



Because all people should have access to a healthy life.
Photo taken in Cameroon.

Global Health Ministries

Newsletter

R.O.L.E.



I invite you to learn with me (or re-learn) a few fundamental lessons for ministry from some outstanding teachers.

"Thank the Lord for giving us the honor to work with you." Jim Noss penned these words to a Malagasy colleague just a month before he

died on May 15, 2021. Thousands heard such words from Jim over his seven+ decades living and serving in the USA, Haiti, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Madagascar and South Sudan. He valued people, and trusted that God was working in and through every connection he made, from a random stranger to a national leader.

Driving across Cameroon together, Jim once said to me, "The biggest thing I've learned in my life is how important it is to take time, no matter your schedule. To drink a cup of coffee...to sit down...to wrap your arms around people. You don't even have to say anything, just the gesture...can move mountains."

~ continued page 2



This 40' container arrived Cameroon in late June, full of items for 4 hospitals, 24 health centers, 2 clinics for OSEELC, the health department of the Lutheran Church in Cameroon, and 2 health centers in CAR. There are 21 hospital beds from Iowa behind this wall of boxes! GHM has partnered in Cameroon for 34 years, building relationships that improve access to health for some of the world's most vulnerable people.

~ continued from page 1



Walking for water, Tanzania

Jim thanked God for each person he encountered and took time to engage with each one. It's a fundamental life-lesson for me, and fundamental to our role as GHM while we "help the hands that heal."

Another life-lesson surfaced recently at a meeting of the GHM Board. Dr. Mark Jacobson shared his own story of arriving as a new missionary over thirty years ago in Tanzania. A highly trained public health professional, he immediately went to work studying a rural community to analyze their fundamental health problems. Science and training pointed to an obvious solution: handwashing. Efficiently he coordinated a rural project to distribute soap and teach handwashing. But young Mark hadn't listened to the community long enough. Six months after the soap arrived, nothing had changed. This community didn't have water to spare for washing hands. Women and children walked long distances just to get enough water to drink and to cook. More trips for water were out of the question.



GHAP in Lake Tanganyika Diocese, TZ, listening to community members

Mark shared how, like all of us, he came to his work with a bias. In his case, he believed his education and command of science made him the best qualified problem-solver. But his bias had blinded him - an important life-lesson for Mark, and for us. His experience points out a third life-lesson also fundamental to our role as GHM - the importance of local community leadership.

Finally, the experience of 17-year-old Mary Lou in South Sudan underscores one more life-lesson. Mary Lou was abandoned by her mother at the age of 3. When she was 13 her dad died, and she was married that same year. When it came time to give birth to her first baby, the delivery took three days. As a result she developed an obstetric fistula, meaning she was perpetually incontinent. Her husband divorced her. Mary Lou felt helpless - no money, no parents, and nowhere to turn.



Mary Lou with Dr. John Sebit Madit, Reconciliation Clinic, Juba, South Sudan

In early February 2021, the Lutheran Church announced it was welcoming women for free fistula surgery (thanks to a collaboration between GHM, the ELCA and the Fistula Foundation). Mary Lou was overjoyed! Despite her poverty and status, she was welcomed at the Lutheran mission. Her surgery was successful and she returned to her village with hope and new possibility for life. The life-lesson here is equity. Healthcare and access to a healthy life is a right for all people, not just the privileged.

At GHM, we need to walk with these life-lessons every day in order to fulfill our role in "helping the hands that heal." Of course, there is more to our role, but these are fundamentals. They are so fundamental that they apply to our lives beyond GHM. I invite you to carry these in your heart and in your life with a simple memory key, **ROLE**: **R**elationships, **O**vercoming biases, **L**ocal communities lead, and **E**quity.

Rev. Doug Cox, Executive Director

TAKING STOCK



Supply Chain Management is a continuous improvement process at GHM, where staff and volunteers discover and develop new ways to support the material needs of our partners. It's important! At Liberia's Curran Hospital, a surgeon has had to leave the OR *during an operation* to find the instrument he needed to continue. It was in a box in the supply room, mixed in with other items. GHM's Supply Chain intern, Ethan, is learning ways to include and label multiple items in a single box in GHM's inventory system. Quality control and improving our inventory database is expediting our process and improving the quality of what we deliver to our partners. In July, we expect to complete a 100% baseline inventory with fair market values, the first in GHM history!

Scott Lien, Dir. of Operations

JAN'S BRV



What's a BRV? Our Big Red Van! It was a roomy Dodge Ram, and my late husband and I drove it to GHM about 5 times a year, loaded with supplies and medical equipment I collected to help the hands that heal. As a nurse I was transfixed by the work being done by GHM - one of the best-kept secrets in the Lutheran Church! My husband and I cared about being good stewards of both the earth and our financial resources, and GHM became part of our annual giving.

We admired the GHM quality of leadership, the problem solving by staff to get containers shipped and delivered to hospitals and clinics in faraway lands ... Don and I were blessed beyond belief in so many ways. As Christians, we are called to share ... It brings joy to know that GHM will receive a legacy gift after we both pass.

Jan Etnier, Madison, Wisconsin

You can learn more about leaving a legacy gift to GHM by contacting Dir. of Philanthropy, Ceallaigh Anderson Smart, 763-586-9590, or csmart@ghm.org



GHM's first virtual Gala was a SUCCESS! We surpassed our goal of raising \$30,000, and although we couldn't be together in person, we welcomed friends from across the country to celebrate and hear from GHM. Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee was an inspiring speaker. Many thanks to all who participated!



SUMMER INTERNS

In May, GHM welcomed 5 interns who are bringing fresh ideas and sharing their talent with us this summer. Pictured are Jia Qin (Georgetown University, Washington, DC), Jeremiah Cox (Hastings College, Hastings, NE), Ethan Bentley (University of Minnesota), and Chloe Nauman (St. Thomas University, Minneapolis). Joining virtually is Zacharia Ryoba, who zooms in from Tanzania. Interns are working on- and off-site in the areas of Global Health, Development and Supply Chain. They're already working hard and making contributions to benefit our partners. It's an exciting new program!

EQUITY REFLECTION: HISTORY NOW

Sometimes history seems old and distant. Sometimes it feels...present. It felt painfully alive for me when I visited the site of George Floyd's death on the one-year anniversary of his death. These words from Abraham Lincoln came to mind: "I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine that should attempt to beguile (you) from the grief of a loss so overwhelming."

The U.S. is struggling to learn from its history, specifically our connection with Africa and the role many from Africa have had in shaping our country. As we confront this part of our history, peace and security have felt fragile and justice elusive. I have heard African friends and colleagues say they did not know what racism was until they came to the U.S.

The first lines of the World Health Organization (WHO) constitution include these two phrases:

The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest cooperation of individuals and States ...The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

Thank you for supporting our cooperation with GHM partners for equity and the fundamental right of health and peace for all.

Rob Thames, FACHE, FHFMA, Dir. of GHAP

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Global Health Ministries' 2020 annual report now available at ghm.org! Or call or email us and we'll send it to you!

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The Global Health Puzzle: How do we fit together now?

Save the Dates!

Oct 6, 13, 20, 2021

Online, 12 pm - 1 pm



GHM's October Symposium