

IHDN News

DECEMBER 2005

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

Only a Drop in the Bucket, But . . .

By Dr. Edem Agamah

We just returned from another successful mission trip to Ghana. As we shared our experience with friends and well-wishers, one comment that was shared was “It’s only a drop in the bucket; the problems of the people in Ghana are so huge that we may not have made that big an impact”.

While this is largely true, it also gives us an opportunity to reflect on our experience and comment on the full meaning and the effect on society. Remember that we feel called to serve and be difference makers. We are being obedient to this calling.

A drop of water is not enough to quench a thirst. However, if drops fall several times into a bucket, a reasonable volume of water could be collected—enough to quench a thirst. Our medical mission efforts have great similarities to a drop of water. We have been making little efforts repeatedly to improve the livelihood of the people of Agbozume-Klikor, a small rural community in Ghana. We have been consistent and sponsored 9 mission trips since 1996. Over this period of time, we have made some impact on the community. Each year, the people eagerly look forward to our next visit. In this newsletter, we share aspects of our November 2005 trip to Ghana. Despite these successes, we recognize that they are very temporary and not eternal.

When the Lord Jesus Christ met the Samaritan woman at the well, he asked her for water (a “no-no” for a Jewish man). While talking with her, Jesus described a living water that makes a person never be thirsty again. Before I gave my life to Christ, I wondered what a drop of that living water will taste like. I wondered how I could collect many drops from that living water. I imagined how much I could be filled when I drank that water. Not anymore. Jesus Christ declared to the Samaritan woman that He was the Living water (John 4:7-26).

As we celebrate the Christmas season, we are thankful to God for everything we have been able to accomplish through IHDN. We are thankful to all who supported and prayed with us. Though our efforts may seem like a drop in the bucket, we have brought hope to some disadvantaged people. With your support, we intend to continue to make small, repeated efforts for His glory. It is our hope and prayer that these little drops would someday grow into a mighty ocean. Yet this is nothing comparable to the thirst and hunger that is satisfied by the Lord Jesus Christ, the living water, whose birthday we celebrate.

We wish you a Merry Christmas, and a blessed Happy New Year.



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 300-500 million cases of Malaria per year
- Over 90% in Africa
- 1 million die from Malaria each year
- Per Capita expenditure on Health in various countries in 2002:

US	- \$5,274
South Africa	- \$689
Ghana	- \$73
- Population of Volta Region of Ghana -1.64 million

Nursing Training—The Foundation Of Medical Care - By Mike Arbise

I am so thankful that God blessed me by calling me to teach at Agbozume, Ghana. The week-long workshop provided an introductory course in Anatomy and Physiology to students from Agbozume and nearby villages in southeastern Ghana. The goal of the workshop was to introduce high school seniors or recent graduates to college-level coursework in health sciences. This is intended to help prepare and encourage them to continue their pursuit of careers in health care. Past students have gone on to college to pursue careers in nursing, economics, and medicine.

The Anatomy & Physiology classes started with 10 students. At the end of the 6th day we had 12 students, including 3 girls, undergoing 8 hours of intensive training each day. The textbook used was *The Human Body in Health and Illness* by Herlihy and Maebius. Its 24 chapters cover subjects including chemistry, microbiology, and cell biology. We were able to complete 12 chapters, covering 5 of the 11 human organ systems. I adapted the course materials to include discussion of health issues most relevant to students in Ghana. We discussed the causes, transmission, and prevention of many infectious diseases. I emphasized that the students must learn the structure and function of the organs and organ systems. We learned how the body organs and systems work together to maintain homeostasis (stability). Finally, we dedicated much time to how diseases and disorders create homeostatic imbalance. I was pleased that for the final exam, all students listed (a) the causes, modes of transmission, and methods of preventing common infectious diseases, and (b) how the human organ systems work to maintain homeostasis.



I went to Ghana to teach others, but most of the time I felt like the student. I learned that although the students lacked easy access to computers, the Internet, and books, they were motivated, intelligent, and not afraid to work hard. I learned that one student's desire to learn was so strong he walked for 1½ hours each way to attend class.

