

# IHDN News

JUNE 2014

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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### Message from the President

Dear friends,

We are very thankful to the Lord God Almighty for making it possible for us to undertake our 24th mission trip to Ghana from January 30 to February 28, 2014. This trip, which also served as electives for final year medical students and surgical residents, was a great success. We attended to over 4,000 patients, performed over 25 surgeries, and cut the sod for the new 24-unit Nursing staff apartment. By the time you receive this newsletter, we will be in Ghana on our 25th mission trip. The need for quality health care in Ghana is great. The opportunity is there for us to save lives and make a difference in the lives of the poor, so we are seizing the moment. Thank you for coming along on this journey.

We hosted a fundraising dinner on March 28 in support of the apartment building for nursing and other staff of the HDN mission hospital. We have raised over \$69,000 toward our goal of \$100,000. Most of you attended this event and donated money toward the construction of the staff apartment. We thank all who donated to this cause. We appreciate your interest and support very much. Those who were not able to attend but would like to partner with us on this building project can still send their contributions.

This is the first time we have recruited volunteers from outside the U.S. We will be joined by a 3-member volunteer team from Barbados (2) and Guyana (1). The involvement of the Caribbean group has allowed us to host a Christian Leadership and Business Development Conference, which will allow us to expand. We hope that this leads to greater things for the kingdom.

Once again, thank you for your support. May the Lord bless and your family in all that you do.

Sincerely

*Dr. Edem Agamah*

### Thanks for supporting our fundraising Banquet

We hosted our 3rd Fundraising Dinner at Hope Church, Springfield, IL, on March 28, 2014 to support the Staff Apartment in Ghana. We raised over \$69,000 toward our goal of \$100,000. We appreciate the support of all who donated. If you would like to donate cash or appreciated securities, let us know. May God bless you.

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### HEALTH STATISTICS

#### LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH —2012 (Years)

Afghanistan	- 60
Barbados	-78
Cameroun	-56
Chad	-51
Ghana	-62
Guyana	-63
Haiti	-62
Nigeria	-54
South Africa	- 59
Sierra Leone	-46
US	-79

Source: World Health Org

[www.who.int/gho](http://www.who.int/gho)

### **Our 24rd Medical Mission trip to Ghana another success**

We undertook the 24th Mission trip to Ghana from January 30 to February 28, 2014. The team consisted of 16 volunteers recruited from Springfield and Chicago. Please see the volunteer list in the December 2013 newsletter.

We are pleased to announce that 8 of the volunteers are now doctors, having graduated from SIU School of Medicine (5) or Rush Medical College (3). They have all moved into their postgraduate medical training. They were able to sharpen their clinical and diagnostic skills in Ghana, a resource-poor area, before embarking on their residency training. Our congratulations to them, their teachers, and their families. We thank all who supported us on this trip.

### **Construction of 24-unit staff apartment begins in Ghana**

We had a brief sod-cutting ceremony for the construction of a 24-unit staff apartment on February 8, 2014 at Weta. This building will help reduce the severe accommodation problems faced by IHDN staff. Presently, 15 nurses are sharing 6 rooms, which is less than optimum.

Construction work has started. It is very challenging to give an accurate cost estimate, because the Ghana Cedi has depreciated over 30% since the beginning of the year. One estimate is between \$600,000 and \$800,000, with the goal of using volunteers to reduce the final cost. When all materials and funds are available, it will take about 2 years to complete. We thank all those who donated funds to kick off this project. Let us know if you or someone you know would like to go and help with this project.

### **Twenty-Fifth mission trip to Ghana, August 7-22, 2014**

By the time you receive this newsletter, the 25th mission team will be in Ghana with volunteers recruited from the U.S., Barbados, and Guyana. The team members are as follows:

Dr. Edem Agamah	Team leader
Mrs. June Agamah	Logistics Coordinator
Ms. Vivienne Dawkins	Maternal & Child Health Nurse Teacher
Ms. Jacqueline Dawkins	Business Project coordinator and Tennis Coach
Ms. Mollie Hassett	Nurse Anesthetist
Mrs. Judith Greenhalgh	Interior Decorator
Mr. Adrian Reid	Business Consultant, from Barbados
Mrs. Robertha Reid	International Business Development Consultant, from Barbados
Ms. Carole James-Boston	Attorney, from Guyana

We will be joined by a Ghanaian team, including Dr. S. Zakaria, Dr. Sylvanus Amuzu, Dr. Gospel Agamah & Mrs. Linda Agamah. We estimate that about 3 to 4,000 people will come to the IHDN Mission Hospital, Weta, to receive some form of care, including hernia and breast cancer surgeries.

