

Lincoln Scholar
Lectures At Perkins
School of Theology

'Captain Chaplain'
Extension Minister's
Service In The Air
Force 3

'Hands of Jesus'
Methodist Surgeon
'Jumps' At Invitation
To Minister In Haiti 4

Hope, Healing And
Help For Haiti 6

Waskom First and
Bethel UMCs Serve
Breakfast At Newgate
Mission 7

Spotlight On Local
Church Ministries 8

*Vibrant, growing
congregations
changing lives and
reshaping futures
for Jesus Christ*

Life and death in Haiti



A Haitian congregant of St. Martin Methodist Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, prays during an outdoor worship service.

A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

Two weeks ago was a week of funerals for me. I attended the funeral of Dr. Sam Dixon in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the one for Rev. Clint Rabb held in Austin.

Both men died as result of the earthquake in Haiti. In light of their deaths, I've been contemplating a statement made more than 50 years ago by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He said, "If a man [or woman] hasn't discovered something he [she] will die for, he [she] isn't fit to live." Dr. King's statement calls to mind similar words of Jesus, "Those who want to save their life will lose it, but those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Over the last two years, I've had the privilege of working quite closely with Dr. Sam Dixon, who was the Deputy General Secretary of the United Methodist Committee on Relief. I know personally of his commitment to the humanitarian and relief work at the heart of UMCOR's mission. Last year, we went together to Cote

d'Ivoire to work with several West African Bishops and leaders to help them improve the health delivery system in their

Episcopal areas. Sam was determined to make the good work of UMCOR even better. I was honored to work with him.

For more than 30 years, Bob and I have been friends with Rev. Clint Rabb, who led the unit on Mission Volunteers and was formerly a staff member in Evangelization and Church Growth. Bob likes to describe Clint as 50% old-fashioned Methodist circuit rider and 50% Indiana Jones. Clint helped start new congregations in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Estonia and the Baltic region and Russia. He relished introducing laity to

hands-on global mission. Even as rescuers were trying to free him from the rubble, Clint told a reporter, "Tell the people of Haiti we are praying for them."

We speak often of "risk-taking mission and service." Both of these men and their families knew that phrase was a literal description of their ministries. While no one expected an earthquake in Haiti, some of situations into which they traveled were quite difficult. Nonetheless, they both felt that Christ had called them to their ministries, and they were passionate about what they did. Their lives invite us to continue their work.

Now two weeks after the earthquake, the extent of the devastation in Haiti is still unknown. It appears that the death toll will exceed 200,000 people, with as many as 1 mil-

lion people homeless. Food, water and medicine are in short supply. The infrastructure needed to move assistance to the greatest area of need is limited.

As always, the people of The United Methodist Church are responding generously with both financial gifts and by volunteering to work in Haiti. Thank you. If you haven't made a contribution, I would encourage you to do so. UMCOR is currently estimating a three to five year response to Haiti's need.

As the Texas Annual Conference, we are offering a special gift to UMCOR and the

Haiti Recovery. Our own Rev. Cynthia Harvey, Director of Missional Excellence, has agreed to serve "on loan" to UMCOR for three to six months to organize mission volunteers. She left for New York on Monday, February 1. We send our prayers and support with Cynthia as she leads a major volunteer organization process.

I also share a current story of risk-taking mission. By Monday, our UMCOR team will have returned to the U.S. They crossed the border safely from the Dominican Republic into Haiti with antibiotics and other supplies for Port-au-Prince. While there, they experienced high level earthquake after-shocks and have been able to communicate primarily by text messages and satellite feeds. They assessed the situation and coordinated with relief partners on appropriate courses of action. UMCOR will begin to call for volunteer teams after security and sanitation improves.

Recently, I spoke with Melissa Crutchfield, our International Disaster Coordinator, as they were driving to the border. I was cautioning her and the others to be careful. She replied, "We will, but the work must continue. This is what Sam would have wanted. This is what UMCOR does."

Dr. King said, "If a man [or woman] hasn't discovered something he [she] will die for, he [she] isn't fit to live." Jesus said, "Those who want to save their lives will lose them, and those who lose their lives for my sake will find them." From time to time, it is fitting to measure our own lives by those standards.

