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My Sister's Keeper Co-founder and family featured in the Boston Globe, December 10, 2006:

Ray Hammond, his wife, Gloria, and their two daughters are all uniters - even though they're not always united. Now, at a pivotal moment in Boston's history of race relations, they are the one family that is poised to affect this city's future more than any other. [Click here to read the rest of the story...](#)

My Sister's Keeper's Cynthia Bell featured in Yale Medicine Magazine, Autumn 2006.

The night her husband brought a Sudanese guest home for dinner, Cynthia Hymes Bell, M.P.H. '84, heard a story that inspired her to risk her life. [Click here and read the whole story...](#)

My Sister's Keeper featured on NPR's All things Considered

Award winning journalist Charlayne Hunter-Gault recounts the story of My Sister's Keeper's humanitarian trip to southern Sudan. Listen to the story at NPR's website.

San Francisco Chronicle: CRISIS IN SUDAN

Conscience has motivated the movement. People across wide range of religious faiths have felt compelled to get involved.

Jim Doyle, Chronicle Staff Writer, Saturday, April 29, 2006

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90.9 WBUR Boston: Darfur Campaign

By Bob Oakes

Boston, MA - April 28, 2006

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By Stacy Gilliam, Special to AOL Voices

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Monday, April 10, 2006

By Ervin Dyer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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Slavery In Our Time, A Talk With Liz Walker of CBS 4 TV

Boston Theological Institute Bulletin, Spring 2006

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Standing on the Shoulders of Harriet Tubman: I Am My Sister's Keeper

Boston Research Center Harriet Tubman Lecture on Human Rights. Presented by Reverend Gloria White-Hammond,

January 27, 2005

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The Healer

She's painfully shy. She's soft-spoken and demure. But in her roles as a pediatrician, minister and anti-slavery activist, Gloria White-Hammond doesn't know how to quit. Tufts Medicine Magazine, October 4, 2004

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Boston Women Activists Help Rescue 1,116 Slaves in Sudan, Announces Anti-Slavery Group; 'My Sister's Keeper'

Program Inaugurated, Linking Female Leaders from Boston And Sudan in Community Rebuilding. PR Newswire, July 8, 2002

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Every African must aspire towards this noble value that I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper; inspired and propelled by the principle - an injury to one is an injury to all.

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Couple's Compassion Flows to Former Slaves

A Boston couple saw Sudanese women and children being freed from slavery, and now plan to help them improve their lives

The Providence Journal

January 21, 2003

By Richard Dujardin

If you're an American, you may think slavery went out with the Civil War.

But if you are a villager in war-torn Sudan, you probably know slavery endures.

The Rev. Ray Hammond, pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston, and his wife, Dr. Gloria White-Hammond, co-pastor and a pediatrician at Boston's South End Community Health Center, are among those who have not only reflected on the inhumanity that slavery represents, but who have felt moved to do something about it.

Sometime soon, the Harvard-educated couple expect to take a trip to the Sudan, this time with enough cash to buy a diesel-powered grinding machine that would ease the workload for former slaves.

The Hammonds became interested in African slavery through the Swiss-based Christian Solidarity International, a group that helps to buy freedom for slaves.

Dr. White-Hammond says she and her husband came face to face with the slave-redemption effort in the summer of 2000, when they saw 900 women and children come into view in the Bahr el Ghazal region of southern Sudan.

The entourage had been enslaved years before, when Arab militiamen, using the country's bitter civil war as a pretext, raided the Dinka villages in southern Sudan and carried away the women and children after killing the men.

But now was the moment that anxious relatives and friends had been awaiting.

John Eibner, a 1974 Barrington College graduate and a leader in Christian Solidarity International, had recruited a number of Arab intermediaries to go into the north and get the slaves from their owners whether it was through an offer of money or cattle, an appeal using the teachings of the Koran, or by helping the slaves to escape.

Whatever method had been used, Eibner seemed not to care. What he did care about was that the slaves had been retrieved. Sitting with the chief retriever in a dusty field, Eibner reimbursed him the equivalent of \$33 for each recovered slave or nearly \$30,000.

Mr. Hammond says the scene was a poignant reminder that the freedom that Americans take for granted is still "a distant dream" for many around the world.

"Of course," he says, "as an African-American, I had a sense of seeing a piece of my own history being reenacted."

Given her medical background, Dr. White-Hammond quickly moved from the role of a clergy-observer to one of physician, tending to serious medical needs.

