

# Haiti, the earthquake



*As a secretary, I have the privilege of meeting extraordinary people with an amazing faith. I recently engaged a conversation with Denis PAUL, Documents and airings Coordinator of Radio Lumière, in Haïti. He recounted the events that happened to his family, when the earthquake struck his island, on January the 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 16.53.*

I had just arrived from the radio station at the small shop where my wife works. She was there with our two youngest boys. I spoke a few words to her and then headed out. I wanted to go home as our other children should have just arrived from school. But at that point, horrifying events occurred. We were thrown into a most terrifying nightmare and forced to witness chaos.

I had just got out into the street when to my horror, the house opposite burst, blocks of stone flied through the air, and walls collapsed burying the residents alive. The few builders working on the scaffolding were simply swallowed up by heavy blocks. The sight was unbearable! And I turned my head in an attempt to free myself from the horrific spectacle, but all around me, the same scenes were repeated, every house had simply collapsed!

I turned round, anxious for my wife and two boys. They should have been following me! I found them trapped under rubble, groaning with pain. My wife and the child she was holding, hurt by blocks, were wounded on the face. I could see a hole in my wife's head. My other son could not move, his leg had been imprisoned by piles of

stones. Praying to the Lord, asking for his help, I struggled to deliver them. The child whose leg had been trapped could not walk, I had to carry him. I helped my wife and the other son and urged them to enter the car that remained intact in the street.

While driving home, we contemplated the extent of the disaster. Chaos was everywhere. Scenes of desolation were unfolding around us. No house remained intact; all had crumbled into heaps of rubble. I suddenly stopped my car. I needed to pray, to express our distress to the Lord: my wife and I were anxious for our four other children! We dreaded the worst!

Holding our breath, we drove a few minutes later through our neighbourhood, whose familiar sights were devastated beyond all recognition! We were searching for our house when suddenly in the distance, to our astonishment; we noticed our children! All four of them were waiting aghast, totally motionless, but safe, with the lady who had been looking after them. There they were, standing in front of the remains of our house! Though very badly damaged it was the only house in the neighbourhood that had not totally collapsed, permitting all its inhabitants to escape to safety! Once again I fell on my knees and thanked the Lord, the author of such a miracle!

Nevertheless, the boys, and especially my wife, were moaning, gripped by terrible pain. Then the awful reality dawned: there were no more hospitals; they had collapsed.

There were no more houses; they were destroyed. And there seemed to be no more doctors! Once again I turned to the Lord, the maker of all things. Every single event is under his control, nothing is beyond him. He is the Almighty and he generously provides in times of trouble.

I had just finished praying when the Lord reminded me of the inflammatory drugs and antibiotics kept inside my car's first aid kit. Were they the tablets that my wife and two sons needed? I was in total ignorance but felt a conviction to administer these drugs to them. And while they were taking them, I implored the Lord to intervene, to come and save us from our distress!

However three days later, I took the initiative of washing my wife's hair; it was dirty, covered with dust and bits of gravel. But she resisted. Pouring water onto her head caused her such unbearable pain! I had to reason with her, explaining that the dust could infect the wounds. Finally she let me do it, but while I was washing her hair, I found a stone in the hole she had, which I removed. Nevertheless, I discovered that the wound was sore and infected!

Straight away, I turned to the Lord. I told him that I needed his help! For ever he will be "*my shield and my horn of salvation, my stronghold*<sup>1</sup>." Then ignoring if I was carrying out the right gestures, I rinsed the wound with water, opened the capsules of a few antibiotics, filled the hole with them and closed the opening with a clean piece of

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 18.2

cloth. The following day, to my bewilderment, the hole was completely closed and the wound had rejected the antibiotics! The Lord had directed my hands! He knows our body perfectly and he answered my plea!

The eighth day, as I was praying I remembered a recent conversation that I had with a friend. He had spoken about a doctor and explained in detail where he lived. Thus I decided to drive there to look for this house.

I managed to find it, still intact! And what is more the doctor was present! To our deep surprise, he advised us to continue with the same antibiotics! He only prescribed a solution for the dressing. With the money left in my pocket, I bought it for my wife and the twins. - Days later, I would learn that my younger sister's daughter's left leg had been partly amputated, just because her mother could not find any antibiotics for her!

