



Healing and Hope

MISSION DOCTORS ASSOCIATION



It is a joy to get to know a group of people over a long period of time. One learns the rhythms, the languages, the customs, and the interesting ways of working out conflict and best of all, things that make people laugh. One of the running jokes over the past six years in Bwambo Village has been “Mimi si nabii, LAKINI”, meaning, I am not a prophet, BUT... .” Our children will often use this phrase, with index finger in the air, to warn us of impending joys or disasters while working in the village hospital, cooking on the wood stove, or sliding down the muddy road in the South Pare Mountains. We must do our best to predict the future, while retaining a sense of humor (and patience!).

This is life in the mission field.

This past year has been made up of great expectations, futile attempts, great tests of patience, and some joyous accomplishments. Our family, along with a large group of volunteers, spent six weeks in Bwambo (our sixth year

running) continuing our work with MDA to support the parish and hospital staff in their heroic efforts to develop Bwambo Health Center into a self-sustaining entity. When we first arrived in 2009, there were six staff members, one priest, and no doctor. Today there are over 20 people on staff, a Medical Officer, a full-time physician/surgeon, a nurses training program, and volunteers rotating through from Europe and the U.S. We could not have predicted the many fruits that would grow from our efforts to bring much-needed supplies and medical training to Bwambo through donations, volunteer hours, and huge hearts of gold to back us.

From a parishioner in Minnesota came a new ultrasound machine which has diagnosed diseases and saved thousands of lives.

From friends in California came three water tanks which provide all of the water needed at the parish and hospital, making sterilization...

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Counterculture: (koun-ter-kuhl-cher]

noun

1. the culture and lifestyle of those people who reject or oppose the dominant values and behavior of society.
2. a follower of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

We know that Jesus invites us, his followers, to reject the dominant values of society and instead choose love. Pope Francis recently articulated this beautifully:

The world tells us to seek success, power and money;
God tells us to seek humility, service and love.

While there are many ways to live this mandate, often people look at the doctors who pack up their bags, their young families, leave behind a medical practice, potential for income, and chose to work instead with limited resources, in rural areas of Africa and Latin America - and they ask 'Why?'

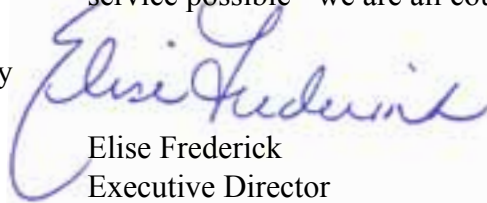
The answer is found in both Jesus' invitation, and the way Pope Francis has reminded us that we are called to be countercultural.

Mission Doctors have chosen to reject what the world tells them to seek and chose instead humility, service and love.

While not everyone can be at the bedside of a patient Cameroon or Peru - all of us can look at how we participate and respond to our invitation from God. The doctors who serve cannot do it alone. The sacrifice they make must be met by the generosity of those who make their service possible. Your countercultural generosity does just that. It makes it possible for these generous doctors to serve.

With five doctors serving long-term and dozens going out short-term in the past year, Mission Doctors needs your help more than ever.

As always, we are here to answer questions - if you are a doctor feeling called to serve or someone able to make their service possible - we are all countercultural.



Elise Frederick
Executive Director

**TOGETHER, WE
SUPPORT CATHOLIC
DOCTORS AND
THEIR FAMILIES
WHO SERVE IN
RESPONSE
TO REQUESTS FROM
MISSIONARY BISHOPS**



OVER 46,000 PATIENTS SERVED IN 2014



**TRAINED MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS
IN TWELVE HOSPITALS AND CLINICS**

**MISSION DOCTORS
SERVED OVER
11,000 HOURS
IN 2014**

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hygiene, and drinking water available to all patients and staff.

From a friend in St. Paul, came a donation to refurbish a dilapidated house, which has now become a new convent for medical missionary sisters from India.

From over 100 generous friends, came a new ambulance which carries patients up and down the mountain for emergency care. (Even a young mother delivered her baby safely in the back of the ambulance last week!)

