



GLOBAL HEALTH

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HIV/AIDS Initiative Advances

GHM's HIV/AIDS Initiative moves forward this month as requests for proposals for projects to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and care for those affected go out to our partner Lutheran churches around the world, according to Wilhelmina Holder, GHM board member and chair of the Initiative.

Already under review are proposals from Ethiopia, Tanzania, South Africa, Cameroon, Central African Republic and India. They cover a range of interventions, including preventive education, equipping pastors and evangelists to teach about the disease, efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination, prevention of maternal/child transmission of HIV, and expansion of home hospice care services.

The three-year initiative challenges Lutherans in America to assist churches in the developing world to proclaim the Gospel of God's grace to those afflicted with AIDS, and give them hope for a better life.

Individuals and congregations have so far responded to the appeal with \$77,000 in donations. Corporate and foundation appeals will soon be made to help reach the 2004 goal of \$250,000.

Cyclones damage Madagascar

Destructive cyclones have struck the island of Madagascar causing widespread damage. In Mahajanga one person was killed and about 5,000 people are without shelter. In Marovoay some 15,000 hectares of cropland were underwater.

Many rivers have overflowed, causing floods and isolating some communities. Most of the town of Maintirano has been destroyed, including the Lutheran church, mission house and college, and a dispensary was damaged.

Karunalaya Hospital project reaches its goal!

Members of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod are to be praised for their generosity in exceeding the challenge grant goal for Karunalaya Hospital matched by GHM. The hospital, for-

Trip planned to CAR and Cameroon

GHM executive director, Rev. Tim Iverson and operations manager, Scott Lien will travel to the Central African Republic and Cameroon February 27-March 14. They will meet church health care program leadership to build on our partnerships and develop plans for the future.

"Our visit to Madagascar last year greatly improved our understanding of mutual needs and expectations," said Iverson, "and our ability to make strategic plans for collaboration in strengthening the Lutheran health care system there. We look forward to similar progress in CAR and Cameroon, and we invite prayers for a safe and productive visit."

merly a mission of the LCMS, is an institution of the Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church, located in Kerala, India. A grant of \$23,350 will make possible critical renovations of the hospital building and staff residents in time for their 50th anniversary Golden Jubilee celebration.

Dr. J.C. Vijayan, who directs the 70-bed facility, had these words of thanks: "We are thankful to GHM for the great help rendered to Karunalaya Hospital and the people of Wandoor whom we serve. This Christian expression of love in action will be very much appreciated by all, especially the people of Islamic faith in Wandoor, who form more than 60% of the population.

"It is amazing to note how God provided in full for our needs of hospital renovation through the generous donation of his children in the USA. We praise and thank God for his blessings on the project. May God bless and make best use of it for the extension of his kingdom on earth."



The Karunalaya Hospital at Wandoor, India



From the Director

"I thank God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you with joy, thankful for your partnership in the Gospel."

After a year and a half with Global Health Ministries, I feel that I am beginning to share what was in the heart of the Apostle Paul when he wrote these words, remembering brothers and sisters from countless towns and villages in his ministry on the road. It's quite a blessing as I begin each day, sipping my first cup of coffee and perusing the often dismal morning paper, to remember you, rub my eyes and thank God that I am in partnership with people all over the nation and world, pushing back against the darkness, proclaiming the hope of the Gospel in word and deed!

It's such a privilege to be invited to your morning services of worship, your synodical assemblies, and global mission gatherings of men and women and youth, to tell our story and invite you to join the mission of continuing the healing ministry of our Lord Jesus. It's so wonderful to hear your stories of calling and involvement in mission, to see your enthusiasm and joy, and to celebrate our partnership in the Gospel.

A seminary professor of mine once said that the Gospel is more than words; it is a happening where the power of God is at work among his people. Well, the Gospel is indeed happening among you and through you, God's people, and it is beautiful to behold! Small wonder that Paul was able to say in his love letter to the church at Philippi, "I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." Paul's journeys had enabled him to see the big picture, the length and breadth and depth of God's love at work, and I am beginning to see it too.

I have seen village mothers dancing with arms uplifted in praise to God for having answered their prayers. They had asked for the healing of their children, a miraculous intervention of God's grace, they said, and it was you, dear friends, who made it all possible. A Malagasy surgeon bid a tearful farewell to the South Dakota urologist sent to train him on a GHM-financed short-term mission, and months later wrote him to proudly report that he had performed 50 operations using his new skills—all successful. It was you the nursing school director was thanking when she acknowledged the final scholarship gift of many we have sent for her 25 students graduating this year to serve the Lutheran hospitals of their nation.

Because of you, a young woman is fulfilling her dream, and will become the first Maasai woman doctor in the world. It was your congregation—60 members strong—that took out a loan to buy a tractor needed by a hospital half-way around the world, and then raised the money to ship it there along with needed medical supplies and equipment. In the central Iowa nursing home you rolled the bandages that wrapped the wounds of war refugees in Liberia. You prepared the midwife and hospice kits in your church basements. You wrote the checks and made plans for gifts from your estate, and it was you who packed the container of medical supplies and said a prayer for those who would receive them.