Grace and peace,

Janice Riggle Huie
Resident Bishop
Texas Annual Conference



The Cross Connection is the official publication of the Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Resident Bishop
Janice Riggle Huie

Director of Communications
Eleanor L. Colvin
ecolvin@txcumc.org

Editor
Thelma Jones
thelmaj@methodists.net

Web Content Manager
Brant Mills
bmills@txcumc.org

Communications Assistant
Rebecca Garcia
garciar@methodists.net

Conference Web Site:
www.txcumc.org

To Subscribe:

Send your subscription fee of \$20 payable to the Texas Annual Conference to:

Cross Connection
5215 Main Street
Houston, Texas 77002
713-521-9383



Texas Annual Conference member elected president of United Methodist Church Foundation

By Byrd Bonner
Executive Director
UM Church Foundation

The United Methodist Church Foundation Board (UMCF) recently elected its officers for 2010.

Oscar Garza, a member of Cypress Trails UMC in the Texas Annual Conference was elected President of the Foundation. Along with Garza, four new officers were also elected. They were: Vice President, Irma Clark (Chicago, Illinois); Secretary, Larna Spearman (Indianapolis, Indiana); Treasurer, Jessica Vargo (N. Canton, Ohio); and Chair of the Funds Management Committee, Mona Waymire (Madill, Oklahoma).

The Foundation is a ministry of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), which serves as the



Oscar Garza

investment stewards of Church funds." The 20-member, global board sets policy for the United Methodist Church Foundation. The mission of the Foundation is to empower the Church – local to global – by modeling a

Garza stated, "I am excited about being elected to serve as president of the board of the United Methodist Church Foundation. The organization has had remarkable leadership under our past president, Don Underwood. With the grace of God, and with the help of the

Foundation's sole member and elects its board members. Five new persons were elected by the board of GCFA at its

November annual meet-

ing. They were: Nathaniel L. Bishop (Roanoke, Virginia); Susan Ezrati (Tivoli, New York); Dixie Hall (Elverson, Pennsylvania); Keith Andrew Hwang (Los Angeles, California); and Mathew A. Pinson (Atlanta, Georgia).

board and the staff, we will do our best to continue the work before us. Our focus in the coming years will be increasing the size of the endowments and furthering our mission as

culture of generosity in trusted partnership with agencies and institutions to endow its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

"Our focus in the coming years will be increasing the size of the endowments and furthering our mission as investment stewards of Church funds."

Oscar Garza
President, United Methodist Church Foundation

investment stewards of Church funds."

The 20-member, global board sets policy for the United Methodist Church Foundation. The mission of the Foundation is to empower the Church – local to global – by modeling a

The staff of the Foundation includes Byrd Bonner, Executive Director; and Rev. Sharon Clapp, Director of Development and Philanthropic Initiatives.

Thelma Jones, editor of Cross Connection newspaper contributed to this article.

Lincoln scholar and author to lecture at Perkins School of Theology

Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University will host Dr. Ronald C. White, Jr., author of *A. Lincoln: A Biography*, for the inaugural Public Life/Private Faith Lecture and luncheon on Friday, February 12, 2010. White's book is a bestseller with The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Los Angeles Times, and was the main selection of The History Book Club for January 2009.

The luncheon and lecture will be held at the Rosewood Crescent Hotel Ballroom, 400 Crescent Court in Dallas, from noon to 1:30 p.m., with opening remarks and University welcome offered by SMU President R. Gerald Turner.

The lecture and symposium are being planned by members of the Perkins School of Theology Second Century Campaign Steering Committee, including Talmage Boston, Dodee Crockett, Nita Clark, Rena Pederson, and Holly Philbin.

The event is being underwritten by Dr. Kim Carney and family in memory of Dr. Frederick S. Carney, former Professor Emeritus of Moral Theology and Christian Ethics at Perkins. Proceeds from the lecture will benefit the building projects of the Perkins School of Theology Second Century Campaign.

White's noon lecture is titled "Abraham Lincoln's Sermon on the Mount: His Second Inaugural Address." The afternoon symposium, "Abraham Lincoln's Religious Odyssey," will include responses by Professor Charles Curran, Scurlock University Professor of Human Values at SMU, and Professor Rebekah Miles, Associate Professor of Ethics at Perkins.

These presentations are scheduled for 4 p.m. in the Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Great Hall, 5901 Bishop Blvd. on the SMU campus. The afternoon event is free and open to the public, with parking in the

Meadows Museum Parking Garage available on request.

A graduate of UCLA, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Princeton University, White is presently a fellow at the Huntington Library and a Visiting Professor of History at UCLA. He has lectured at the White House, as well as at hundreds of universities, civic events, and conventions, and has appeared on the News Hour with Jim Lehrer.