From donated manuals and laptops, came an entire course in OB/GYN care for the nurses training program.

When we first arrived in 2009, there were six staff members, one priest, and no doctor. Today there are over 20 people on staff, a Medical Officer, a full-time physician/surgeon, a nurses training program, and volunteers rotating through from Europe and the U.S.

And from the great generosity of doctors, Mark Druffner, Don Wessel, Greg Young, Jim Hake, and resident Fr. Dr. Beda Kiure, came an abundance of medical supplies, text books and training sessions for medical personnel and Signe Markell who started the very first eye clinic.

I suspect that this experience of “loaves and fishes” is familiar to most of our MDA volunteers.

It’s humbling.

It’s satisfying.

It’s transforming!

It’s the Holy Spirit in action through the care, hard work, and compassion of our big-hearted donors and volunteers.

I am not a prophet, BUT

I think we will see many more baskets, full-to-overflowing, through the great work that Mission Doctors are doing all over the world.

We are very grateful to be able to bring our few loaves and fishes to East Africa and witness the loving power of a generous God.

Thank you MDA!

Molly Delaney Druffner (and family)

Mark and Molly Druffner are a blessing to the people of the Diocese of Same. Since 2009, Mark has served as a physician during the summers and Molly and their seven children have become involved in every aspect of the Parish and Hospital.



Molly with some of the local children



Surgery at Buambo Health Center, Tanzania



Healthy Baby Clinic, Tanzania

Visit the Druffner’s blog at
www.DruffnerMissiontoTanzania.blogspot.com



2015 Retreat/Seminar

Coming Together to Prepare

Doctors and their spouses from Florida to California gathered this year at Loyola Marymount University to hear from veteran Mission Doctors, staff and Board members about the opportunities to serve short-term with MDA. This Retreat/Seminar weekend provides a unique opportunity to learn about mission locations and the joys and challenges of serving short-term. The gathering also allows our veteran Mission Doctors to share their experience and discuss the daily ins and outs of service.

If you are interested in serving with Mission Doctors, this weekend is a great place to start. The annual Retreat/Seminar takes place in the Spring. For more information, visit our website.

Reflection on Formation

When I first contacted MDA, I was planning on practicing medicine in a remote part of Africa. What I was looking for was a facilitator for my dream - I already knew what I was going to do in Africa, I just needed someone to get me there.

Enter MDA. I was impressed by what I saw during discernment, and later at the MDA board meeting. Many members of the board were veteran Mission Doctors who loved the experience so much that they wanted to continue on in another capacity. They would be good facilitators for my dream.



Dr. Martha Franz

I wanted to learn how to treat cerebral malaria, how to make rounds in a hospital with 200 beds, 5 physicians, and no ER... Gradually, I became aware that my mission was not only going to practice medicine in Njinikom...

I joined four other lay missionaries, shared the same house and meals, and had classes every day for four months. The classes, while interesting, were frustratingly lacking in medical instruction. I wanted to learn how to treat cerebral malaria, how to make rounds in a hospital with 200 beds, 5 physicians, and no ER. I wanted to learn everything I could about practicing medicine in a resource-limited, rural hospital. But instead, I was learning how to interact with other cultures and people, how to acknowledge and validate my own culture and emotions without imposing them on others, and how to incorporate God and prayer into my daily life, and to make it a part of me, rather than just something that is done at Mass.

This was all well and good, but how would it help me to treat the child with severe malnutrition, or the pregnant woman with HIV? Gradually, I became aware that my mission was not only going to practice medicine in Njinikom, Cameroon - that would be a part, for sure - but my mission is also to go to Njinikom, meet people, form relationships, learn the culture, and let them change me.

The medicine, while important, is secondary. As Elise would tell me, my gift to them is myself, not only my medical knowledge.

Martha Franz just completed the four month formation program for long-term service with Mission Doctors. She will begin a three year assignment at St. Martin De Porres Hospital.

