

IHDN News

AUGUST 2003

*International
Health and
Development
Network
"Thanks for
making a
difference."*

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

It is the time of year that we pack our suitcases and accompany our friends and volunteers on another mission trip to Ghana. We are always excited to go to Ghana for several reasons. We get the chance to help, make new friends, teach, learn and be blessed. We also get to be obedient to our calling. We are pleased to update you on our efforts. The medical student's electives in International Health & Tropical Medicine will enhance the academic aspect of our work. The Women's Enterprise Development will help us revive our economic development efforts. We are conducting outreach clinics in four villages in Ghana as well as working in major hospitals. We will continue to share God's love by showing the "Jesus" film in the Ewe language. We thank all of you for supporting our work. May the Lord bless you and your families.

FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER DIRECTOR RESIGNS

The IHDN Family Medical Center's Director, Dr. Randy Sepenu, resigned January 1, 2003, to pursue other career goals. We thank Dr. Sepenu for his work with IHDN. The Center is temporarily closed and will be opened for the use by the mission team. We are looking for a full-time Medical Director. Please pray with us in the search.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OFFICER JOINS IHDN-GHANA

Mr. Godsword Doffey, a teacher by training and recent graduate of Emmaus Correspondence Bible School, has joined IHDN, Ghana staff. His employment is full-time and he will be developing the non-medical aspects of our ministry in Ghana. Let us welcome Godsword to IHDN. We pray for guidance and support of the communities he serves.

SANITATION & ROAD CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

The road construction work in Ghana has reached a critical stage requiring heavy duty equipment including motor grader, motor rollers, and bitumen spraying vehicles. The extremely high cost (e.g. \$1,000/day) of renting and moving these vehicles from Accra has prevented us from completing the work in a timely manner. Please pray that we will find a contractor willing to rent this equipment at a price we can afford. Pray that we will have all the funds to finish this portion of the work and move to the next phase.

A PEDIATRIC SURGEON'S JOURNEY TO GHANA*By Dr. Ruth Mayforth*

I first met the Agamah family at a CMDA (Christian Medical and Dental Association) picnic just over a year and a half ago, shortly after they had returned from a mission trip to Ghana. I was immediately drawn by their warmth and enthusiasm and by the evidence of God working in their lives. It was clear that God was at the center of their lives.

A number of things intrigued me about their work. They were not satisfied with just meeting the spiritual and medical needs of the people. They looked at all of the needs of the people, and used whatever talents they had to meet those needs and help the people develop as whole – from education for the children to marriage and family seminars, and from developing computer skills to building a much needed road. In addition, they had taken their **WHOLE FAMILY** on the trip, and had clearly involved their girls in the work. The fact that Edem Agamah grew up there and still has family in Ghana added to the impact of their work – they truly understand these people and their culture, and thus are uniquely equipped to not only understand the true needs, but also how best to approach problems within their culture. Also, their family in Ghana can follow-up and continue to water any seeds that have been planted and continue to further the work.

I have always wanted to be involved in medical missions, and there were a few other things that drew me to the work in Ghana. One was simply that I wanted to be a part of a team from my church – to be able to share the unique bond that comes from serving Him together. Another was that most of the people in Ghana understand and speak some English – I didn't want my ability to communicate with the people to be limited by the presence of an interpreter. And I wanted to be able to use the gifts I have been given to serve Him – and in many ways it seemed like a "good fit".

All of these "reasons", however, would not have been enough to get me to Ghana. I am not a very courageous person and left to myself I am pretty sure I would have "chickened out." However, I have been working on simply being obedient to Him, even when it pushes me way out of my own comfort zone (and somehow obeying Him often seems to!). But I have come to know the joy of simply trusting Him as I follow His lead. And the bottom line is simply that I was called to go. So I am going – and am becoming excited about how He will use this experience, not only in the lives of the people I am around, but in my life as well. Because I can tell He's up to something...

I will be providing general pediatric care to villagers with no doctor. I will also be helping the physicians and surgeons in the Ho Regional hospitals and Aflao Hospital. I will do some teaching and perform surgery when we have pediatric surgical needs.

