

# Living Hope

## HIMM Quenches Thirst in Orphans

*For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat: I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink ...” (Mathew 25: 35)*

In 2005, the chairman of the Nigerian Red Cross Society Chief Mac Anthony Ahamefula requested for assistance from HIMM on behalf of its Motherless Babies Home located in Owerri. “We have had to contend with a large influx of motherless and abandoned babies in the orphanage. Some mothers have left their HIV infected babies for us to care for. We have little or no help coming from members of the public.” said Chief Ahamefula. During mission 2008, we were able to answer the call for help.

Dr. Kennedy Okere, HIMM’s Mission 2008 evangelist, Pastor Carolyn White and other team members visited the orphanage to assess its condition. Just as Chief Ahamefula had described, the facility was indeed in a deplorable condition. There was no water to drink or do laundry; the home had only cribs in which babies as well as older kids slept and the cribs were in very bad condition; the kids were ill and malnourished due to lack of food and poor sanitary conditions around the area where the food is prepared. Volunteers had to make several long distance trips to fetch water in buckets for the Home; the water fetched would never last a whole day to meet the needs of the orphanage. HIMM donated a bag of rice, medications and money but we realized that the orphanage still needed help. “I looked at the children, and though their lips did not move, I could hear a still small voice in me saying, give them water to drink, they are thirsty; I felt that this was the Lord’s voice speaking to me.” said Dr. Kennedy Okere.

World Children’s Fund and the Sycamore Network of Savannah, Georgia assisted HIMM in raising funds to dig borehole water and construct a well system consisting of two large

water storage tanks installed on a stand and attached to an electric powered pump system. This system allows the orphanage workers to pump water from the borehole and fill up the two storage tanks. The water can be treated and used for drinking and cooking. It also eliminates the need to travel long distances to fetch water. The children at the Orphanage home rejoiced when they saw water run from the tap extending from pipes attached to the tanks. All the kids were anxious to drink and quench their thirst. Dr Okere named the water system the “River of Life Water System”, for whoever drinks from the Well will never thirst again. HIMM also assisted in furnishing the

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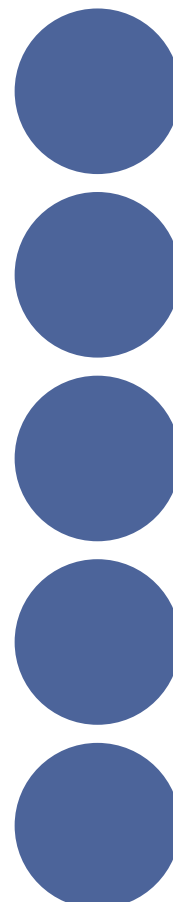
**Orphan Kids Drinking from the River of Live Well**



**Orphan Kids Getting Water from the New Well System**

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## President's Message ...

### *The Triumphal Entry*



**Kennedy K. Okere, MD**

**M**ission 2008 was the most difficult mission year HIMM has ever prepared for. Mainly spiritual and psychological issues burdened this year's mission as opposed to physical ailments which characterized our previous mission. Also, due to financial constraints, issues with airline regulations and transportation of our luggage and medication, it was doubtful we would make the trip. However, as the time drew closer the Lord started to open doors for us through our supporters, and on the actual travel date, the airline we were to travel on changed regulations which allowed us to transport all the medication we had available at minimal costs. The end result of our trials was our triumphal entry into Nigeria to hold another successful medical mission.

Just as in 2006, we were able to visit five different towns seeing a total of 2500 patients in two weeks. Along with visiting different towns we were also able to hold a medical mission at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO). This made it possible for us to serve the needs of students in the university. We also visited the Red Cross Motherless Babies' Home located in Owerri. We found that the needs of the home are overwhelming; they lack water, bedding and cribs for the babies and food is scarce. We were able to donate food, money and medications to the home and we successfully completed constructing a well for the home. This well involves digging borehole water and installing water storage tanks to serve as a reservoir for storing water pumped from the well.

As is usual with our mission cases, hypertension was the most dominant health issue we encountered. This disease is still a major cause of mortality and morbidity in Nigeria and HIMM will continue to fight against the silent killer. HIMM will not relent in its effort keeping blood pressure under control and preventing its long term complications of which stroke, congestive heart failure and kidney failure are the main culprits in Nigeria. After extensive consultations with the Director of Health at FUTO, Dr C.O Emerole, HIMM has decided to partner with the university in carrying out studies on hypertension. As part of our educational service to the people we will implement a door-to-door teaching program on Hypertension, malaria and diabetes.