Pulitzer Prize winning author James M. McPherson has written that White's treatment of the 16th president in *A. Lincoln* is "the best biography of Lincoln since David Donald's *Lincoln* (1995)."

Besides his acclaimed Lincoln biography, White is also the author of *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural*

(2002), honored as a Notable Book of 2002 with The New York Times, and a bestseller with The Washington Post and San Francisco Chronicle; and *The Eloquent President: A Portrait of Lincoln Through His Words* (2005), a bestseller with The Los Angeles Times and a selection of the History Book Club and the Book-of-the-Month Club.

The cost of the luncheon is \$150. To purchase tickets, visit smu.edu/perkins/lifeandfaith lecture. For further information or to request symposium parking, contact Amanda Barbour at 214-768-3688 or abarbour@smu.edu.



Higher learning. Real experience. Vital ministry.



'Captain Chaplain'

Aviation and salvation are cornerstones of extension minister's service through the Air Force

By Brant Mills
TAC Communications

Chaplain Captain Buddy Walker has served in many places around the world while working as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force. His journey has taken him through a variety of diverse ministry settings and given him the opportunity to serve in many capacities as an extension minister.

Having been raised in a Christian home, Walker says he cannot recall ever not knowing Jesus Christ.

When he was a senior at Texas A&M, his District Superintendent offered him a temporary pastoral position that needed to be filled. He ended up

His dream and calling came together in 1999 when he was appointed as a chaplain and stationed at Tyndall AFB in Panama City, Florida. "I got to do aerospace ministry as an Air Force Chaplain. It was a great ministry."



Chaplain and pilot. Captain Buddy Walker became both when he joined the United States Air Force in 1998.

plex chain of permissions to wear a kufi or yarmulke. We were working on that when I left. Diversity tolerance is a

A Diverse Ministry

Walker says he is part of "a culture of direct access for our faith where we have permission as caregivers to be involved with people regardless of their religious tradition... "When something bad or good happens or they need affirmation or support, I'm the one they call. It is wonderful and amazing. I've had kids at Tyndall who are Wiccan... and an atheist in Greenland... who would introduce me as their chaplain. One asked me to give the prayer for his promotion ceremony."

"Relational ministry works, Walker noted."

They know that first and foremost, we love them as fellow human beings. That gives us caregiving access to ask the really tough questions, or just provide as safe place to vent about frustrations.

"It is the absolute, unimpeachable, inclusive ministry that listens and speaks beyond church boundaries. Not everyone does well in this environment for that reason. We model Christ to the people we serve in this community. They know from the connection because we care about them – not because we're

required to – it is relational ministry."

Beyond Church Walls

"This is the most exciting ministry I've ever done in my life!

Walker said. "Where else may we share compassion, ethical advice or boost spirits, equally-welcomed by general officers or young airmen? We are bringing a faith dynamic into a very brutal place... and we're out there wherever they are."

"That might be in a bunker during a rocket attack letting

them know we're gonna persevere and get back home, being compassionate and encouraging - not saying 'suck it up buttercup.' It could be on top of a C-130 talking with a young 20-21 year old getting the news his grandparent passed away and there's no way he can go home for that. Imagine having a worship service under an American flag in a foreign country, where just a few hours before there was a mortar attack on base or suicide bomber attack at the gate. We're allowed to do our ministry everywhere!"

Walker added that churches should reach out to military personnel while they are home.

"Invite armed service members to participate in leadership positions. They are trained to lead from 18 years old. Tap them and say 'we know you are a responsible leader because of who you are and what you've been trained to do.' They will be the greatest servant leaders you've ever had. Invite them to share their story - no one takes the time to do that anymore. Time is the greatest gift anyone can give. It breaks my heart when people don't want to take the time to hear what they went

"Invite armed service members to participate in leadership positions. They are trained to lead from 18 years old. . . They will be the greatest servant leaders you've ever had. Invite them to share their story—no one takes the time to do that anymore."

Captain Buddy Walker Chaplain

serving the Milano circuit for four years and says he learned the graces of being a pastor there. He also began flying small planes during that time and began a journey toward two vocations of which he says one was a calling and one was a dream from youth.

In the early '90s, Walker moved to Laneville UMC, where he stopped being a part-time local pastor and started seminary at Perkins. "I flew myself to Love Field to attend classes and then flew back to East Texas." After finishing seminary, he received his first appointment to serve as an associate pastor at A&M UMC.

