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## Praise/Prayer Requests

Continued health 1  
for Ruth Pierson.  
She and Chuck re-  
turned to MI this  
month.

That the Lord will 2  
protect and watch  
over the shipment  
which is scheduled  
to arrive in Sierra  
Leone on March 8th.  
That clearing cus-  
toms will go  
smoothly as will the  
transport to Kamak-  
wie.

Understanding as we 3  
learn to live in a new  
culture and the heat.

The Sierra Leone 4  
Wesleyan Church

For Mimi and Chris 5  
and Marc who we  
left behind.

God will work in all 6  
Matt's friend's lives.

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- To become a financial or prayer partner in our ministry [Click Here.](#)
- Asher family fund WM04-0332 or Start Up fund WM06-1272.(solar)
- We thank all the people willing to continue to pray for us
- We currently have 98% of our support budget pledged.

# Ashers In Africa

Volume 1 Issue 9

Newsletter Date February 2009

## New Jobs, New Friends, New Home, But A Constant God!

It really seems impossible that we have been here nearly 3 months now. Things have changed so quickly we hardly have time to reflect on the changes. In late January we were able to host the team of pastors from Global Partners and the East Michigan Wesleyan District, who came to work with the local pastors and to show the Jesus film. They gave a pastor's conference during the day to instruct and inspire and encourage the pastors of the Kamakwie District. Then in the evenings the pastors and Dr. John Conner and the Jesus film team set up and showed the Jesus film. Many people made decisions for Christ this week. Now the work begins for the local pastors to work with these new converts and set up churches.

Karen enjoyed spoiling the pastors a bit with some home cooking. Pastor Dennis helped Matt and Abdul install the basketball court in our yard. It has become the focal play yard for the kids. You can pretty much always find enough kids for a soccer match or a basketball game at the Asher's house. The young children go to school in the mornings and are done by 3PM but the high school students don't finish until 6PM. They younger children just don't understand why Matt has to stay in and do school work. They want him to come out and play. As I sit here typing it is 105 degrees in the shade and I can

not imagine playing sports in this heat, but they love it.

Before they left, we gave the pastors a tour of the hospital. They enjoyed giving toys to the children in the pediatric department. Pastor Rick even dressed up in scrubs and observed a C-section! Baby and mother did fine, and it is a miraculous thing to see.

They went home with a much lighter load than they came with. They had brought our family many goodies (bacon, drink mix and pepperoni were among the favorites) and many medical supplies. Jeff and Erika Fitch had ordered some more hanging scales for us which are working well to weigh the blood bags to ensure that the small children get the correct dose. It is amazing that this simple little fish/luggage scale can save so many lives.

On the final day the pastors were here in Kamakwie, Pastor Roger preached at a small country church, where a new minister, Pastor Robert, was being ordained. This was an exciting day for the Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone. Pastor Robert and his family will be the first missionary pastors to be sent out by the local church. They will be moving to a different culture, and different language. They will be ministering to the Sou sou people. And the local churches of the Kamakwie District will be supporting them financially. As I watched all this



unfold, I prayed for his wife and children because I know the changes they are to encounter. I admire their willingness to step out in faith. Please pray that the church will be able to fulfill this commitment financially.

On Sunday we all piled in the Asher's new truck and headed to Freetown. Tom and Matt stayed back to hold down the fort. Karen needed to go as we had a medical student from Chicago, Lindy, who was due to arrive on Monday. Her flight was delayed due to a snow storm in London, and they flew this poor girl all the way to Kenya and then back to Sierra Leone.

She finally made it on Tuesday afternoon, very tired but happy to see a familiar face. Karen and Lindy and Hope Graham (who was attending a seminar to get our hospital certified to treat pediatric AIDS patients) then drove back to Kamakwie. It was a bit taxing but the car was good and the roads were tolerable. Typical of girls, we stopped to purchase pineapple and baskets along the way. I said it was shopping therapy but really I just wanted to let go of that steering wheel for a mo-

ment. I had tried to memorize where some of the really bad bumps were on the way to Freetown but after a while all red brown dirt roads look alike. After this experience, maybe I won't be afraid to ride the four-wheeler trails with the Whiteford group! Lindy is enjoying her month of medicine here. Below is a picture of her trying to steal a few moments to study up on the next surgery they had to do. The kids behind her stood there for over 50 minutes looking at the book with her! They are fascinated with her long red hair. Someone even offered to buy it from her. I am not sure what she thought she would do here but she has already scrubbed c-sections, amputations, skin grafts and exploratory lapa. Not to mention hundreds of clinic patients and many nebulizer treatments and ear irrigations. No matter how many months she spends on rotations in the states she will never see all the pathology that is here on a daily basis.

Later this month Karen and Wane (our nurse mid-wife) are going to attend a conference on maternal and child health in Bo. (Yes, it means another drive across that road, 3 hours to the black top) Although Karen is unable to work full time like Tom is, her ability to teach, whether in the lab or to the staff is very needed. Many of the emergencies that are brought in for the OB ward could be prevented with more training of the midlevel providers in the villages. They hope to take this information to the health care providers at the local clinics to provide better care for the women before they deliver. In addition, she and Hope are working on teaching the staff about the medications used for HIV positive patients and prevention of transmission. These medications have been made available from the government, but they do not provide any staff to administer them or evaluate the treatment. This has become an immense burden for the staff that is trained, so more training is imperative.

Speaking of the OB ward, I have a request for those of you willing to send items to be shipped over. In addition to rolled bandages, we do need empty pill bottles. I had been told that we did not use them but the staff here would really like to have them. They are used as collection bottles for urine and stool for the lab. In addition, we need caps and clothing for the newborns. Many women come to the hospital to deliver with absolutely nothing for their babies. Death is so much of life here that they are amazed when their children live. They don't even name the baby until they return to the village. So Mrs. Pierson has had groups that made baby packs for the newborns. It is a zip-lock bag with a receiving blanket, a set of diaper pins, a cloth diaper, and a onsie or sleeper. Then if it is cool, like it is now at night, we give the moms little hats to keep the child's head warm. They wrap the child in a thin cotton lapa but the blankets and hats are very helpful. If you or your group would be willing to send these items, please send them to WORLD HOPE WAREHOUSE C/O Dr. Asher Kamakwie Wesleyan Hospital 1906 GUS KAPLAN DR. ALEXANDRIA, LA 71301.



"City Slickers" in Africa ! Just kidding!



Pastor Rodger meeting patients.



So Lindy, just where do you make that incision?



Rev. JY Konteh ordains Pastor Robert



Who said white men can't jump?

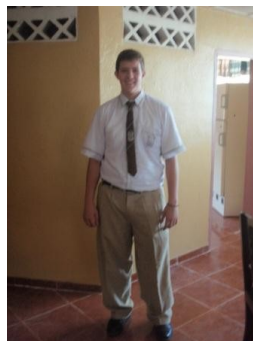


Youth Pastor Albert gets "wheels for youth" from the pastors from Michigan.



### So how is Matthew doing?

Matt is adjusting to school and his computer school work. He enjoys spending time with Abdul and his new friend, Smith. He sprained his ankle playing soccer and decided that in the future he should wear shoes when playing. After all he is still a "poto" or a white man! He met the volunteers from Inter-Aid who are from France. He enjoys practicing his French with them. I think they enjoy his effort! We appreciate all you who are especially praying for him!



Matt ready for school!

Pastor Dennis helping Matt and Abdul setting up the basketball court!



Every day we pray for you, our prayer and financial supporters. We are very aware that none of this would be possible without you and we are so very thankful. God bless you! Tom, Karen, and Matt Asher