HIMM expresses deep appreciation to our cooperate friends- Tekeda Pharmaceutical Industry, St. Joseph & Candler Hospital in Savannah, Georgia, South West Community Church, Savannah, GA, MAP International, AmeriCares and the American people for there great sacrifice in donation of medication and hard earned dollars. Special thanks go to Pastor Carolyn White and other team members who joined in counseling and prayers for our patients. I do hope as you read this newsletter you will find out the extent your donations have contributed to the welfare of the people of Africa.

*High Chief Kennedy Kelechi Okere, MD*

**President**

## HIMM at Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO)



**Prof. Celestine Onwuliri and Dr. Okere**

In 2007, Professor Celestine Onwuliri, Vice Chancellor, FUTO requested HIMM consider holding a medical mission on the university campus grounds and provide free medical care to the university students. Prof. Onwuliri proposed to permit people in the neighboring towns on to the campus grounds to receive free treatment as well. HIMM was pleased to be able to fulfill the request and used the university campus as a site for free medical services during Mission 2008.

FUTO provided physicians who worked with the HIMM team. We deeply appreciate the fact that though the university requested for HIMM's visit, they also provided workers to help increase the number of patients that were seen. These physicians included Dr. Lawson, Dr. Egwim Isaac, and Dr. E.C Ezeribe. The university also provided a pharmacist and six nurses to join our team. This collaborative effort enabled us to

see 500 patients on the university grounds.

Professor C.O.E Onwuliri was Dr. Okere's undergraduate academic adviser and research project supervisor at the University of Jos, Nigeria. "I am proud to say that some years ago Dr. Okere was my student. Today I call him my son, a colleague, a hero and a champion, as we join hands to make this world a better place." said Prof. Onwuliri.

To promote further collaboration with the university, Dr. Okere formed a relationship with the Director of Medical Services, FUTO, Dr. C. O. Emeharole to engage in research studies on Hypertension control, with emphasis on non pharmacologic treatment approaches in rural communities in Imo State-Nigeria. HIMM will continue to work with local universities in Nigeria to achieve affordable health care for the rural population.



**Patient Suffering from A Stroke**

## HIMM Celebrates Easter for the Less Privileged



**Children Enjoying Easter Lunch**

Many do not have problems receiving gifts from friends and well wishers during Christmas or Easter in the developed world but the reverse is the case in the developing world. Some kid's do not have much to eat neither do they have people to spend time with at such special moment. HIMM was honored to host 200 children for the Easter. In the United States, part of the Easter celebration includes Easter egg hunts for the kids; in Africa, this fun filled process is not available for the kids to enjoy. Even if it is, the kids suffer more from lack of food and would prefer to have meal which they have not had before, or have not had for a long time. Feeding the kids and allowing them to sing and dance was enough to make them happy for the day.



## Help Put a Smile on This Face



**46 Year Old Woman with Cleft Lip**

Anna Uzoma is a 46yr old female who was born with a left oral tear (cleft lip). Anna believes that when she was a baby, her baby sitter gave her poison and so she developed this worsening tear along the left of her mouth. We have dealt with many cases of pediatric cleft lip and palate but very few cases of adult cleft lip/palate; nevertheless, none has been associated with poison.

Anna has not been to any doctor for treatment. She is socially withdrawn and covers her mouth often with handkerchief because of the tear. This condition has affected her marriage. While I interviewed her, she cried during the course of the interview and repeatedly said, "Please help me to look like other normal people in my village." This is an atypical adult cleft lip case; it will cost \$1000 for Anna to receive treatment. Your contribution can help restore hope and life to Anna. Please make checks out to Horizon International Medical Missions, Inc – memo Anna Uzoma and mail to:

Horizon International Medical Missions, Inc  
Attn: Kennedy Okere, MD  
111 Lions Gate Rd,  
Savannah, GA 31419

All contributions are tax exempt.

## Rising Incidents of Glaucoma, Cataract and Night Blindness in Nigeria



**Patients Selecting Glasses**

It is common to hear many patients who come to our mission clinics complain that they are suffering from blurred vision. This condition prevents some of them from working. The traditional rulers of the towns from which the people hail have requested for government assistance in curing, controlling or eliminating blindness due to cases of glaucoma, cataract or night blindness. Night blindness is a result of vitamin A deficiency. This is preventable in children by giving them vitamin A.