*Have you found a place to live since the disaster occurred?*

Our car has become our shelter; we sleep in it at night with two children placed on me. Nevertheless I am so happy! I am glad and rejoice. The Lord has filled my heart with joy! He has renewed my hope, given me his peace and spared my whole family. Jesus said: *'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives<sup>2</sup>.'* I can be joyful because I fix my eyes not on what is seen,

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<sup>2</sup> John 14. 27

but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal ...

*And the wonderful fact is that the radio station has never stopped airing!*

The radio station's broadcasts cover ninety percent of the island! Radio Lumière is located about twenty-two kilometres away from where we live. All the houses around lay in ruins, its building alone remains standing straight! Just a few cracks are noticeable on the first floor! The programmes are aired continually, especially the series of Esperance Aujourd'hui programmes about 'Natural Disasters'. The voice of the Lord can be heard amidst chaos and tragedy, bringing comfort, hope and meaning.

Hélène Flanders, March 2010

I thank Denis PAUL whose kind contribution allowed the writing of this booklet.



*The two following excerpts were copied from Radio Lumière website: <http://www.radiolumiere.org/> with permission.*

**Who are they, our lost co-workers, who left for heaven on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010?**



*Marlène Joseph*

Date of birth: July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1981

Marital status: Single

Experience at Radio Lumière: Before graduating to eternity, Marlène was a studio operator, “Expression producer,” news reporter, news writer and anchor. She also wrote and produced adverts.



*Ginor Desplumes*

Date of birth: February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1966

Marital status: married to Penina

Family size: 3 young children

Experience at Radio Lumière: Before going to be with his Master, he was serving as program director of Radio Lumière. He was also the co-producer of the show “Paroxysme” with Roodoll Pierre Louis.

He died filling in for pastor Gervais Glodys teaching a course on Ethics at Lumière University. The structure of the University building collapsed during the killer earthquake on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010.



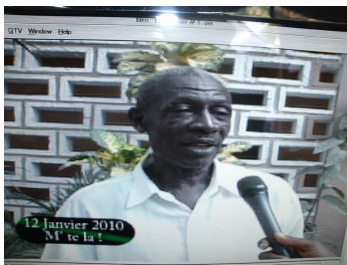
*Jude Marcellus*

Date of birth: January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1973

Marital status: married to Germiné Yéyé

Experience at Radio Lumière: When he left us, he was the co-producer and speaker of “Détente Dominicale” which is aired on Sundays between 3 and 5 pm. He produced that show in cooperation with Pastor Varnel Jeune, the general director of the Radio Lumière.

**Once again, death has struck our ranks and another soldier enters eternity. His Name, Theophilus Delva.**



On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010, at approximately 11.40, our brother Theophilus Delva was hit by two bullets shot by gunmen on a motorcycle. He was returning from a financial transaction. He had arrived at the main gate of the

radio station when the bandits opened fire on him. They were however unable to get away with the money that our

brother was carrying. Nevertheless they left him with a germ of death. He was operated on successfully and the two bullets were extracted, but he remained in hospital. Weakened by age and other medical precedents, he died on Friday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 11.45 in the hospital "Médecins sans Frontières", located in the Carrefour neighbourhood, at the age of 64.

This came as a new shock for the staff just as they had begun to recover their joy.

Theophilus was mild mannered, a friend to everyone. His two main loves were his country and the gospel which he was always ready to discuss with all who would listen. With thankfulness, he testified to the Lord's protection during the events of January 12<sup>th</sup>. Little did he know that the instruments of the devil were at his heels. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, they pounced on him. They destroyed his body, but we know that the Lord Almighty has saved his soul for the resurrection.

He has left us, and this is a harsh reality. We extend our sympathies to his wife and his children, his relatives and friends. As for us, colleagues and collaborators of Radio Lumière, we will shed many tears, but we remain firm and steadfast knowing that the Lord may take us to himself whenever he wants and by any means. We also have the assurance that on that final day we will once again see our friend, Theophilus Delva.