



Global Health Ministries Newsletter

Because all people should have access to a healthy life.

*Photo, Ngaoundéré Hospital, Cameroon, May, 2023
Arrival of the 60th GHM container in Cameroon*

A Century of Service



Dr. Len Akland, GHM's first President

Global Health Ministries' first President and CEO, Dr. Leonard Akland (Len), celebrated almost a century of faith and service before joining his wife Agnes for eternity

in the loving arms of Jesus. "We are 'ministry,'" Len used to say about GHM, "We are not just another social organization that cares. We want to be a ministry of Jesus Christ to all corners of the earth."

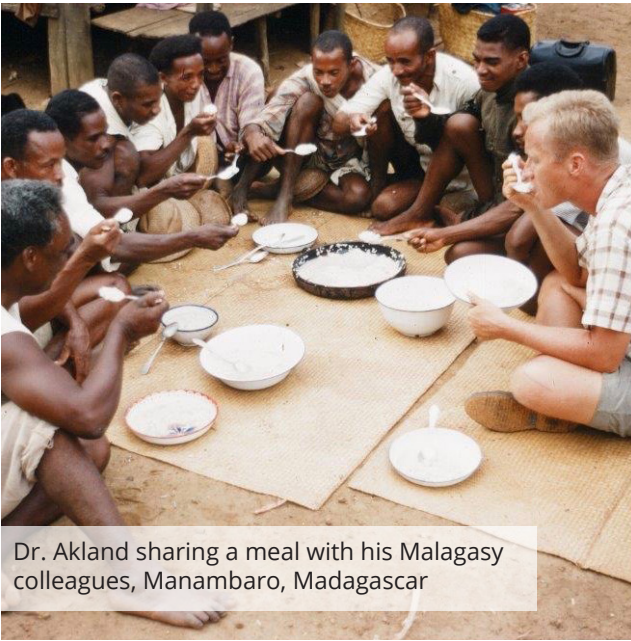
Len's mother instilled a heart for global ministry in her children. So, in 1959 when Len and Agnes were contacted by the head of Lutheran missions with the dire need for a physician/surgeon in Madagascar, they were ready. Len felt called and so did Agnes, herself a child of missionaries who had served over 30 years in Madagascar. They spent most of the next 10 years serving in Madagascar. Len's style of partner-

~ continued page 2



If Len were reading this he would say, "you should tell them about Agnes." Fluent in Malagasy, Agnes connected with the Malagasy women in the local church, took care of the sick who came to her door, handed out cups of rice when someone needed a meal. A gifted musician and teacher, she made her own mark in Madagascar. Agnes was also instrumental in forming Global Health Ministries, and nurturing this organization as it grew.

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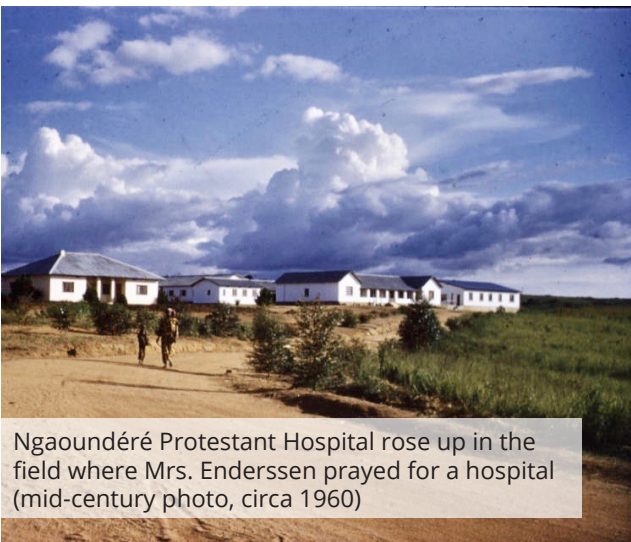


Dr. Akland sharing a meal with his Malagasy colleagues, Manambaro, Madagascar

ship with local people in his work became a model that deeply shaped Global Health Ministries, the ministry he helped to found after returning to the US. Len and Agnes held the people of Madagascar in their hearts, and they continued to advocate for and support GHM for the rest of their lives.

A century ago, as Len and Agnes' parents were raising children, they could never have imagined the changes their children would see in the coming century. In 1910, for example, only 9% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa identified as Christian, but a century later, in 2010, that number was 63%. In the Asia-Pacific region, the percentage more than doubled over this same century (from 3% to 7%).¹ As the century progressed, Christianity became increasingly more global.

In 1950, just a decade before Len and Agnes moved to Madagascar, the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) was founded with about 18,000 members. Within 30 years it grew to almost half a million and today it's larger than the largest Lutheran Church in North America (ELCA), uniting more than 4 million Malagasy Lutherans. The FLM was the first church in a lower- or middle-income country to transition from a former "mission field" to an autonomous church body. It was also the first to be accepted into the Lutheran World Federation. Today the FLM sends its own personnel as missionaries to many countries.



Ngaoundéré Protestant Hospital rose up in the field where Mrs. Enderssen prayed for a hospital (mid-century photo, circa 1960)

On the opposite side of Africa a century ago, in an empty field in Cameroon a Norwegian missionary nurse prayed for God to bring a hospital. Mrs. Enderssen saw people's suffering and the tremendous need for doctors and nurses. Today in that very field stands the largest Lutheran hospital in Cameroon. Three more hospitals and 23 clinics are included in what is now the Lutheran healthcare system in Cameroon (OSEELC), helping some 40,000 people a year. Mrs. Enderssen's prayers and those of faithful servants for generations after her are being answered.