Visit Martha's blog at
www.DrMarthaInCameroon.blogspot.com

A Month in Uganda

Lying on a reclining bench at Gate T-72 at Brussels Airport, awaiting our flight to Washington DC, I blink, questioning if one month ago I had sat in this exact same chair en route to Kigali Rwanda. A blink, a flash, a breath, a dream, a month gone by. From the day after our arrival at St. Francis Hospital in Uganda until the day before we left, Clare and I saw, evaluated and treated children daily. I think when a month feels like a moment, it surely must have been rich with life and growth that will take months and years to understand.

Our first full day in Uganda was Good Friday. On rounds, the three toughest cases were a child with sepsis/cerebral malaria, another with severe pneumonia and a third who was a three pound premature infant. Struggling to re-orient myself to resource-limited medical care and the subtleties of life at St. Francis Hospital, we stand helplessly watching the premature infant die.

Later that day, sitting in the chapel during the Good Friday services, I try to make sense of the fears and failures of the day. The rain begins to hit the metal roof during the prayers of petitions. Heavier and heavier, louder and louder, drowning out all voices, so loud that even thinking is difficult. In the center of the chapel my gaze is held by the crucifix, a wooden carving that depicts Christ dying on the cross, behind Jesus is God the Father standing with outstretched arms supporting the nailed hands of His son. Unable to think through the pounding rain, laden with the frustrations and pain of the infant's death and the day's suffering, all that I am able to do is sit and know somewhere deep in my gut that I join in Christ's suffering. Sometimes we may not understand God's purpose for us or sense God's presence. Our challenge is to accept this and to trust the road God leads us down, wherever it may go. So I am given the strength to wait.



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Each day is full, with children in the pediatric ward, the nursery of premature infants, children in the surgical ward, and outpatient consults. Together Clare, our eldest daughter on her last rotation of medical school, and I work together through the days' challenges. Clare was two years old when we made our first trip with Mission Doctors Association and spent several years at St. Mary's Hospital in Papua New Guinea. There she spoke pidgin English and spent her days running around the compound with her friends. Now, 25 years later, she is again overseas with us, this time full of ability and compassion, able to help serve others in need.

Perhaps it is wise to trust the roads God leads us on.

The Coda family first joined Mission Doctors in 1989. They attended the nine-month formation and then served with their young family for three years in Papua New Guinea at St. Mary's Hospital, Vunapope. They began serving short-term in 2004, beginning at Shisong Hospital in Cameroon, and have served several times, including this most recent mission in Mutotle, Uganda.



The Strength of a Child

Rusbel comes from a small indigenous community several hours up river from Santa Clotilde. Like most kids on the river, he was delivered at home and attended to by his father and grandmother. However, his parents noted he was not stooling and only had a small opening where his anus should be. They came down river to the Santa Clotilde where the priest-physicians before us diagnosed a congenital defect of an imperforate anus. He was transferred to the regional hospital and had a successful operation to place a diverting ostomy. This surgery allowed his intestine to normally pass into a bag attached to his abdomen. This remarkable young boy has lived in his community, but like other kids he has enjoyed playing soccer, going to class and helping take care of his little siblings. He had periodic check-ups in Iquitos. The doctors told them he could have the surgery to reverse his ostomy when he was 10 years old.

In January, Rusbel, still 9, woke up like any other morning. He helped take care of his siblings while his parents worked their small plot of land to harvest some yucca and plantains. When they came back, they found Rusbel doubled over in pain with a prolapse of his ostomy - almost 2 feet of intestine had telescoped out of the small hole in his abdomen outside of his body. This occurred around midday and they immediately got into their "pequi pequi" (hollowed out canoe with outboard motor) and made the 8 hour trip once again to Santa Clotilde.

