

May 2003

WE TOUCH THE WORLD WITH MEDICINE

► Inside this issue:

Living Hope

HIMM Mission 2003: The Journey Progresses

In May 2003, HIMM went on its second Medical Mission trip to Imo State, Nigeria. During this trip, HIMM was able to provide free medical care to people in two different towns - Ihiagwa, Owerri and Umuoye, Owerri. Our goal was to touch the rural poor peasant farmers with medicine.



Patients in the waiting room



Dr. Mrs. Carolyn Amadi - Imo State
Commissioner for Health

The mission began with the traditional ruler and spokesperson of the Ihiagwa people, Eze James Muruako, and The Honorable Commissioner for Health, Imo state, chairing the opening ceremony at Ihiagwa. Eze-elect Muruako stated at the ceremony that the free medical service Dr. Okere and his team offered filled a terrible vacuum in the lives of the community. He termed Horizon Medical Mission a Godsend among the poor people of the community.

Covering the opening ceremony was Journalist Chukwudi Akasike of the Eastern Herald Newspaper of Owerri, Imo State. He stated in his newspaper report that, "Ihiagwa and surrounding communities are not in a hurry to forget this rare gesture from a rare creature." (Excerpts from Eastern Herald, Monday April 21, 2003).

At Ihiagwa - Owerri West Local Government area of Imo State, HIMM attended to six hundred patients in 2 weeks and two hundred people in 2 days at Umuoye-Imerienwe - Ngor Okpala Local Government. People from surrounding towns also came to receive free medical treatment.

People receiving free
medication at Mission pharmacy

President's Message

2

HIMM Mission 2003:
The Journey Progresses

3

(Continued on page 3)

President's Message ...



Kennedy K. Okere, MD

The year 2000 was remarkable in the history of Horizon International Medical Mission because we launched our first medical mission to Nigeria starting from the hometown (Ihiagwa- Owerri West Local Government, Nigeria) of our founder and president Dr. Kennedy Okere.

hypertension, diabetes and its complications, malaria, typhoid and other minor surgical cases. It was sad to note that some of our patients came with some form of diagnosis in their mind which always was wrong. Their diagnosis was wrong because the visited people who claimed to be trained medical doctors, but were not. These “doctors” had incorrectly diagnosed the patients and prescribed medications that might not resolve their ailments. Pharmacies would sell fake medication made of chalk to unsuspecting patients. The patients would take the medication and would not get better because chalk is not used to cure medical ailments. Most patients had never gone to see a physician in their life because either they could not afford to or no doctor was available in their area.

This deplorable situation kept my heart in turmoil after my return to the United States. I felt the need to expand our mission in rural Nigeria. In 2003 our mission theme was “Thinking Beyond”. I decided to travel outside my home boundary and visit some other towns. We were able to visit Umuoye in the Ngor Okpala Local Government. There we able to aid in battling the spread of Tuberculosis in that town. We had transported medication for people to be treated and then made a follow-up visit to the people to check on their progress.

We were very please with our improvements during Mission 2003; we received an increase in availability of medication and supplies worth \$60,000 and the number of medical and non medical missionaries improved by 75%. In two weeks we were able to see 1,800 patients. We also began building a new hospital to help in following up medical cases after each mission. The clinic is the Horizon Medical Center.

Kennedy Kelechi Okere, MD
President

HIMM Mission 2003—continued ...



Knee injection on 50-year-old woman with severe Arthritis



Ear irrigation procedure being performed on 7year old girl

The most common diseases encountered were Malaria, Malnutrition, Typhoid fever, Arthritis, Hypertension, Diabetes and a few cases of Breast cancer, HIV and Tuberculosis. We also carried out wound care, laceration repairs, incisions and drainage of abscesses.



57-year-old man with Necrotic leg wound



50-year-old woman with massive goiter



Pastor Dusty Reynolds of Southwest Community Church, Savannah, GA

The HIMM missionaries also saw some advanced surgical cases, which they doctors could not treat due to lack of adequate facilities. HIMM, however, was able to raise funds for some cases to undergo treatment in a tertiary institution in Nigeria.

We are deeply appreciative to the Pastor and people of Southwest Community Church for their prayers and financial support. We are indebted our sponsors: AmeriCares, MAP International, Takeda Pharmaceutical Industry, Smith and Beecham, St Joseph's/Candler Hospital, Purdue Frederick Company and all our individual sponsors whose gifts have touched the lives of the people of Nigeria. We pray that the good Lord will continue to bless you.

(Continued on page 4)

Figure 9: HIMM Clinic under construction.

We look forward to HIMM's next mission coming next year. With your help, we will be able to use our clinic, which is now under construction, to carry out surgical procedures and handle follow-up patients.



Horizon Medical Center (HMC) Under Construction



Dr. Okere and Mr. Ukpong at (HMC)



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HIMM

Horizon International Medical Mission, Inc

We Touch the World with Medicine

Mission Statement: HIMM is committed to taking action to resolve rural health issues as opposed to giving lectures with no action executed and no plan to take action. It plans to develop a relationship with medical schools and residency programs to create a program that will enable medical students and residents to travel to these rural areas to see patients, work on various health issues and gain experience dealing with tropical medical issues. HIMM plans to work with rural health workers to educate the people on their health issues.

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