In 1998, Walker accompanied a friend who was being commissioned to Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio. While visiting, he stopped in to talk to the people at the Air Force chaplain recruiting center. He then began the process to become a chaplain for the USAF.

Around the World

Walker left Tyndall in 2003, when he was deployed in Prince Sultan air base in Saudi Arabia for four months. He then moved to Thule AFB in Greenland, which he describes as our last arctic base – 500 miles south of the North Pole. "I served as an installation chaplain there. It was an international ministry to mostly Danish and Eskimo and 140-plus Air Force personnel."

Later, Walker transferred to a fighter base at Spangdahlem, Germany, before returning to the U.S. to Bolling AFB in Washington D.C., during the Summer of 2008.

"I was put to work for three months in the Chief of Chaplain's office in the Plans and Programs division," Walker said. "There I had great exposure to strategic ministry planning for the Air Force. I spent time working on drafting a regulation to give more freedom to individuals to wear religious head coverings. There is a com-

huge concern in protecting freedom of religion – a unique aspect of the job I enjoy."

He deployed to Khandahar, Afghanistan, and returned to Bolling in mid-September 2009.

Since his return, Walker has been serving in a Major's position even though he is a Captain. "I'm called Senior Protestant Chaplain and I supervise two chaplain captains, about 11 protestant programs (all programs not catholic) two coordinators, a parish coordinator, a religious education coordinator and the rater and supervisor of two captains. I also pastor the 9 a.m. liturgical service [weekly]."

"Here at Bolling we take care of the National Capital Region. This includes everywhere we've got Air Force people working, in D.C. and beyond, between Virginia and Maryland. A person with any major life changing event can call and say 'we need a chaplain.'"



Soldier for God! Captain Walker conducts a worship service on base.

through and how meaningful and powerful it was."

If you would like to learn more about Chaplain Captain Buddy Walker's ministry, he can be reached via e-mail at hyral.walker@afncr.af.mil.



‘Hands of Jesus’

Methodist surgeon ‘jumps’ at invitation



Left Photo: Smiles in the midst of chaos. A medical staff person comforts a child in the make shift hospital on the Haitian border.

Right Photo: A Haitian man has his injured leg tended after surgery.

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Texas Annual Conference
Communications Director

It is simple math: Five days plus 50 surgeries equals a forever changed man.

United Methodist surgeon Dr. Michael Kent recently returned from an “adventure of a lifetime,” providing emergency medical relief to the people of Haiti, following the country’s catastrophic 7.0 earthquake on January 12.

“I got a phone call last Thursday [January 14], from a friend who is an orthopedic surgeon. He asked me to go on an adventure with him,” said Kent. “Turns out, the adventure was going to Haiti.”

The pair didn’t know much about where they would serve, or even how they would get from the airport to the border town of Jimini in the Dominican Republic. “We just knew that there were a bunch of injuries that needed an orthopedic surgeon,” Kent said. “Very rarely am I useful in a disaster. But an

earthquake is one where that sort of injury calls for orthopedic specialists.”

With five years of medical practice under his belt, and a solid spiritual foundation – formed at Lake Jackson UMC as a youth and now strengthened at Christ UMC Sugar Land near Houston, the 35-year-old took a leap of faith.

“Obviously it was a difficult decision, with a wife and kids; it was based completely and totally on faith,” Kent said. “When do you travel thousands of miles away and not have an itinerary? It was the biggest test of my faith up to this point in my life. God’s asking you to jump, and he’s already prepared the landing.”

Care amid chaos

Fifteen minutes before he boarded the plane, he learned his actual destination would be a hospital and orphanage in the Dominican Republic. Kent left Houston Sunday, January 17, and arrived on Tuesday, around 3 p.m.

“It was chaotic initially,” he said, “a bunch of folks, with a bunch of bad injuries that had obviously been waiting about a week at that time.”

Upon arrival, there were about 100 people who needed surgery immediately. In all, the team of four doctors he worked with saw in excess of 400 people. Among their first challenges to tackle were the limited working conditions. The hospital had two functioning operating rooms, and the team quickly converted another three rooms into operating rooms.

As time passed, organization and order was being restored, and Kent said: “we were able to provide a more ‘American-like’ medical system, for lack of a better word.”

In the five days he spent at the makeshift hospital on the Dominican Republic’s border near Haiti, he operated on 50 people. In contrast, he typically performs 10-15 operations in a week’s time when practicing medicine in Texas.

