



Attendees at Mobile Cares ask God to save Haiti

By Roy Hoffman

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MOBILE, Ala. -- In the serenity of Government Street Presbyterian Church, with Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergy sending up prayers, people gathered downtown Wednesday to open their hearts and wallets for the earthquake victims in Haiti.

The event, dubbed Mobile Cares, was a citywide prayer service for Haiti sponsored by Government Street Presbyterian Church in conjunction with the city of Mobile.

"God's people are unified in one accord," Mobile Mayor Sam Jones said in his opening remarks, speaking of the world's outpouring of concern for Haiti.

Close to home, Jones praised "our community's moral force when unified."

That sense of unity, said the Rev. George Sinclair, pastor of Government Street Presbyterian, was "to fellow human beings, who suffered tragedy."

In his prayer for Haiti, Sinclair beseeched, "We cry out with them, Lord. Answer them in the day of trouble. ... You say the poor are always with us. Let it be so, dear God. Help your human family stand together, not apart."

Rabbi Donald Kunstadt, of Springhill Avenue Temple, read Psalm 46: "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains should shake in the heart of the sea."

The Rev. O'Neil Wiley, pastor of State Street AME Zion Church, led a responsive reading that included, "Hear our prayer, O Lord, for the people of Haiti, for those who have died, for those who mourn, for those who have been torn from their homes, for those who have nowhere to turn for help."

A theme that recurred during the hourlong service was the power of good works in tragic times.

Several organizations are offering help to Haiti following the earthquake there.

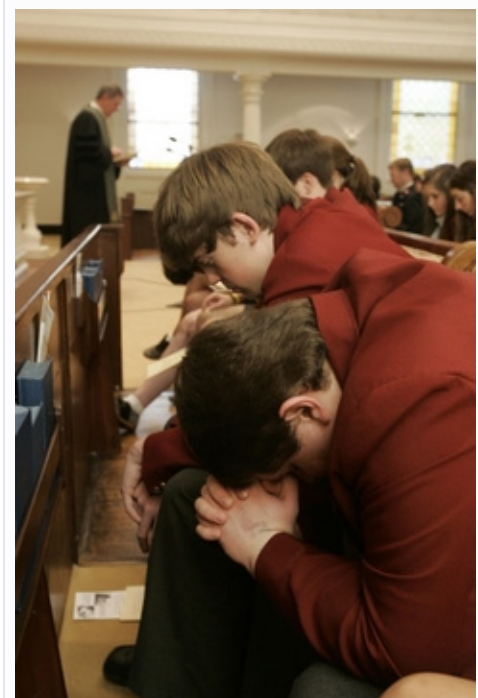
- Donations to Episcopal Relief & Development's Haiti Fund can be made by calling 800-334-7626 or by visiting www.episcopalchurch.org. Gifts can be mailed to Episcopal Relief & Development, Box

The Most Rev. Thomas J. Rodi, archbishop of Mobile, spoke in his prayer of the need "to put into action the faith you have blessed us with."

The archbishop spoke of the necessity to "live that faith."

Also participating were Major Ted Morris, area commander of the Salvation Army in Mobile, and the Rev. Canon Beverly Findley Gibson, sub-dean, Christ Church Cathedral.

Among the prayers was a report, emotional yet detailed, by Leisle Mims, executive director, American Red Cross Gulf Coast chapter.



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(Press-Register/Victor Calhoun)

UMS-Wright students Thomas Wilson and Rony Young lower their heads during one of a number of prayers during Mobile Cares, a citywide prayer service for Haiti held at the Government Street Presbyterian Church in conjunction with the City of Mobile on Wednesday Jan. 27, 2010. A special offering was received for the Haitian Disaster Relief Fund of the American Red Cross during the service.

7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058. Write "Haiti Fund" in the memo line of checks.

- The Salvation Army is only accepting monetary donations for relief efforts in Haiti at this time. Donations may be sent by visiting the Web site **www.salvationarmyusa.org** or by calling 1-800-725-2769 or by sending checks marked "Haiti Relief" to the local Salvation Army office, P.O. Box 1025, Mobile, Ala. 36633-1025.
- BBVA Compass announced Thursday that it would match \$100,000 worth of contributions made through the bank to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. The deadline is Jan. 30.

Mims reminded the crowd that during Hurricane Katrina, Gulf Coast residents were helped considerably by the Red Cross and were touched by the generosity of aid organizations near and far.

"What took moments to destroy will take many years to rebuild," Mims said of Haiti.

She spoke of the challenges of getting supplies in -- "the bottleneck is terrific" -- the desperate need to purify drinking water, the plight of children orphaned or alone.

While funds have been funneled to those needs and countless others, so much more is needed, she said.

"We hope and pray this stays in our hearts," Mims said, after the "media attention" turns elsewhere, "that we continue to support the people of Haiti."

When church ushers took up a collection, people reached into their pockets, pulling out cash and checks for Haiti.

Music lifted the spirits of everyone, from the UMS-Wright Singers' rendition of "Holy Radiant Light," to the interdenominational choir's

African-American spiritual, "Guide My Feet."

Terry Maddox, the interdenominational choir's director, chose "Our Father" for one of the songs, too -- the Lord's Prayer, with a Caribbean beat.

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