

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

News Release

14 January 2010

Church musician creates hymn for Haiti

An American church musician has written a hymn for the people of Haiti in the wake of the devastating earthquake which hit the Caribbean country earlier this week.

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), composed a hymn entitled “In Haiti, there is anguish” with lyrics to be sung to the music of the popular hymn “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”.

The first verse of the hymn raises the question on the minds of many as they see news images of the impact of the quake.

“In Haiti, there is anguish that seems too much to bear;
A land so used to sorrow now knows even more despair.
From city streets, the cries of grief rise up to hills above;
In all the sorrow, pain and death, where are you, God of love?”

The general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Setri Nyomi, today sent the hymn to all of the organization’s member churches with the suggestion it be sung at services this Sunday along with prayers for the people of Haiti.

In his message Nyomi says, “I am sure you too have been stunned by the news of the devastating earthquake in Haiti that we woke up to yesterday. Haiti has been through so much and our hearts bleed to see them go through yet another major crisis with such a heavy loss of life and so much destruction.”

The hymn lyrics are reproduced here below:

In Haiti, There is Anguish

ST. CHRISTOPHER 7.6.8.6.8.6.8.6 (“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”)

In Haiti, there is anguish that seems too much to bear;
A land so used to sorrow now knows even more despair.
From city streets, the cries of grief rise up to hills above;
In all the sorrow, pain and death, where are you, God of love?

A woman sifts through rubble, a man has lost his home,
A hungry, orphaned toddler sobs, for she is now alone.
Where are you, Lord, when thousands die—the rich, the poorest poor?
Were you the very first to cry for all that is no more?

O God, you love your children; you hear each lifted prayer!
May all who suffer in that land know you are present there.
In moments of compassion shown, in simple acts of grace,
May those in pain find healing balm, and know your love's embrace.

Where are you in the anguish? Lord, may we hear anew
That anywhere your world cries out, you're there-- and suffering, too.
And may we see, in others' pain, the cross we're called to bear;
Send out your church in Jesus' name to pray, to serve, to share.

Tune: Frederick Charles Maker, 1881

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The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) brings together 75 million Reformed Christians in 214 churches in 107 countries - united in their commitment to making a difference in a troubled world. The WARC general secretary is Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. WARC's secretariat is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

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