The hospital and a nearby

orphanage became a hub, he said, in that they had the most operating rooms and equipment available. “So, we became a referral center of sort,” he said.

The orphanage had a capacity of 100 people and the hospital could hold 40. The hub swelled at more than 200 percent occupancy – with 300 people being housed in them during Kent’s stay.

Although Kent and fellow doctors brought in some supplies, much of what they used came from Joyce Meyer Ministries’ Hand of Hope. Based in Kansas City, the ministry founded the orphanage and hospital at which the doctors served.

Of the 20 pallets (19,000 pounds of supplies) Hand of Hope sent to Miami, not all of it made it into the island country with Kent. They were forced to sort through the supplies at the airport and take only 900 pounds of the most useful items. Throughout his mission, he said, supplies arrived daily from around United States and the

world.

Spiritual adrenaline

The first day Kent worked from around 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. The next day, surgeries started mid-morning and lasted until 7 or 8 p.m. that night.

Their goal: “Do as much as you can – because the more efficient you could be, the more people you could fix,” he said. But at some point, one’s energy wanes after consecutive 10- to 12-hour workdays in crisis conditions.

What kept their spirits and energy high, when the circumstances constantly drained them?

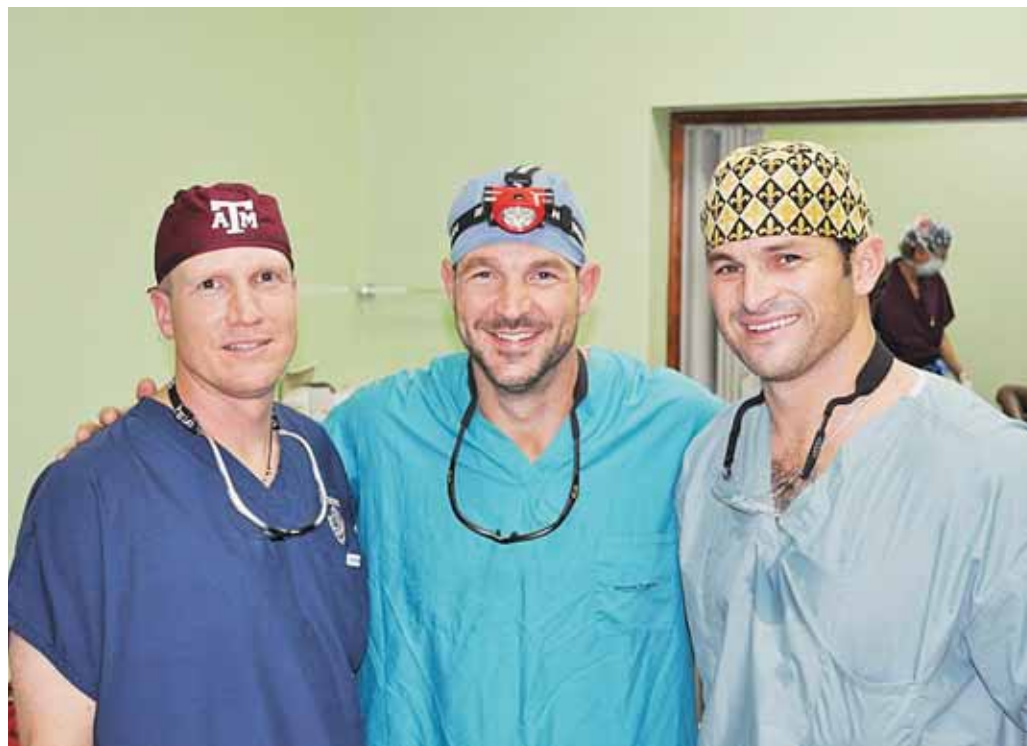
Prayer was obviously the No. 1 thing that under-girded Kent’s work and empowered the team. Surprisingly, social media – internet based networking tools – followed closely behind as a means of support.

Dr. Tom Green, a friend of Kent’s for 10 years whom he describes as “a spiritual rock,” invited him on the trip and set

Continued on page 7



to minister to Haiti's earthquake victims



Bottom Right Photo: Dr. Michael Kent, center, worked with Dr. Tom Rivers, left, and Dr. Craig Green, providing emergency relief to Haitians suffering crushed limbs in the border town of Jimini, Dominican Republic.