**International Health and Development
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INTERNATIONAL HEALTH & TROPICAL MEDICINE ELECTIVE IN GHANA

IHDN sponsored its first medical student from Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Mr. Cary Theivagt, to Ghana, March 29-April 26, 2003. Mr. Theivagt spent his time at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ho Regional Hospital and Aflao Hospital. Two more students, Ms. Rachel Reutter and Ms. Kristine Mace will be in Ghana from August 2-September 5. They would like to pursue careers in International Health and Tropical Medicine. Each student needs to raise about \$3,000 to pay for their airline ticket, immunizations, passport, board and lodging, books, study materials and travel in Ghana. Donations to the program help us develop this educational program for the benefit of SIU Medical School students.

2003 IHDN MISSION TEAM TO GHANA

A fourteen member IHDN mission team will leave the US for Ghana in August. The team is made up of volunteers recruited from Illinois and California and is subdivided into three smaller teams.

Team A: August 2-16

Dr. Ruth Mayforth, Pediatric Surgery & Clinics, Praise & Worship Band.

Team B: August 2-23

Dr. Edem Agamah - Outreach Medical Clinics, Christian leadership, Marriage & Family Life workshop, Sanitation & Roads Construction Management

Mrs. June Agamah - Teacher's Training & Sexual Abstinence Workshop, English & Math classes, Marriage & Family Life, Praise & Worship Band

Ms. Akpene Agamah – Praise & Worship Band, Teacher's Aide

Ms. Aseye Agamah – Praise & Worship Band

Ms. Alikem Agamah – Praise & Worship Band

Ms. Vivienne Dawkins – Nursing, Outreach Medical Clinics, Sexual Abstinence Workshop, Maternal Health, Praise & Worship Band

Ms. Ekuia Blankson – Diabetes Training, Medical Outreach Clinics

Mrs. Darlene Lane – Women's Enterprise, Praise & Worship Band

Mr. Curt Catherwood – Computer Science, Praise & Worship Band

Ms. Bethany Catherwood- English & Math, Praise & Worship Band

Ms. Angela Devine – Pharmacy Tech, Outreach Medical Clinics

Team C: August 2-September 5

Ms. Rachel Reutter- Outreach Medical Clinics, Medical Student Electives

Ms. Kristine Mace- Outreach Medical Clinics, Medical Student Electives

Please pray for a successful mission trip. Pray for the people we seek to reach. Pray for good health, traveling mercies, that God's name will be praised in all that we do.

IHDN welcomes the interest and support of friends as we seek to make a difference in the developing world. Please make your tax deductible gift payable to IHDN. Thank you.

IHDN FINANANCIAL UPDATE 2002

Total Cash contribution	\$32,291
Total Non Cash Contributions including medication, supplies & tax services	\$49,868
Interest Income	\$ 389
Total Revenue	\$82,548
Total Expenses	\$71,889
Net Balance	\$10,659

All IHDN workers are non-paid volunteers. We thank you for your generous contribution both financial and non-financial. May the Lord bless you.

IHDN RECEIVES MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Memorial donations were received in the names of the following: Mr. Thomas Lawless, Mrs. Frances Hartman and Mrs. Norma Ouellette. We appreciate the support of IHDN by their friends and families. We share in their grief and loss and we pray for God's strength and support for all.

HELP US BE GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR RESOURCES

From time to time we need to update our mailing list to be certain we are sending it only to those who wish to receive it. Due to the high costs of printing and mailing this newsletter we ask you to let us know if you wish to continue receiving the semi-annual IHDN News.

Please fill in and clip off the form below if you want to receive IHDN News in the future. Your mailing label is affixed to the reverse side to make it easier for us to identify you. If your name or address has changed or needs a correction, please indicate so on the label. Put the form in the attached envelope with the IHDN return address label.

Yes, I/we wish to continue to receive the IHDN News.

Please keep my/our name on the mailing list.

We will continue to support IHDN in our prayers and with our resources.

HELPING THE POOR

By Dr. Edem Agamah

Helping the poor is a very complex and frustrating but potentially rewarding vocation, when done properly. “Fighting for the poor” is a popular political phrase used by politicians to gain political support. Several millions of dollars are spent each year in relief and humanitarian assistance to poor countries. Despite all these efforts, the poor remain and the numbers keep growing.

Who are the poor of society?