We will be holding an in-service training for the nursing staff and recruit midwives, who will assist us in the development of labor and delivery services at the IHDN mission hospital.

We will continue with the decoration of the inpatient ward and also conduct a needs assessment for an elementary school. Please join us in prayers for the team and this trip. Pray for good health, travelling mercies and God's blessings on us and the people we seek to serve. Pray that our efforts will not be in vain that lives will be transformed for His glory.

## **IHDN Sponsors Business Development & Christian Leadership Conference at Weta**

IHDN is hosting a two-part conference entitled Business Development and Christian Leadership Conference at Weta on August 11-13, 2014. The target audience is business owners and aspiring business owners and community leaders from Agbozume-Klikor, Weta, Afiadenyigba, Afife, Abor, and surrounding areas. Goals of the conference are listed below.

### Business Development

Goal: To teach small business owners how to improve and grow their businesses, and create jobs and opportunities for people. We will also focus on how to grow businesses. Specific topics will be:

Types of businesses; advantages and disadvantages of each type

Incorporation or Registration

Business Ethics & Legal Framework of Business

Recordkeeping and Proper Accounting.

Marketing & Advertising of Business

Sources of Capital

Risk in Business

Customer Service

We will discuss case studies of how small businesses in Barbados are exporting goods and service to the developed world and how Ghanaian businesses can learn from their experience.

### Christian Leadership

Goal: To teach the Christian and community leaders on conflict resolution and how to build effective teams. Conflict is inevitable in all human relationships. Recognizing what is conflict and resolving it brings people together for a common goal.

## **What can you do to help to IHDN?**

We are often asked the question “What can I do to help you?” This question usually comes from friends and colleagues who value our mission and want to help. Here are several ways you can help:

Pray, pray, and pray for IHDN. Pray that we will remain faithful to the call to serve Him to the best of our abilities. Pray for His blessings to be upon us and provide all our needs.

Develop a dynamic interest and follow our work. Ask questions, give us feedback, tell the IHDN story to your family and friends, and invite them to join us in helping the poor in Ghana.

Donate your time. Use your skills, expertise, and knowledge to help bless our efforts both in the U.S. and in Ghana.

Donate appreciated stocks, mutual funds, or bonds to IHDN. This helps IHDN, and you also get a tax deduction for the full value at the time of donation (not the value at purchase) to the extent you are eligible to deduct charitable gifts.

Donate money and items of value—things that you can use in the U.S. and can also be used in Ghana. Give us a call at 217-787-6530 or send a mail to [ihdn@aol.com](mailto:ihdn@aol.com).

We continue to receive some of these blessings. We are thankful to all who share themselves and their resources with us.

## **A Better Way Forward**

### **Ms. Sarah Agamah**

Africa is a continent rich in natural resources and bursting with various opportunities for trade. Oil, timber, gold, diamond, coffee, cocoa, aluminum, and bauxite are just a few of the abundant products Africa has to offer to the world. In spite of the many prospects that abound for trade and growth, and the billions of dollars in foreign aid that have reached the continent, Africans remain some of the poorest peoples on the planet. The majority of countries in Africa—including Ghana—have not been able to come even close to reaching their greatest level of potential. Why is this the case?

Critically acclaimed African economist Dambisa Moyo has some ideas. In her book *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*, Moyo discusses the results of various studies on the effects of foreign aid (strictly non-medical or charity-based) to Africa gathered from reputable sources. She concludes that the data demonstrates such aid as “fueling corruption, making democracy less likely, causing inflation and making exports uncompetitive.” Lack of solid infrastructure, good roads, efficient and trustworthy systems of banking, and import/export practices as well as the persistence of corrupt and volatile governments have all deterred many nations from embarking on business pursuits with many African countries. These are side-effects of a larger problem that she says is caused by ineffective aid: a dependency mindset that cripples growth. She argues that too much wasted currency has been expended in Africa, and changes must be made. Others agree.

In a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled “Smart Aid for the World’s Poor,” Matt Ridley, a member of the British House of Lords, outlined five focused goals that he believes would increase productivity in Africa immensely: (1) Reduce malnutrition, so that children can stay in school and become productive members of society. (2) Tackle malaria and tuberculosis—two largely preventable diseases that deeply impact productivity. (3) Boost preprimary education, which costs very little and has lifelong benefits. (4) Provide universal access to sexual and reproductive health care, which would save the lives of mothers and infants and allow moms to be more productive economically. (5) Expand free trade.