Top Right: A young surgery patient of Dr. Michael Kent flashes a smile following her leg surgery. Dr. Kent performed more than 50 surgeries in five days in the Dominican Republic following the Port-au-Prince earthquake.

Photos courtesy of Dr. Michael Kent



Hope, healing and help for Haiti



UMCOR partnership gives Haitians clean water. Sharlene Jean offers treated drinking water to a child living in a makeshift camp in Gressier, Haiti.

UMNS photos by Mike DuBose.

Remembering Haiti

By Rev. Jim Killen
Retired TAC Pastor

I got my first look at what is called “the third world” a number of years ago when I visited Haiti on a mission trip. The vision hit me in the face with an impact that I have never forgotten.

On the bus ride from the airport to the hotel in Port-Au-Prince, I could look to my right

The Methodist church in Haiti is not big but it is alive and serving. Most of the churches are small congregations served by dedicated, un-ordained local pastors who are ministers, aid workers and community organizers. The little community churches were likely to be not only places of worship but also occasional clinics, schools, and agricultural cooperatives. The church is committed to respond-

Keep the people of Haiti and the Haitian church in your prayers. And be praying about what you can do to participate in the relief effort that will be needed immediately and for years to come.

Rev. Jim Killen

and see the beautiful Caribbean. I could look to my left and see a hillside covered with tiny cinder block and sheet metal huts, most of them not more than 10 or 12 feet square – the homes of the poor.

I could see the people cooking their food on charcoal fires. The streets were always full of people, most of them standing around because they had nothing else to do. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. We learned to appreciate the courage with which the people try to put together meaningful lives under such oppressive circumstances.

ing to the needs of the people. And UMCOR, our United Methodist Committee on Relief, is at work there. We can be sure that they are gearing up to participate in the massive relief effort that is about to be needed.

It is hard to imagine the massive amount of human suffering that must be going on in that poor country in the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated the country. Keep the people of Haiti and the Haitian church in your prayers. And be praying about what you can do to participate in the relief effort that will be needed immediately and for years to come.

“An offering for Haiti”

By Rev. Cynthia T. Hinson
Texas Annual Conference

Sung to the tune of “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”

When human suffering startles the earth, we dare not claim our God the cause,
For God who loves us shares our pain and wills to comfort us in our loss.
Yet struggling to believe That God does with us grieve
We call out in our prayers,
And plead that others share
Such needs beyond imagined cost.

The Spirit crosses all doctrinal bounds, uniting minds and hearts and hands.
As Body one the faithful move to meet the call as best we can.
Not only words of prayer,
But goods and wealth we share



Vehicles from the United Methodist Committee on Relief join a line of vehicles heading into Haiti at the border of the Dominican Republic.

A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

To help to ease the pain,
To live in our Lord’s reign,
With passion we in unity stand.

As Christ has come and comes again we dare not turn and walk away.
He calls and leads us toward

the hope so many hold in heart today
We know the needs are great
We know the time is late
Each day the need grows more
God knows no foreign shore
Their tears are God’s; our hearts the way.

Haiti Cries...And We Cry With Them

(A prayer as we search through the rubble)



Signs requesting help are a common sight in earthquake-damaged areas in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

UMNS photo by
Mike DuBose

By Safiya Fosua
General Board of Discipleship

Earth shaking
Home breaking
Ground-moved-the-mountain-into-my-way tragedy!
Broken bodies
Broken hearts
Broken lives.

Haiti cries
And we cry with them.
God,

Our hearts are aching as we try to imagine what the daylight brought
To our brothers and sisters in Haiti.
Heal the young eyes that have seen far too much on this day.
Heal the hearts of many who have lost friends, family and a way of life on this day.
Be with those who are missing
And those who are dying outside of the grasp of
Loving hands to hold them

Loving voices to soothe them.
Move us over here from empathy to action
From sympathy to substance
As we contemplate what can be done to help
Today
And many days
Into a forever-changed future.
Amen.

Fosua is Director of Invitational Preaching Ministries with the General Board of Discipleship.



Ministry Snapshots



A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor (Proverbs 22:9). A scripture that the members of Waskom UMC and Bethel UMC take literally to heart as they serve breakfast at the Newgate Mission in Longview, Texas.

Waskom First and Bethel UMCs serve breakfast at Newgate Mission

Members of Waskom and Bethel United Methodist Churches joined together in preparing and serving a meal at Newgate Mission in Longview in January.