This is just the beginning of these students' learning under IHDN. Plans have been made for Mr. Mark Dedzo (a 4th year economics major at the University of Ghana and IHDN scholarship beneficiary) to host intensive math classes for the students during the Christmas holidays. They will also meet monthly to pursue Christian leadership training. Like other past IHDN graduates, these students will have a chance to put their hand in the hand of others to help build a foundation of health care for future generations in Agbozume and all of Ghana.

My thanks go to the IHDN Ghana staff, with special thanks to Mr. Mark Dedzo, Mr. Jacob Augustt, Mr. Elorm Agamah, Mr. Ben Agamah, Mrs. Jan Calley, and Mrs. June Agamah for helping me conduct the workshop. I also thank all who supported me financially with the trip.

“But a Samaritan.....went to him and bandaged his wound, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.”
Luke 10:33-34

Workshop Held For Farmers In Ghana - by David Calley

Talking and spending time with Ghanaian farmers were all that I could have expected, and more. Thanks be to God! They were very open, welcoming, and eager to learn. We discussed farming in Ghana with much interest in farming in the U.S. They had many good questions for discussion.



The farmers' workshop was held at Avalavi, a farming village close to Agbozume. We had meetings on five different days. Our group grew larger each day, reaching 65 or more on the last day. The topics covered included growing corn (maize), and starting a farm business cooperative.

With computer expertise and assistance from Mr. Jacob Augustt, one of the local young men, I was able to use PowerPoint to make my presentation. That proved to be very helpful. Jacob is a fine, caring young man whom we all grew to love during our stay in Ghana. "Mr. Hi-Tech" (as I called Jacob) was my right-hand man and was invaluable to me in the workshops. He also helped at the Internet café to download a handbook with instruction on forming a cooperative. Many of the farmers grow rice as a first crop. With our training, they realize they need to look for a second crop. This will be something to do on a follow up trip. There was great enthusiasm about starting a business cooperative to help mechanize their farming. I learned that much rice (as much as 40%) is lost in hand harvesting; so if they could join to buy a combine, that would make a huge difference in crop yields.

Five farmers were chosen to serve on a board to meet and start setting things up to form the cooperative. Of course they will need legal expertise to help set it up properly, so there is much to be done before it can become a working cooperative. The handbook that we downloaded will be a useful tool for the group.

My little notebooks, left over from my days of selling Pioneer seed, were a great help for teaching about growing maize, as the information explained row spacing and how many seeds to plant. I did learn that hybrid seed corn can be bought in Ghana, but is not much used due to high cost. Five farmers agreed to join together and buy a bag, and each plant test plots for comparison. I will be very interested in the outcome of those plots. I think it will work.

Corn is grown in Ghana for human consumption, and more is needed to keep up with that demand; but with higher yields, perhaps some could be fed to animals to increase their yield as well. What an exciting and delightful experience seeing their excitement!



With a little help these Farmers hope to improve Food Production and feed The people in Ghana.



A Tribute to Rhonda Miller by Mrs. June Agamah

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands. Psalm 138:8 (NIV)

Rhonda Miller left this earth on Sunday, October 30, 2005. She had been an IHDN volunteer for several years, and in 2000, became a board member. When IHDN implemented a micro-credit program to help volunteers in the IHDN Family Medical Center to obtain loans to develop or improve their businesses, Rhonda took on the responsibility of assessing the loan applications to determine who should qualify to receive the loans. As an IHDN board member, she was involved in helping the women in Agbozume develop a batik (tie and dye) business. She single-handedly designed business plans and marketing tools to help the women market their goods. Although these ventures were not sustainable, Rhonda understood that it takes “baby steps” to improve the quality of life of poor people everywhere.

Rhonda wrote several articles for the IHDN newsletter. Her approach to life is reflected in some of those articles. Rhonda believed in giving people a second and third chance in life. When I first met Rhonda, she and David were practically foster parents to two lovely girls, while they both held full-time jobs and volunteered in the children’s ministry at Hope Evangelical Free Church. Rhonda lived out the saying “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” Her deep and abiding faith in God allowed her to see beyond the here and now. She saw the kingdom of heaven for what is truly is, buried treasure. Once she found it, she used her time, talent, and resources to help others. One of Rhonda’s favorite songs was “Seize the day” by Carolyn Arends. Rhonda did seize every day of her life on earth with us, for regardless of her ill health or limitations, nothing could stand in her way. May she rest in peace.