Her conversations with some of the patients were heart-wrenching. A woman talked about how after her capture she had tried to persuade the slave raiders to allow her to carry her two toddlers instead of the raiders' loot.

The raiders had a simple "solution" to her request: They killed the children.

Dr. White-Hammond found the tales sobering.

"I felt it was the first time I had access to the sordid experiences that I had only read about in the slave narratives," she recounted one evening last week.

"The gang rapes, the female genital mutilation, the beatings and stabbings, the having to live outdoors with the goats and to eat only what the masters had left over these were all things our ancestors talked about, but nothing I experienced up close and personal."

She says the stories gave her a new understanding of what her ancestors, carried away as slaves on the Middle Passage had to endure.

"I used to wonder 'What were my ancestors thinking?' Now I think I know.

"I think they were thinking about people like me. They were thinking that if they could hold on, maybe one day there would be somebody like me who would have access to wonderful institutions of learning, who would have titles and live in a nice house, and see her responsibility to do everything she could see that such things don't happen again."

To help make sure those women who have had to endure slavery are not forgotten, Dr. White-Hammond went back to Africa last summer and will be leaving with her husband for yet another trip to the Sudan "very soon." For security reasons, they prefer not to disclose the dates.

To be sure, Dr. White-Hammond says she and her husband are simple "foot soldiers" in a slave-redemption effort.

"There's a misconception out there that we have bake sales at our church and then go and use the money to buy slaves," she says. "That's not accurate."

Most of the money for the effort comes from donations to Christian Solidarity International, primarily from Europe, followed by the United States.

And unlike the international's Eibner, whose organization is credited with purchasing freedom for 70,000 slaves in Sudan during the last eight years, the Hammonds see their role as primarily helping to educate others about the project and bringing some badly needed economic and medical help to former slaves.

On the educational front, the Hammonds acknowledge that some groups, including the respected Human Rights Watch, oppose slave buybacks, contending that they only add fuel to the slave trade by giving those who are thinking of capturing slaves another reason for doing so.

But tell that to a woman who has been badly beaten by her slave masters and would never win freedom without outside help, Dr. White-Hammond says.

If the slave redemption effort is fueling the slave trade, says Mr. Hammond, you would be seeing more raids on villages and more people taken into slavery, "but the numbers are going down."

He thinks they're dwindling both because of mounting pressure on Sudan's government by the United States, and because many of the southern Sudanese villages that used to be targets in the past typically villagers with greater numbers of Christians and practitioners of traditional religion are now better able to defend themselves against the slave raiders.

Human Rights Watch and some media outlets have also raised the possibility of fraud.

Mr. Hammond acknowledges that some well-intentioned individuals and groups were probably duped into paying large sums of money to people posing as Arab middlemen to "redeem" people who were never slaves in the first place.

But that's not the case with Christian Solidarity International, he says. "They work closely with local authorities, and they know the people they're dealing with."

When slaves are redeemed, he says, the agency photographs and fingerprints the freed slaves and checks the information against its database in London to make sure there has been no "recycling" of slaves.

As it is, with Sudan's civil war winding down, the Hammonds believe the times are calling for a shift in emphasis.

This upcoming trip is Dr. White-Hammond's third as a member of the Boston-based American Anti-Slavery Group. This time, the Hammonds will be bringing along money to purchase the diesel-powered grinding machine that they say will liberate hundreds and perhaps thousands of Sudanese women from the laborious chore of pounding grain allowing them to devote time to other things, such as learning to read.

The machine is already waiting to be picked up and transported, and Dr. White-Hammond has been talking with women's groups about how they plan to operate and repair the machine and divide profits.

Operating under the name of My Sister's Keeper, they've also invited a physician from Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center to accompany them on the trip. The doctor would advise the one Sudanese physician they know has a clinic there how to defend the population against the ravages of HIV/AIDS.

Two possible approaches: conducting an educational campaign among the women working the grinding machine, and having the doctor spend 12 weeks in Boston to study at Harvard Medical School's AIDS Institute.

"We have a narrow window to jump on the HIV issue before it becomes rampant as it is everywhere else in Africa," says Dr. White-Hammond. "AIDS is the one thing that can deep-six all of our work, and that includes any slave redemption work, or any of the transition work."

"We have to get on top of it now."