Sixteen volunteers served breakfast to 119 persons who were at the mission Saturday morning. Representatives from both churches will be returning to Newgate several more times throughout the year. This is a project in which the Waskom Church has been involved with for several years and recently has been joined by members of Bethel UMC in Elysian Fields.

Newgate Mission serves the spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and financial needs of the homeless, low income, and marginalized population in Longview and the surrounding area. Relieving needs, recovering lives, rebuilding communi-

ty, and restoring hope are the goals of the mission's programs and services. Mission staff, volunteers, and members of the Newgate community work together in creating a caring community that advocates on behalf of the poor and marginalized.

Many United Methodist Churches in the North District of the Texas Annual Conference support Newgate Mission. Churches and other organizations provide meals, financial and or program support, facility improvements, serving as mentors, and advocacy. Speakers are available to do community presentations about Newgate Mission and to talk about the needs of the poor and marginalized. For more information or to learn about volunteer opportunities, call 903-757-6146 or e-mail

info@newgatemission.org.

Newgate also operates a bargain center, which receives donated furniture, clothes, reading glasses, shoes, books, and other household items. Visit the Bargain Center at 426 East Cotton Street in Longview. To donate items, call 903-236-9844.

Waskom and Bethel United Methodist volunteers enjoy serving at Newgate as part of their respective churches' mission activities. Rev. Harold Coburn serves as pastor of both churches. First UMC Waskom will be returning to Newgate on Saturday, April 24, a day in which many United Methodist Churches across the country will be participating in "Change the World Day."

'Hands of Jesus'

Continued from page 4



Doctors and other medical volunteers work long hours caring for those injured in the earthquake.

up twitter and Facebook pages to allow people to follow their work in real time.

"One day he said, 'There are 1,900 people praying for us on twitter.' Then, the next day he's saying, '5,000 people are following along and saying prayers for us,'" Kent said.

the reason you keep going, and because you see smiles emerging over all the frowns and tears – that helps."

Being a husband, father, physician and Christian were another source of strength.

"All four of those things help me serve better in this

doing nothing, you were not looking for anything to do – as a surgeon or otherwise," he said. "God is

"Obviously it was a difficult decision, with a wife and kids; it was based completely and totally on faith. . . When do you travel thousands of miles away and not have an itinerary? It was the biggest test of my faith up to this point in my life. God's asking you to jump, and he's already prepared the landing."

**Dr. Michael Kent
Christ UMC Sugar Land**

And, after the first day of surgeries, Green "Skyped" into an impromptu prayer service his church was hosting in Baton Rouge, La.

In addition to surgeries, Dr. Kent's work included mopping floors, organizing medical supplies from an orthopedic standpoint, processing donations from orthopedic implant companies and carrying his child-patients to-and-from the orphanage downhill.

"If there was down time, if you're standing around

situation," Kent said. "If I wasn't a Christian, I don't know how I could go over. If I didn't have a family, would I feel as strongly to compassionately help those wives and children? ...Usually it's the case that when you go on these types of mission trips, you help yourself more than others. The trip changed my attitude about family, how I practice medicine and what my obligation is as a Christian."



Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

Fellowship Opportunities

Ash Wednesday Breakfast at St. Paul's UMC Houston

Bishop Mike Rinehart of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will be the speaker for the annual Ash Wednesday Breakfast at St. Paul's UMC.

Hosted by the St. Paul's Men's Lectionary Bible Study group, the breakfast will be at 7 a.m. Wednesday, February 17, in the Jones Building. Reservations are not necessary for the \$5 breakfast.

Military Support Group Meetings at Memorial Drive UMC

This is a support group for family and friends who have loved ones serving in the military or working overseas.

The group will meet the third Saturday of each month, 9:30 a.m. at La Madeleine's, 12955 Memorial Drive.

For more information, contact Sheri Kelley, 713-468-8356, ext. 119 or sherikelley@mdumc.org.

Learning Opportunities

Deer Park UMC Hosts Restorative Justice Workshop

A Journey of Healing, Hope and Restoration is the theme for the workshop scheduled for Saturday, February 20, at Deer Park UMC, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Special guest speaker will be Rev. Marvin Hood, pastor of Newgate Fellowship UMC.

For additional information about this event, contact Carolyn Chemin at 281-479-3406.

Tax Seminars Offered

Heartspring Methodist Foundation and the Texas Annual Conference Center for Connectional Resources are sponsoring seminars for clergy, as well as staff and laity who participate in the financial management of a local church.