Toni was the first doctor on the scene. She lifted up his shirt and had to sit down and catch her breath for one second and then move into action. Rusbel lay there somnolent with very weak pulses. His blood pressure was so low we could not get a reading. Our nurses quickly started an IV and fluids. A nurse came to knock on the door to tell me Toni needed me because a kid came with his intestines on his stomach. I seriously thought he was joking...when he said he wasn't I rushed down to her side. We quickly decided on which IV antibiotics to give, called in the lab and covered his viscera with wet gauze and plastic to prevent an excess of fluid loss. I stayed up with him that night with the nurses frequently checking his vital signs, temperature and moistening his dressings.

ABC - Antoinette (Toni), Brian and Charlie. This young family have now served two years at Santa Clotilde Mission. In a location reachable only by a journey that includes 5 - 7 hours on the Amazon and Napo Rivers, they care for the patients who arrive at the hospital, sometimes following an all night trip on the river in a dugout canoe. They deliver babies, treat injuries and illnesses and reach out to the many outstations that are a part of their work.

At the break of dawn, we carried him down to the river edge and got into our small boat to journey to the regional hospital.

Rusbel's father and I attended to him during the 6-hour journey to the hospital giving him IV pain medications and fluids. He was much more alert then when first arrived at Santa Clotilde, but started spiking fevers. Time was not on our side. His viscera was swollen and beginning to lose blood supply and die. He needed surgery if he could only hang on until our arrival. The ambulance met us in the port in Iquitos and took us directly to the emergency room. The doctors had the same reaction we had in Santa Clotilde. They rushed him to the operating room. Rusbel had one cardiac arrest on the table, but was resuscitated. The surgeon had to remove about 2 feet of intestine, reconnect it and make another ostomy to drain. Rusbel was in critical condition. The surgeon called to say he "has done all he could and the child is now in God's hands alone."

No truer words could have been spoken, "he is in God's hands." Rusbel, after spending three days in a medicine induced coma, awoke alert and talking; his ostomy working and draining normally. After a week in recovery in the regional hospital, he was transferred back to Santa Clotilde for continued ostomy care and nutrition. He was treated for parasites, and after recovering his strength and 10 pounds, Rusbel was strong enough to make the trip to Lima where he is now in our patient house awaiting surgery at the national Children's Hospital.

Rusbel is one of many cases that arrive at any hour of the day to Santa Clotilde along the remote region of the Napo River.

We are here serving as Mission Doctors and we are grateful for your prayers, donations and support to continue the work of "God's Hands" here in Peru.

Thank You and God Bless!



Reflections

Since our arrival to Njinikom, we have heard the following words again and again from the Sisters, from the staff and from the patients. "Courage" and "We Are Together."

Faces fill the mind.

Tears have flowed, warm embraces given and received.

Webs of hope, connections strengthened, and patterns intertwined.

A future not seen, another mountain to climb.

The sun sets, the sun rises. The babe cries, the mother says goodbye.

We feel alone, but we are not.

We are together. Together we have courage.

Together we continue down the path....the path that God has chosen.



*Brent, Jennifer, Elizabeth, Julianne,
Christopher & Nicholas*

Mission Doctors Brent Burket and Jennifer Thoene share this article with us from rural Njinikom, Cameroon. The couple is in the third year of a long term mission serving with their four young children at St. Martin De Porres Hospital. Jennifer and Brent have also served long-term with MDA in Ghana and Guatemala.

Visit the Burket Thoene Family Mission blog at
www.BurketThoeneFamilyMission.blogspot.com

The Heart of Mission Doctors

The human heart beats 100,000 times in a day, about 35 million beats in one year, oxygen and nutrients sent - Mission Doctors Auxiliary is the heart of MDA. Their work for more than 50 years has ensured that doctors are sent to Latin America and Africa.

On Valentine's Day, the Mission Doctors Auxiliary hosted a Gala Benefit "Heart for the World" at the W Hotel in Hollywood, California. Ms. Jane Fehrenbacher and Dr. Richard Talbot were the recipients of the 2015 Msgr. Anthony Brouwers Award. Jane first served three years in Zimbabwe with a young family and her late husband, Dr. James Carey. Fast forward four decades and Jane, with husband Dr. Richard Talbot, DDS, take off for the first of 'Dick and Jane's MDA Adventures' to Cameroon. They took along supplies and equipment to facilitate and improve the dental care to be provided at St. Martin de Porres Hospital. This first trip laid the ground work for another where Dick would continue to provide training and direct patient care and Jane would work with students and teachers alike.