I have seen all this and more; enough to believe that through it all the Gospel is happening. God is bringing to completion his promised grace and unity, peace and healing for a world he loves. I thank God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you with joy, thankful for your partnership in the Gospel! Rev. Tim Iverson

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Cameroon projects funded

Global Health Ministries has approved two new projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon for 2004. The first, directed by Dr. Daniel Salpou, will implement a testing and treatment program to prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS from infected mothers to their newborns.

The program, through the church's three hospitals, will reach 4600 women in three years. With a 17% incidence of infection, nearly 500 women and babies will receive treatment, using a single dose, low-cost medication that is one of the most hopeful developments to date in preventing the spread of this disease.

The second project establishes a modern Health Management Information System to gather data necessary to evaluate the AIDS program, as well as statistical reporting and analysis of the entire health care system.

Manager of the HMIS program will be Dr. Joely Rakotoarivelo, a South/South missionary from Madagascar. Special thanks are due Drs. Hans and Martha Aas and Glen Holt of the St. Mary's Duluth Clinics for their roles in developing these programs.

Malagasy dentists receive training



Dr. Wally McKenzie and his wife, Kathy, a dental hygienist, recently returned from a GHM-financed training project with the dental personnel of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. A 3-day session at the hospital in Antsirabe covered instruction in equipment repair, composite techniques, infection control and accounting. Fort Dauphin, where a busy church dispensary is located, was the site of a

second training. In the photo, Dr. Bertrand, clinic dentist, looks on as Dr. McKenzie teaches a class in equipment assessment and repair. An evaluation of the Malagasy dental program's system-wide equipment, supply and training needs was also completed by the McKenzies, providing GHM with invaluable direction for future project support.

Limited health care continues in Liberia



Refugees flock to Phebe's facilities for shelter, treatment.

Phebe dedicates gifts

Gifts of two buildings and their furnishings were recently dedicated at the field hospital at Salala, Liberia, where staff members of Phebe Hospital are carrying on their ministry. Dr. Emmanuel M. Sandoe, medical director at Phebe and County Health Officer, presided and thanked those who provided the gifts. He pointed out that Phebe had been displaced and ransacked three times in recent years.

"The institution as well as the staff suffered humiliation, rape, wholesale looting, and even death. Despite these times of terror, the guiding desire of the members of the staff has been to return to

Suakoko and resume our health care activities. Even this year there have continued to be significant and major damages and looting to the hospital, in spite of the peace agreement reached at Accra."

Dr. Sandoe appealed to the government and all donors to resume the support they provided before the war years. "We will wisely utilize these resources for the benefit of Bong County and the people of Liberia," he promised. Some people at Phebe have begun rebuilding the hospital but this will require a tremendous amount of work and money.

Curran offers clinic

A few staff members from Curran Hospital in Liberia are providing limited health care in their area. Since the facilities at the hospital have been completely destroyed, they are operating a mobile clinic, serving mostly refugees. They offer immunizations, treat common illnesses, and provide education. They refer more serious ailments to Phebe or Monrovia.

Timothy Cleta, administrator at Curran, stresses the need for some return of health care facilities in the area. He hopes that Curran can be reestablished, although it will have to be built from the ground up because of the destruction.

Gifts doing what they are intended to do



The staff at Iambi Hospital, Tanzania, reported their Christmas observance: "The challenge here is not 'What do you get the person who has everything?' but 'What do you give people who have nothing?' Something useful? Something just for fun? The kids got toys, of course, and we gave the leprosy patients jeans and t-shirts, donated by someone in Arkansas."

We are looking more and more professional here at Iambi, with modern medical equipment, wheelchairs and quilts for every bed. Our new moms and midwives are thrilled with the delivery kits you've provided. Our leprosy patients depend on the rolled bandages every day to protect their fragile limbs. And the sutures? Lab equipment? All the other wonderful items from your warehouse? All are doing what they were intended to do: spread the word of caring Christians caring for people who need the care."

PLEASE PRAY WITH US

During March - Pray for the victims of the cyclones in Madagascar.

During April - Ask that new medications can limit the spread of AIDS.

Shipping to be increased

Current plans call for increasing the number of GHM shipments overseas both in 2004 and again in 2005. Sixteen containers are on the list for this year; the first was to be sent to Liberia in February. In addition, SOA, a local organization supporting the Malagasy Lutheran Church, and a Cedar Rapids, IA, group each plan shipments.

We hope the number of shipments can be increased again in 2005. Obviously this will call for greater efforts by more volunteers to find supplies and process them at the Fridley warehouse.



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Nigerian church sponsors well digging



Camels provide transport for water and building materials.

Nearly half of the people of Nigeria do not have access to safe drinking water. When something as precious as water is scarce it can lead to arguments - even violence. A well was being dug near Kantagora when the diggers hit rock. To deal with the rock the well had to be emptied. Villagers were told to bring a bucket and get their share. Some brought several buckets, to which others objected. Before the matter got violent they found a way to distribute the water fairly.



A well under construction, partially funded by GHM.

The Lutheran church in Nigeria has dug 15 wells in this area during the two years of drought. There are three teams of diggers and a supervisor. Communities apply for a well and agree to contribute materials and labor before they are given the project. The church also sponsors workshops to educate people about hygiene and diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Safe water saves lives and enable girls to spend their time in school rather than getting water.