The cost is \$45 for each session or \$80 for both and includes all books and materials. The seminar is scheduled for Wednesday, February 10 at St. Paul's UMC in Houston with presenter Amy Hume.

Presenter Frank Sommerville will host a seminar at Marvin UMC in Tyler on Thursday, February 25.

For registration and additional information, call 713-533-3780 or 1-800-521-9617.

Keeping Marriages Healthy with Small Children

Blogger and columnist Mary Jo Rapini will present a workshop at St. Paul's School on Thursday, February 25, about how parents with small children can keep their marriages healthy.

An intimacy/sex, relationship therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor, Rapini will present practical solutions to help parents of young children rekindle the intimacy in their marriages without embarrassing their children. Many experts have stated that parents keeping their intimacy and marriage alive are the single biggest predictor of a child's well being.

Featured on TLC's new series *Big Medicine*, Rapini also is a contributing expert for *Cosmopolitan*, *Women's Health*, *First*, and *Seventeen* magazines.

Rapini writes her own column, "Note to Self," in the *Houston Chronicle* and the love/relationship articles for the *Chronicle's* City Bright blog plus the "Ask Mary Jo" column in *Houston Family Magazine*.

The free workshop will be from 1 to 2 p.m. Thursday, February 25, in the Jones Building. To RSVP for the workshop and childcare during it, please call 713-528-5779 or email sp-school@stpaulshouston.org.

Upper Room Ministries will host "Markings"

"Following a path prepared by others... Preparing a path for others to follow"

The Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation retreat, scheduled for March 7-12 at the Prothro Center at Lake Texoma offers a daily rhythm designed for rest and renewal.

The rhythm includes times for worship, study, silence and solitude, prayer, spiritual friends — all within the context of Christian community.

Upon registration, additional information will be sent regarding the daily schedule and reading recommendations.

Save the Date of October 22-25

The 2010 National Christian Educators Fellowship Conference will be held in Louisville, Kentucky.

Rev. Rudy Rasmus, pastor of St. John's UMC Houston and Dr. Sherry L. Daniels, pastor of Norfolk UMC in Virginia will be keynote speakers and presenters.

Visit cefumc.org for early bird registration for members and

non-members of Christian Educators Fellowship.

Mission Opportunities

Call for Health Kits

The United Methodist Committee on Relief has issued a call for Health Kits, which provide basic necessities to people who have been forced to leave their homes because of human conflict or natural disaster.

Health kits are also used as learning tools in personal hygiene and nutrition classes.

Please follow the directions exactly. Include all items; do not add items that are not on the lists. Extra gifts, though given with the best of intentions, render a kit unusable and must be removed. Note: All items must be new.

Place the following items inside a sealed one-gallon plastic bag:

- 1 hand towel (15" x 25" up to 17" x 27")
 - 1 washcloth
 - 1 comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)
 - 1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
 - 1 bath-size bar of soap (3 oz. and up)
 - 1 toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper, No child-size brushes)
 - 1 large tube of toothpaste (4.5 oz. or larger, expiration date must be 6 months or longer in advance of the date of shipment to UMCOR Sager Brown)
 - 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages
- Value: \$12 per kit.

In a separate envelope, please send a check for at least \$1 for each kit to help UMCOR Sager

Brown with the costs of processing and shipping kits around the world.

Important: Please do not include any religious, political or patriotic notes or emblems in any kit.

Deliver kits to TAC Disaster Response Consultant Rev. Clay Whitaker at Old River Terrace UMC, 161 I-10 East, Channelview, TX, 77530 or Rev. Bill Newcomb at Cokesbury UMC located at 10030 Scarsdale, Houston, Texas 77089.

Annual Conference 2010

Annual Conference will be held at The Woodlands UMC May 30 through June 2.

Guidelines for displays and meetings are as follows:

Meeting Room Request

All meetings are required to pay a set-up fee for the 2010 Conference.

Small classrooms will cost \$30 per set-up. Meeting halls will cost a minimum of \$50 plus \$1 per person over 50.

Displays

All tables will be provided covers and skirts. Each table will be six feet long and 30 inches wide.

The cost range for tables will be \$50-\$75. The deadline for Texas Annual Conference sponsored groups is March 15.

Visit the Conference website, www.txcumc.org for more information on Annual Conference 2010.

Send Spotlight submissions to:

thelmaj@methodists.net or call 713-521-9383