This year marks 100 years of Lutheran mission in what is now Cameroon and Central African Republic (CAR). Out of that work two more Lutheran Churches were born and we look forward to celebrating with Lutherans from the United States and Canada, as well as leaders from our partner churches in Cameroon and CAR, to mark this historic moment together. The Sudan Mission Centennial will be held in the Twin Cities July 7-9, 2023.²

Today, GHM's partners are the missionaries in their own countries as they bring health and healing to all people in Christ's name. New faith in Christ and strengthened faith are born of their Christian witness every day. 100 years of faith and service - praise God!

Rev. Doug Cox, Executive Director

¹ *Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population*, Pew Research Center, 2011.

² <https://sdsynod.org/synod-events/missioncentennial2023>



Today, the GHM-equipped lab at OSEELC's Ngaoubela Protestant Hospital offers the best cancer diagnostics in all of northern Cameroon

Global Health: History ... and Future

In July, we celebrate 100 years of Lutheran mission in Cameroon and Central African Republic. That work took root, the Churches in Cameroon and CAR and their ministries grew, and soon after GHM was founded the Health Department of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (OSEELC) formed a partnership with GHM that has resulted in more than three decades of support for their health programs.

In 2007, responding to a request from OSEELC, GHM launched GHAP with a consultation project looking at governance to help strengthen OSEELC's health system. With the leadership of Cindy Wilke, MHA, GHAP began helping to advance health for all by seeking to strengthen Leadership, Governance and Financing.

Over the past 16 years, many experienced health leaders and professionals have worked through GHAP to help our partners in Cameroon and in other countries. Importantly, future health leaders and professionals are increasingly supporting our country partners by collaborating through GHAP.

This month, we celebrate the addition of two more Global Health student interns who will be with us for the summer. They recently joined our staff on a recent videoconference as part of their orientation.



Katie Berkompas (upper left corner), St. Catherine University Global MPH candidate, brings over a decade of experience as a critical care nurse. Katie also has made a half dozen health mission visits to El Salvador, starting with her physician father when she was in high school.

Minnesotan **Lauryn Jones** (middle right), Lehigh University, is a Population Health and pre-med candidate, and involved with Sickle Cell Disease research through a Global Social Impact Fellowship. She has served as a UN Youth Representative connected to a Center for Public Health in Nigeria.

Please join us in welcoming Katie and Lauryn. And thank you for your support of GHAP, helping to strengthen health leadership capacity in our partner countries today and in our health leaders of tomorrow.

Rob Thames, FACHE, FHFMA, Dir. of GHAP

We Treat Jesus Heals



"Nous Traitons, Jesus Guerit." The words on this Lutheran Health Center sign in French-speaking Cameroon mean *"We Treat, Jesus Heals."* Across Africa, from Cameroon to Madagascar, this appears on or in Lutheran health facilities as proclamation of their faith and as a witness to the generosity and love of Christ, the Great Physician.

Podcast!



Did you know GHM has its very own podcast? Join Ceallaigh Smart, GHM's Director of Philanthropy, and Scott Lien, Director of Operations, as they lift up stories from the world of global health work. Our podcast

name, *Happy Trails in Global Health*, was inspired by our experiences accompanying our global partners, learning from and encouraged by each other. You're invited to listen in as Scott and Ceallaigh talk with one of GHM's global partners, exploring what's happening in their worlds, discovering stories of hope and healing. Episodes uploaded so far include conversations with Dr. Steve Swanson (NICU at Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre, Tanzania - Episode 2), Dr. Sahondra Rasoarimanana (CEO of SALFA, the Lutheran health system in Madagascar - Episode 3) and Samuel Magok and Landa Gibreel Ali (Administrator and Nurse/Midwife at Lutheran Reconciliation Medical Centre, Juba, South Sudan - Episode 4). Don't miss the first episode as Ceallaigh and Scott explain how and why they're going to hit the trail! Find the link on GHM's website, or check it out at <https://happytrailsinglobalhealth.podbean.com/>

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From the Heart

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. ~ Luke 12:34



We invite you to leave a legacy. Becoming a GHM Legacy Partner is one of the most powerful actions you can take to **give the gift of health for all.**

A legacy commitment is an investment in sustainable work that will **directly impact** some of the world's most vulnerable populations and **transform the future** for generations to come. Contact GHM's office for more info.

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Bohong's Centrifuge

In the Central African Republic (CAR), where Lutheran roots go back a century, Bohong Health Center struggles with limited equipment. The lead lab tech hand cranks his centrifuge, 10 minutes at a time, completing about 250 lab tests a month. A more efficient centrifuge would be helpful! GHM's shipping ministry provides meaningful support to partners like Bohong Health Center. Every year for 35 years, GHM has shipped at least one container full of vital medical supplies and equipment to the Lutheran health-care system in Cameroon. Since 2009,

those containers have included supplies to be sent across the border to the CAR, helping equip Emmanuel and Bohong Health Centers for their life-giving work. Wracked by deep poverty and waves of violence and insecurity, few places in the world have greater need for our support and our prayers.