**Little Girl with Vitamin A Deficiency**

HIMM has only been able to help prevent night blindness in children by supplying them with vitamin A, and has been able to help patients who need reading glasses. We have not been able to provide much assistance to patients suffering from glaucoma or cataract. We use this opportunity to request assistance from ophthalmologists who are ready to offer their skills in a mission to the developing world. If you are interested or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Kennedy Okere at [kennedy@himm.org](mailto:kennedy@himm.org).

## Governor of Imo State His Excellency Chief Ikedi Ohakim Commends HIMM

HIMM in collaboration with Willy-Esther Foundation, Inc brought hope and succor to the people of Awaka and Emii in Owerri North, Imo State. We were able to attend to four hundred and fifty (450) patients at Awaka and three hundred (300) patients in Emii. Dr. Chukwueme Enwere, an OB/GYN specialist, and Professor Felicia Eke, a Pediatrician and the Dean of Clinical Science at University of Port Harcourt assisted the mission team. Due to their presence we were able to see more pediatric and OB patients.

The commissioner for Health Dr. V. Odokwu, who represented the Governor of Imo State at the mission opening ceremony, in his opening remarks said, "The government of Imo State is impressed with the efforts HIMM is making in rural health development. The organization effort is in line with the efforts of the state government to bring rural health care to the door step of our people". The governor, through Dr. Odokwu, advised HIMM to keep records of patients seen in the clinic so that the Ministry of Health can follow up with the patients at the conclusion of the free medical mission.

Through the special efforts of the Willy-Ester Foundation, USA, headed by Chief Prof. Alexander D. W. Acholonu, who is the president and CEO of the organization, and students from the School of Medical

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**Orphanage Kitchen and Lady Cooking Outside**

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Home's newly built kitchen so that the workers will not have to cook outside with firewood again. Cooking inside the kitchen will reduce housefly carrying diseases such as cholera.

Mr. Kelechi Ihueze, the secretary of the Red Cross Society, Owerri, on behalf of the Society expressed his appreciation for all the improvements applied to the orphanage. He expressed his gratitude to the Sycamore Network, World Children's Fund and HIMM for their love and dedication for serving God and doing the work He has set apart for us to do. Mr. Ihueze said "We have prayed for years for God to quench our thirst and now he has answered us through Dr. Okere and other people of God who work with him, we are very grateful".



**Dr. Okere (Right) Donating a Sac of Rice to the Orphanage**



**Inside the Orphanage showing cribs where all the kids sleep, regardless of their age or size**



## HIMM Visits Owerri Municipal

*Healing must be to the mind, body and soul to be complete*



**Children Scavenging Trash**

Community Baptist Church, Owerri requested for HIMM to hold a medical and evangelical mission at their church site in 2007; we were able to fulfill their request during Mission 2008.

The Community Baptist Church is a young church, planted by Rev. Dr. Clement Amadi at a location where illegal drug use and other kinds of illegal activities used to take place. The children found in this environment suffer from extreme poverty and malnourishment. They spend most of their time wandering aimlessly and digging for things in the trash. Psychological and spiritual issues are the main ailments of this community.

Though we dealt with medical ailments such as wound care, arthritis, hypertension, malaria, etc, our main tools of rehabilitation were counseling and prayers. At the end of the day we felt drained. This was as a result of just listening to deep confessions of crimes committed by these patients in the past and walking them through the guilt and pain associated with it. The good news is that we achieved great success in the number of people who were willing to change their life styles for good and contribute positively to their community. Rev Dr. Clement Amadi, who is also the pastor of the church, hopes to continue ministering in the area and continue the rehabilitation process these patients need. The holistic approach to medicine is the key to success in this community, and this is the basis on which HIMM will continue to approach ailments in our missions.



**Man suffering from Arthritis and requesting for prayers**

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Laboratory Technology, Imo State University, HIV screening was done at the mission sites. Those who tested positive were referred to the Federal Medical Center, Owerri for treatment. It was an eye opener to the villagers when they realized that the HIV infection really is at their door step. Many had rebuffed the idea that they would ever be infected with HIV – no matter the life style they desired to live. Unfortunately, some of them and/or their relatives were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and these patients are now fading away due to complications of the disease. In addition to rebuffing the idea of infection, there is also the problem of convincing people to go for HIV screening. The major reason behind refusing screening is the fear of societal rejection if tested positive. We are very grateful the contribution and the efforts of Dr Enwere, Professor Eke, Chief Alexander Acholonu and the medical lab technicians who assisted with Mission 2008.