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<http://www.iabolish.com/news/AASG%20News/coverage/bh05-18-03.htm>

TV PLUS; Talkin' TV

The Boston Herald

May 18, 2003

By Marisa Guthrie

Boston, MA—Liz Walker has been a fixture on the local news scene for more than 20 years. A few years ago, Walker moved from WBZ (Ch. 4)'s high-profile 11 p.m. newscast to the noon news to attend Harvard Divinity School, where she is working on her graduate degree. And she's working on a third career. She started a non-profit. Walker and Rev. Gloria White-Hammond - co-pastor with her husband, Rev. Raymond A. Hammond of Jamaica Plain's Bethel AME Church - are the CEO and director of My Sister's Keeper. Their mission is to raise awareness and funds to combat the slave trade in war-ravaged Sudan. The victims, women and children, for the most part, have been kidnapped by Muslims from northern Sudan and sold into slavery in the south.

Walker has made two trips to Sudan with the Hammonds. With the Boston-based American Anti-Slavery Group and Christian Solidarity International, they've purchased the freedom of 4,000 slaves. Walker's news series, "In the Lion's Mouth: Slavery Crisis in Sudan," first premiered in 2001 and runs intermittently on WBZ.

Q: When did you first become involved with this charity work?

A: I read a story about two years ago right around the same time I had decided to get off the 11 p.m. news and go to graduate school. Actually, it was an op-ed piece that Dr. Charles Jacobs (president of the American Anti-Slavery Group) had written about modern-day slavery. It just amazed me, I had never heard about 20th-century slavery. That peaked my interest. When the American Anti-Slavery Group here in Boston was planning a trip to Africa and they asked me if I would you like to go.

A: As a reporter, I would never have thought of going to Africa. But it all just kind of fell into place. I knew the station wasn't going to pay a lot of money for a photographer. So I took my own camera and thought, well, whatever happens happens, I'll shoot it myself.

A: The whole slave redemption issue (exchanging money for freedom) was very controversial. But you go there and you talk to these people, and they tell you about rape and forced genital mutilation and they show you their wounds. And you don't want to believe it, that there could be so much rage and hatred in the world. And it just doesn't make any sense. But it's not just allegations. I've done a lot of research, and this is all real. And it's very disturbing. But there's hope there because these people are really adamant about survival. And there's something very inspirational about that.

Q: How involved are you in My Sister's Keeper?

A: I am in the day to day. Working at the station and at the same time trying to put together this initiative has been very challenging. I've been involved with many non-profits over the years. But I've never started one. It's totally grass roots. It's basically Gloria and it's me. It's all trial and error.

A: We're lucky to have Bethel Church as our financial agent. But one day we know we'll have to go out on our own. Just the idea of all the letter writing. . . . I mean I never put together a function before. There are a million things to do: Do you have flowers, do you have napkins? But the really wonderful thing about it is, it's something we're passionate about . . .

Q: And you're still in school.

A: Yes, my life is so crazy. I've got to drop something. You know, something's got to go. WBZ has been wonderful to me. It's full time, but it's flexible hours. And that's been a life-saver. (News director) Peter (Brown) and (general manager) Ed Goldman allowed me to do the noon show so I could go to school. They've been great.

Q: Will you eventually leave the news business?

A: I have no idea. I have to work. I have to pay a mortgage, and I have a child. And I love everything I do. But clearly I cannot live like this forever. But for now, this is how it is . . . I'm under contract (at WBZ) and I have a year and a half of grad school left . . .

Q: Any regrets?

A: No, never. It's wonderful to have choices. But every time I get to this point in the semester, I think, "Who told me that this would be a good idea?" THIS is really hard. But again, it's another great choice.

Q: Did you ever fear for your safety on any of these trips?

A: I was afraid the second time only because by that time I had learned much more about the Sudan. The first time I went, I didn't realize how dangerous it was. The first trip was before 9-11, and I didn't know about the connection with Osama bin Laden and terror organizations in the Sudan. The second time, things felt really out of control. But you walk on your faith. And I was there with Gloria, who is just an incredible faith walker. In those situations, you tend to lean on your faith. But it's kind of scary.

Q: Do you have another trip planned?

A: I hope to go back in the fall, before the rainy season.

Q: What was it like being the reporter and camerawoman?

A: I have much greater respect for photographers now. Let me just say, next time I go back, I will travel with a photographer. Please, I am not a photographer. That's one thing Superwoman will not be trying to do ever again.

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<http://www.interaction.org/newswire/detail.php?id=3791>