

# Missionaries offer comfort to injured quake victims from Haiti

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JIMANI, Dominican Republic (BP)—Delores York sits in the hallway of Good Samaritan Clinic just east of the Haiti border in the Dominican Republic. Her feet hurt, and she is exhausted. It's been a long day for her and other clinic volunteers as earthquake victims fill every room, waiting for treatment.



IMB missionary Dawn Goodwin serves as an interpreter at a clinic in Jimani, Dominican Republic. She is one of the few there who speaks Haitian Creole and can translate for medical staff and patients, scattered on mattresses throughout the clinic. (IMB PHOTO)

Suddenly York, an [International Mission Board](#) missionary from Abilene who has ministered among Haitians 12 years, is back on her feet. She's in the lobby holding hands with Claire, a woman about to go into surgery to repair her broken hip. Claire lost her home, looters stole everything she

had and she—like so many others—lost loved ones in the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that rocked Haiti.

But the two women can't stop smiling.

"She's my sister," York says proudly. "She's happy about Jesus saving her life."

"I have hope in God," Claire responds. "God will get me through this."

York and Claire just met at the clinic, but they've become fast friends since York speaks Claire's Creole language. As hundreds of injured Haitians pour into the clinic, York and other IMB missionaries helping there provide a valuable skill as interpreters.

"Hardly anyone here speaks Creole," said Dawn Goodwin, an IMB missionary from Jefferson City, Tenn. "We're able to help the doctors understand what exactly is wrong with the patient, so they can give the treatment the patient needs."

Language barriers only complicate the situation in what looks like a war zone, with patients scattered on mattresses throughout the clinic.

Patients include amputees, those with head wounds, infections and broken bones. They line the hallway as ambulances pull up to unload new patients.



Missionary Delores York of Abilene interprets, consoles and prays with patients at a clinic in Jimani, Dominican Republic, near the Haiti border. In addition to being injured, most patients have lost their homes as well as family and friends.  
(BP PHOTO)

The only available space for some is a patch of grass and dirt just outside the clinic. Rooms overflow with patients, exhausted doctors and other medical volunteers, some just trying to catch an hour or two of rest.

“It’s been a week since the earthquake—and they’re still coming,” Goodwin said.

Sleep isn’t something Goodwin, York or York’s husband, Sam, from Midwest City, Okla., have seen much of in recent days.

“I just did a 24-hour shift,” Goodwin said. “I haven’t been able to get much sleep, but there aren’t enough translators.”

Interpreting is just part of what the Baptist missionaries are doing. A day at the clinic can include everything from helping lift patients on and off beds to cleaning bathrooms.

The focus, however, remains the patients—most of whom have lost their

homes as well as family and friends.

“Everything is gone,” said Junior, who was visiting his wife, a patient at the clinic. They lost their two children in the earthquake. “This is all we have,” he said as he pulled on his shirt.

“We have nowhere to go.”

After being released, many patients are transported to Bethel Baptist Church in Jimani, Dominican Republic, for temporary shelter. But their future remains uncertain.

For now, volunteers do what they can to comfort the hurting and wounded.

Although doctors continue to rotate in, the number of patients is overwhelming. Workers at the clinic estimate they have treated more than 1,000 patients.

Another challenge is the equipment at the clinic. One evening, the X-ray machine was down, forcing doctors to cut open an arm or leg to feel for cracks or breaks in the bone.

While so many stories coming out of Haiti are sad, there also are miracles to report.

A woman and her 22-day-old baby were transported to the clinic after being rescued from the rubble of a building where they had been trapped for three days.

It’s easy to feel helpless and overwhelmed in the midst of crisis, York acknowledged. But she wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.

“For us, the hardest part would be not being here,” she says.