**From the Left, Chief Acholonu, Dr. V. Odokwu & Mr. Ukpong, PharmD**

## Pastor's Corner: Answering God's Call

By Pastor Carolyn White

### God's Call for Me to Survive

I am a minister at the Pentecostal Sanctuary Church, Savannah, Georgia. I suffered from an illness that put me in a coma for three weeks. One would think that my time on earth was up, but God said that it was not. He told me he had more for me to do. He asked me to rise and walk ... and so I did.

### God's Call for Me to Serve A Little Longer

Dr Okere has been my family physician for four years. I learned of HIMM directly from him. I had always been intrigued by his stories, so I decided to read more. I visited the organization website and read stories of their past mission trips. I became excited at what I read about the mission team and other people who had traveled with the team. After my time in the hospital, God tugged on my hear constantly putting the idea within me that I needed to take my experience of God's love and God's word and share with people in Africa. Despite worries and doubt from family and friends because of their concern for my health, I pressed on making preparations for the trip. I knew God was still leading me to go to Africa for this mission. I was more encouraged because I was traveling with my doctor with whom I share a passion for Christ.

### My Answer to God's Call to Survive and Serve



**Pastor White laying hands and praying for the people**

It was a long trip ... 10-12 hour straight flight from Savannah, Georgia into Lagos, Nigeria, an hour and a half flight from Lagos to Port Harcourt, and the last part of the journey, an hour drive from Port Harcourt to Ihiagwa, Imo State – the central location for the medical mission. I had survived the journey, now it was time to serve.

Multiple talents can be used to carryout mission work. I prayed and counseled with people, but I also engaged in crowd control. You must realize that the majority, if not all, of the people do not have easy or immediate access to medical care. So any opportunity the people have, they will rush at the chance for medical attention before the chance is lost. As a result, the crowd was rowdy at almost every mission site we visited. I took the responsibility of organizing the crowd and giving out cards so that they can see the doctor in an orderly fashion.

At one of the mission sites called Emii, there were not enough rooms in the building for me to consult privately with people, so I was asked to attend to people in the yard, under a large tree. This was wonderful for me; the weather was hot but there was a cool breeze under the tree. As I sat and ministered to the people, I found out that many of them had the same requests. The majority of the people at Emii came to the site not only to see the medical team, but also to request for prayers, consultation or they came with the desire to know the basic truth about Jesus and His Saving Grace. God laid it on my heart to make open alter call for healing and salvation. To God be the glory, we witnessed physical healing, 35 people gave their life to the Lord Jesus for the first time and others renewed their faith in the Lord. Though the people do speak English, it was difficult for them to understand me because of my accent, so I had an interpreter assigned to me. I continued to share God's word with the people with this wonderful lady interpreting for me. When I made the alter call, she was one of the first to be saved. The atmosphere at Emii was filled with joy and praise worship.

I am eternally grateful for the opportunity God gave me to serve in Africa. I will recommend foreign missions to Ministers. Getting out of your comfort zone to do the work God has prepared for you to do is very fulfilling.



**Pastor White**

## Supporter's Corner

Dear Kennedy,

Claire and I are very pleased to be able to support your mission trip again this year. Because two of my close friends in college were sons of Nigerian missionaries, because my student government in college was active in providing humanitarian relief during the Biafran war, and because Kennedy Okere is our friend, Nigeria is one of the countries for whom I often pray.

Lately my prayers have turned around the need for integrity in Nigeria and my concerns about relations between followers of Islam in the North and Christians in the Southern part of the country. In the preaching part of your ministry when you go home, I hope you can emphasize the need for a personal sense of integrity in the Christian community. This will not solve the problems of corruption in the government that so hinder the growth of the Nigerian economy ... but one can only develop national integrity on the example of its citizens. I also hope that you and your Christian colleagues can remember Christ's admonition to pray for our enemies in framing responses to the violence that sometimes arises between Islam and Christians.

Thank you for being the hands and feet for our prayers in Nigeria,

Ed Wheeler



**Dr & Mrs. Ed Wheeler and Dr. & Mrs.  
Kennedy Okere**



***"Touching the World with Medicine"***

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