In addition to serving long and short-term in Africa, Jane and Dick, along with the entire Carey Family, have supported the idea of making it possible for other young families to serve as a way of honoring the memory of Dr. James Carey. This portion of the MDA Endowment is helping to provide loan repayment for two doctors currently serving in Peru, making their mission a mission possible.

This year's record breaking Gala brought in close to \$100,000 with our Patrons, Silent Auction and Raffle.

Plans are already underway for the 2016 event which will be held at the Loews Hollywood on February 13, 2015. Our honorees will be Dr. and Mrs. Lou Coda, who first served with Mission Doctors in Papua New Guinea 25 years ago. You can read about their recent service in this newsletter on page five.

Can you join the Auxiliary? Of course! Mission Doctors Auxiliary is planning additional events locally. Read the upcoming events for more information.



Auxiliary President, Bonnie Flaherty kicking the night off



Dick and Jane



The Ultimate Mission

As Mission Doctors, we are called to reveal the love of Christ. Everything else is an insignificant detail.

For those of us trained as physicians, this is a difficult lesson to learn, but one that is essential to our mission. After 15 years of short-term medical missions in Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru, I have come to realize that the people I serve are not really starving for more medicine. They are starving for a more profound form of healing. They are starving for Christ's love—just as I am.

The medical details of what I do in mission are important only if I show to my patients the love of Jesus. I must reflect Jesus' love, or I have done nothing of consequence.

As Saint Mother Teresa said, "It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving."

This is why the Catholic element of Mission Doctors Association is so important. Ultimately, it is the one gift we offer that has lasting importance. Medicine is a perfect vessel for our mission, but it is not the ultimate mission.

Phil Hawley has served with Mission Doctors for over 15 years and he is preparing to serve once again at Guadalupe Clinic in Loja, Ecuador. As a member of the Board of Directors of MDA, Phil brings his considerable gifts to help ensure the future of MDA.

Stock Donations

Your gift of stock can double your tax benefits!

When you are able to make a direct gift of stock or other property that has realized a "gain," you do not have to recognize the gain. These rules allow for the "doubling up," so to speak of tax benefits:

1. A charitable deduction of the full value.
2. Plus avoiding tax on the appreciation in value of the stock or property.

Stock must have been held for at least one year. You are encouraged to check with your tax professional to see if this is something that would benefit you and the many patients served by Mission Doctors.

If you would like more information on how to make a gift of stock or property, please call our office.



Upcoming Events

August 15, 2015: Application Deadline for the 2016 long-term program.

September 18-20, 2015: Discernment Weekend Candidates for the long-term program are invited to reflect on their call and learn more about this option.

October 18, 2015: White Mass This year's mass will be held again at Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels with celebrant Archbishop Jose Gomez. MDA will present the Catholic Doctor of the Year Award at this Mass. All are welcome. www.CatholicWM.org

Fall 2015: Card Party Join the Auxiliary at the Wilshire Country Club for a day of games and a wonderful lunch. Contact our office for more details and an invitation.

February 13, 2016: Auxiliary Annual Gala Mark your calendars and plan to join us at the Loews Hollywood for a lovely evening of dinner and dancing. MDA will present the 2016 Msgr. Anthony Brouwers Award to Dr. Lou and Mrs. Martha Coda.

March, 2016: Retreat/Seminar Doctors and their spouses considering short-term service are invited to attend the annual Retreat/Seminar at Loyola Marymount University. Contact our office for more details.

March, 2016: Annual Appreciation Mass and Brunch Friends of MDA are invited to join us to celebrate our annual Mass, followed by a brunch at St. Robert's Hall, and an opportunity to meet the doctors who have come together for the Retreat/Seminar.



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