

PROFILE – Anita Crump

Narrator:

This month on UMC.org Profiles, Anita Crump, former lay leader for the Louisiana Conference, Hurricane Katrina survivor, and dedicated United Methodist shares her faith story.

Anita Crump has dedicated her life to serving others and the building up of God's kingdom. Anita's husband, Leroy Crump, was also an honored worker in the United Methodist Church. They, along with the Reverend Hadley R. Edwards, worked tenaciously on the development of Bethany United Methodist Church in New Orleans, which was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Katrina also took Anita's home, her cars, and most of her material possessions – but it didn't take her faith. Or her hope. Or her servant's heart. Anita is known as the "hat lady" because of her many colorful hats, which are as vibrant as her spirit. Anita's solid faith and lifelong service are an example for us all.

Anita Crump:

I am a native New Orleanian. I came from a Methodist home and parents who worked very hard in the United Methodist Church. I have a sister and a brother – I had a sister and a brother. A sister who was very active in the church as the youth director and Sunday School teacher; a brother who was a pastor. And we were taught very early in life with our parents that we were to adhere to the biblical scripture which says "Choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

My mother sang in the choir, my father sang in the choir. My father was a class leader. And as a child, all three of us were brought to Sunday school. We worked in Sunday school. We not only attended, we participated every year in the Vacation Bible School that we had, and so consequently as we grew up, we grew up thinking in terms of what we need to do for the up building of God's kingdom. That was brought in each day in our home. We had prayers in our home. Our mother did a lot of singing, and so consequently we heard the hymns of the Methodist Church years ago. My spiritual life is of utmost of importance, because I believe that you seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything else will be added. From a child we were taught that, and so what I was taught as a child has really stayed with me and remained with me all of my life. We started off very, very early as young people knowing the importance of being biblically based as Christians. And I started off just as a youngster, and felt that as a Christian I had a purpose in life. My purpose was not just for me. I had to organize myself and plan, but through and with that I had a purpose to serve others. And I felt like Matthew in the 25th

chapter which says, "What you do for the least of these, you do it for me." And so I've always felt in my journey, that I had to be a servant for others.

Professionally, I attended Xavier University and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology. And I also pursued education at Xavier University in elementary education. I received a Master of Arts degree from Xavier University in guidance and counseling. I attended Tulane University and worked as an intern for Administration and Supervision. I attended George Peabody College at Vanderbilt University and received an educational doctorate degree. I have served in the New Orleans public school system as a teacher, as a counselor, as a reading specialist, and as a senior high assistant principal and an elementary principal.

I have served as the conference lay leader for the Louisiana Conference, and I have been elected to serve as the first delegate to the General Conferences of 1996, 2000 and also 2004. Presently I am a member a member of Bethany United Methodist Church pastored by none other than the Reverend Hadley R. Edwards, a very effervescent, multi-talented individual. We have been doing a lot of things at Bethany. They had a number of things that had to be done. They ordered new pews. We had new white pews. We carpeted the church. We purchased an organ, a number of new chairs for the choir stand, we carpeted the choir stand. We air conditioned it. We had two worship services. We had a very powerful biblically based message given by the pastor. Our worship services were always packed with people coming from all over the city to hear the pastor preach and to listen to the choir sing. We had a lot of very different types of music – contemporary music, gospel music, as well as music from our United Methodist Hymnal. We have a number of things that we do for missions. We take pictures of all the activities. We had books, we had it on computers. We just don't know where those things are now. They are gone. They are out on the streets because we had to take everything out of the church because of Katrina.

We had been hearing about Katrina beginning that Monday. It was weakening and then it was strengthening, it was weakening and it was strengthening. It hit, it made landfall in Miami and we said "Oh my goodness, it will not make two landfalls." So we didn't pay it any attention until probably that Thursday, when the meteorologists started saying that the coordinates were changing, and he kept saying that it was going to make a direct hit in New Orleans. So I packed my little bags with my usual 3 pieces that I would take. By this time I had my home all prepared. I folded my spreads up on top of the bed. I said "Oh my goodness, if we get a little water, it won't get on the bed or anything", so I was just meticulous about moving things around a little and making sure everything was just right and had the whole thing all clean and neat and everything. And I said, "Well, I'll take a little jewelry." I took my husband's pocket watch and two watches that

he had. And I didn't even take a dress. Only 3 pairs of pants, and I did wear the Bethany shirt when we left, when we evacuated. And we did leave New Orleans that Sunday morning at 6 a.m. and we arrived about 8 hours later in Dallas, Texas. And so we stayed in the hotel from that Sunday to that Friday, and I had an airline ticket my niece sent, and we went to Ann Arbor Michigan on the 2nd of September and I've been there ever since.

When we found out how destructive Katrina was, it was just, it just devastated us. I could not believe it. So the next day, we thought that in spite of all that that we could still come back home. That's just how foolishly we thought. And my sister in law called me and she said, "Anita, how is everything?" And I said, "Oh, I guess it's alright." And she said, "Well Anita, don't try to go home now." And I said, "Well, why not?" And she said, "Oh, no, no, you'll be a few days. Don't try to go home right now. Why don't you just wait a little while?" And I said, "Wait a little while?" She said, "Yes, don't try to go home now." She was trying to tell me what had happened, and I didn't even believe it had happened – that we had eight feet of water, I had eight and a half feet of water in the home. I could not believe it. Rev. Gaines, one of our associate pastors, went over to my home and he took a picture, and when I saw that I was disheartened. I wept when I saw those pictures. But my Biblical life, really I went to God in prayer. That's all I can do. And think in terms of what good things He has done. And I won't complain. My good days outlast my bad ones, don't they? And I'm not going to complain, because they definitely do.

Right now we are very, very upset over Katrina and what occurred, losing everything – a home and two automobiles and everything that we have ever accomplished. But the bible says weeping will endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. I am very happy and proud to be a United Methodist at this time, in spite of what Katrina has done. It's not that devastating that we will not survive. We will survive. We will survive. We will come back, and we will be stronger than we have been in the past. Because of our faith in God, we know that through Him everything is possible, and that He will make things alright for us.

I'm looking forward to moving back to Louisiana in the very, very near future. And I am totally committed to doing my work at Bethany. I will continue to be a tither, I will continue to serve God, I will continue to work as hard as I've done. What is our future? I'm not going to be negative about it. I'm going to be very positive. I'm not going to be pessimistic, I'm going to be optimistic. To believe that things are going to move on, and I know through God everything is going to change. We are very, very proud to be United Methodists. We know that the world is our parish, as John Wesley, our leader, has indicated. And we are advocates of that. We try to do everything we can to serve humanity. I always say, "What you keep is lost; what you give is forever yours," and I believe in giving of my best. And that is why I want to continue. I will

continue to work in the church, and I will continue to serve, and I'm doing it because of the fact that I know God is with me. And I feel very strong that He will continue to lead and guide and direct me in the right path, and that's the way I'm thinking, and that's what I'm doing.

Narrator:

Our thanks to Anita Crump for sharing her story with us.

This month's Profile was produced by Pam Price; interview by Fran Walsh; editor was Lane Denson. I'm Hilly Hicks and Profiles is brought to you by UMC.org, the official online ministry of The United Methodist Church, a ministry of United Methodist Communications.