Countries like Ghana would benefit maximally from all of these suggested changes. In Ghana, the maternal mortality rate is still high, at 350 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to 21 deaths per 100,000 live births in the U.S. Ghana’s currency, the Ghana Cedi, has depreciated by 30% just since January. While this is good for exporters, it is very bad for the economy, which is largely reliant on imports. Agriculture is 21.5% of Ghana’s GDP, but this number could be much larger in light of the vast amounts of rich soil that remains untilled (*CIA Factbook* 2010). The problems are great, but carelessly distributed aid from rich countries will not solve them in the long run. Achievable gains in healthcare improvement and trade will bring the positive change that is needed. The opportunities for progress are many. That is why the IHDN Conference on Business Development will seek to empower local business people to grow and seek export markets. Some have realized the potential and have capitalized on it. Hopefully the majority of Ghanaians will begin to take advantage of the possibilities soon.

## **No Flies in the House**

### **Dr. Edem Agamah**

This was supposed to be a short getaway to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary, but it turned out to be more than a getaway. On our trip to Barbados, June and I got the chance to witness a successful implementation of a public health program in a developing country. We also saw the impact of tourism on a country and recruited two mission volunteers from Barbados to go to Ghana in August 2014.

Since we got married, June had always wanted to visit Barbados. Because of our busy lives and the commitment of our vacations to mission trips, we never made the trip until last October.

Barbados is one of the most prosperous countries in the Caribbean, with a per capita GDP of over \$25,000. Tourism is the main source of income besides sugar. The beaches are beautiful, with hotels dotting the shoreline.

During our visit we were introduced to Pastor Trevor Regret of Courts of Praise Church. He and his congregation welcomed us and made our stay a memorable one. We saw a dynamic group of young people striving to serve the Lord. They were looking for opportunities to reach out in ministry. They gave me the opportunity to preach. Using Ephesians 2:10, we shared our work in Ghana and challenged the congregation to do the same by stepping out of their comfort zone. They had been praying for opportunities to go and serve in Africa before we got there.

We also visited a fish market. We were struck by the fact that there was not a single housefly in either the fish market or the adjoining open market. I specifically looked for flies but never found one. I do not believe they were hiding from me as they usually do elsewhere.

This observation is an example of a successful implementation of fly control by the public health infrastructure in a developing country. We learned that the citizens have been educated on proper sanitation and how to eliminate houseflies since childhood—a great achievement for a tropical country.

Even though it took us 25 years to visit Barbados, it turned out to be one of the most successful trips combined with ministry, learning, and relaxation. We thank God for the timing and everything. We do not think going earlier would have yielded these results. We made the sacrifice and went on mission trips during our vacations, but it turned out that God had a better plan for us in the timing of everything.

If you are looking for a tropical getaway, do not wait for 25 years, unless you are planning to come along with us each year to Ghana. We enjoyed Barbados, not because of the amount of fish we ate, but because we saw the beauty of God's people coming together to work for His kingdom. We also learned a lot about sanitation and proper environmental hygiene. We hope that one day, Ghana too can boast of having no houseflies in the fish market.

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### **Congratulations to Dr. Primus Thomas Kpadenou**

We would like to congratulate Dr. Primus Thomas Kpadenou for successfully completing his medical school training at the University of Ghana Medical School, Accra. Dr. Kpadenou, was introduced to IHDN a few years ago, while in medical school. His poor family is poor and he was having challenges paying his school fees. IHDN agreed to sponsor the rest of his medical school education, with a commitment for him to come back and work with IHDN after his housemanship (rotating internship).

We thank God for seeing Primus through his training.

### **IHDN sponsors Ms. Bernice Egu for Nursing Training College, Ho**

Ms. Bernice Egu was born at home, in a village called Tengekope in 1992. Her twin sister died at birth. Her parents were poor farmers. She grew up attending the local elementary school until the age of 11 years when she had to go and serve other family members, who could help pay for her education. After her secondary school, she started selling oranges, bananas, “wireless phone card” to make a living. She had always wanted to be a nurse but did not have the money to pay for her school fees. A few years ago, she was employed as a cleaner by IHDN. She demonstrated superior work ethics that she was moved to a clerical role. After passing her nursing school exams, IHDN decided to sponsor her education with her commitment to come and help work at the hospital. We thank God for sparing the life of Bernice. We pray for great success in her nursing school training and for her to grow to love and serve you.