Other Highlights of the 9th Mission Trip to Ghana

IHDN Donates New NIV Bible to Chief of Weta/Avalavi

We donated a leather-covered NIV Bible to Torgbi Akuna Fletsu III, chief of Weta/Avalavi. The accompanying picture shows the chief selling us the land for our clinic building. He was very excited and thrilled to receive this unexpected gift from America. We attended a church service with the villagers at Weta, where the chief’s daughter read the bible to the congregation. We pray that the word of God will speak to the Chief and the people of Weta/Avalavi and draw them closer to Him.

IHDN Supports Electricity project at Vome-Battor

Remember Vome-Battor? This is the landlocked village across Lake Volta that requires a boat ride for access. We were not able to visit there this year due to time constraints. These villagers are raising about \$30,000 toward the cost to extend electricity to the village. IHDN donated \$1,000 towards this fund. We pray that others will help them extend electricity to the village.

Church Services and Musical Performances at Agbozume

Mrs. Jan Calley, Ms. Akpene Agamah, Ms. Aseye Agamah, and Ms. Alikem Agamah had the opportunity to perform musically at the Agbozume Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Calley sang hymns, while the Agamah sisters played solo instruments, flute, and keyboard. The villagers were encouraged and lifted up by their inspiring music.

Other Highlights of the 9th Mission Trip - Continued

Medical Clinic/Rural Outreach

We held outpatient clinics at Agbozume, Kpedzakope, Nogokpo, and Weta. We saw approximately 400 patients during the entire trip. Ten medical students from the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital joined the team for the health fair at Weta on Saturday, November 12. Because these students had to return to Accra the same day, there was very little time for extra teaching.

One interesting observation on this trip was that most of the patients seen had chronic back pain and knee pain. Back pain is prevalent in the U.S., but perhaps not as much as we saw in Ghana. This may be related to the people's practice of carrying heavy objects on their head and back, resulting in a lifetime of chronic back pain and spasms. After the mosquitoes are killed, and malaria and hypertension are controlled, Ghana needs to focus on reducing the prevalence of back pain by introducing the widespread use of simple trolleys and carts into the daily lives of the people.

IHDN Clinic and Medical Center Building Project

We did not start any construction work on this trip. We spent the time meeting with the chief of Weta and his people to seek additional land. We wanted 5 more acres, but ended up getting 2.5 acres instead. We are thankful to all who have been praying for this project. The architect and engineers are now drawing plans. We also have to find ways to reclaim part of the original land, which is low-lying and at great risk of flooding. We plan to have the masons start making cement blocks early next year. We will continue to raise funds toward this project as we develop and refine our building plans.

Nursing Training School

IHDN intend to establish a Nursing Training School as part of our human resource development in Ghana. We are currently in the planning phase. This includes program and curriculum development, recruitment of staff and volunteers for the school. When fully developed, the school will train registered nurses for our medical center, and also for other medical institutions in Ghana. We are recruiting nurses who would like to be involved in this educational effort. If you or someone you know would be interested, please let us know because we would like to talk with you.

Financial Update for 2005 (January 1 through October 15, 2005)

Total contributions	\$18,910.00
Expenses	\$13,572.16
Net income for this period	\$5,337.84

We thank all who have been praying and supporting our work.

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Please Pray With Us



- Thank God for another successful trip
- People who live in chronic poverty
- Spiritual, human, and financial resources for IHDN—We need help
- The clinic building
- People who are eager to learn more about the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ



Dr. Agamah examines a child



June & Jan helping at clinic



Donation of \$1,000 to Vome-Battor



Dave Calley & Farmers' Workshop



Negotiating for plot of land



Donation of Bible to Chief



Future Nursing Students



Mike Arbise teaching students



Mark, Mike and Elorm



Volunteer team after Health Fair- Weta



Morning Devotion for team