Each year the list of the richest people in the world is published in financial journals. I have never seen any list of the poorest people in the world. One likely reason for this is that there are too many people eligible for that list and it would be a hard one to compile. So the poor are described in statistical terms. For example, anyone earning less than a pre-determined amount per year is described as living below the poverty level and therefore poor. There is a great deal of variability on this definition, depending on which country you live in and also where, within a particular country, you live. Thus the poor in the US will be considered rich using standards in most developing countries like Haiti or Ghana. Similarly a retiree on fixed income who moved from Connecticut to Mississippi could live a very decent life, which will not be possible if he or she did not move. Therefore it is not always easy to describe someone as poor without knowing the context.

Where do the poor come from?

The poor, like everybody else, grew in the mother’s womb before being born into this world. When you are born into an economically disadvantaged home or environment you are more likely to grow up to be poor, unless you receive a good education, get a good job and embrace good values like honesty, hard work and integrity. Similarly, if you are born with physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational handicaps you are more likely to become poor unless you get a lot of help. It is God who created both the rich and the poor, Proverbs 22:2. Most of us may not admit that we have handicaps. When we search our hearts carefully we can see that we all have spiritual handicaps. We were born with a sinful nature, separated from God and apart from Christ.

How do the poor feel about life?

Depending on where you live, poverty will bring hunger to you. Severe and prolonged hunger will lead to malnutrition and increase your susceptibility to infections. The poor in this state may be discouraged about life. With this impaired physical and emotional condition, the capacity to create wealth is reduced. The few who are enterprising will seek help from wherever they can get this help. The majority end up dying prematurely.

What does the Lord think of the poor?

The Lord Jesus never preached total eradication of material poverty. He reminded us that the poor will always remain with us, Mathew 26:11, Mark 14:7. But he reached out to the materially poor and hungry. He fed them with real food till they had surplus. He also preached the Good News to them, Luke 14:8. He described spiritual poverty and promised the kingdom of heaven to all who are spiritually poor, Mathew 5:3. He emphasized the difficulty that the materially rich will face in entering the kingdom of God, Luke 18:24, 25.

What is the societal response to the poor?

Governments, especially in the developed world, have designed various forms of welfare programs to help the poor. Well meaning citizens and groups also complement these efforts and extend these to overseas countries too. Unfortunately, the number of society’s poor keeps increasing and much faster than they can be helped. This is true especially in the developing world where over 70% of population lives in poor villages and towns. This makes it hard for their governments to develop welfare or public assistance programs.

HELPING THE POOR Continued.....

What is the response of IHDN to the poor?

The mission of IHDN is to contribute to help the poor. Our vision of poverty is multidimensional, just as it was described by the Lord Jesus. We seek to help people with poor physical health so we make diagnosis and treat them. We educate them on how to avoid getting sick by teaching them how common diseases are acquired. For example, mosquitoes carry malaria so if you kill the mosquitoes or prevent them from breeding, malaria rates will be reduced. We preach the Good News of Jesus Christ and point them towards heaven. We also promote healthy marriage and family lives to help meet their emotional needs. We also teach them how to make a living as they acquire skills in computer science and enterprise.

Even though the people we are serving in Ghana are materially poor, they are spiritually rich as we find out each year. We give them a little material and physical help for a short time but they end up blessing us spiritually. They teach us each day we spend with them how to be thankful for everything we have in the US. We learn about the strength and beauty of a community and its potential for impacting the world. These aspects of our work are the most rewarding.

We want to encourage people, especially those who love the Lord, to venture out of their comfort zones. We should think not only of meeting our needs. We should find ways to bless the less fortunate around us. If you get involved in helping the poor it will cost you something. You will be giving away your time, resources or knowledge. You may be inconvenienced and not be appreciated. However, you will be honoring the Lord's Name. He will use this to bless you as you also bless people. Remember, it is more blessed to give than to receive, Acts 20:35.

Let us hear from you today.

HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Dr. Edem Agamah was awarded both the Sangamon County Medical Society Alliance and Illinois Medical Society Alliance Humanitarian award for 2003. This was recognizing the work of IHDN in Ghana. Dr. Agamah dedicates this award to all of you for supporting our efforts. Our goal remains the same, to glorify God's name with our work. We thank these organizations for recognizing our work in Ghana.

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