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Praise/Prayer Requests

Praise the Lord for 1
sight for 42 people!

Praise the Lord for 2
all the people willing
to come and serve
the hospital and the
church in Sierra
Leone.

Praise the Lord! The 3
new website is up
and running and you
can follow us at
www.waemm.com

Please pray for The 4
Sierra Leone
Wesleyan Church
and the Gbendembu
bible college's 22
students.

Please continue to 5
pray for Matt. His
address there is:
MSC Box C0245
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Praise the Lord! 6
Marc is home from
Kuwait!

- To become a financial or prayer partner in our personal ministry support [Click Here](#)
- [Global Asher family fund WM04-0332](#)
- [We thank all the people willing to continue to pray for us .](#)
- [Read about Kamakwie or donate to the projects at www.waemm.com](#)

Ashers In Africa

Volume 4 Issue 1

October 2011

42 Blind patients can now see!

We have returned to Sierra Leone and Kamakwie Wesleyan Hospital for our 4th year. We arrived on the 5th of September and immediately went up country to Kamakwie. We barely had time to remove the sheets from the furniture and lift off the first layer of accumulated grime before I had to return to Freetown to pick up our first guest. We were so happy to host Dr. Annette D'souza and her husband David Allen. They came from Canada to help us with what is a very real problem in our area of the country. Blindness. There are at least three places within the country where eye surgery is being done, but for our patients they might have been on another planet. The roads and the lack of economic means make many of our patients captive to blindness. There are programs that will do the surgery for free in this country. But to get there is more than a month's income for many of our people and then you have to find someone to stay with and you have to feed yourself while you are there. All these things cost money, money that most of them just don't have. And there are so many that we at the hospital can not subsidize all of them.

Last year we prayed about this need. We felt we were helping with glasses and treatment of eye problems but we are not qualified to do the sight saving surgeries for cataracts and glaucoma. We put the plea

out to former ophthalmologists who had been here before the war, and Dr. D'Souza responded. She understood that many doctors from the US would not know the limitations we have in this third world country and what kinds of instruments and equipment we would need to do these procedures. She has much experience in this, most recently in Zambia and she was such a blessing to us! She only made one request, that we have enough cases to make the trip worthwhile! We screened over 121 cases in the 10 days she was here, she did 42 surgeries, and we have 28 more on a waiting list! She came bearing wonderful gifts. A keratometer and an ocular ultrasound, hundreds of bottles of eye drops, and two full sets of instruments for the operating room.

To explain to you how difficult it was to set up this operation in our facility, I can not be clear enough. First was the 220 V to 110V conversions, some of each type were being used. Then the voltage stabilization as the generator fluctuated too much to allow some of this sensitive equipment to run. And all this equipment had to be set up in small rooms, not designed for such high tech instruments. And many of our staff had never even seen such a procedure, let alone assist in the surgery! But God had it all under control! She was able to do 5 cases her first day and 7-8



each day after that!

Tom and I learned a lot also. Probably the most eye opening (pardon the pun!) was the high incidence of glaucoma in our country. Many who think they are blind from cataracts actually are blind from untreated glaucoma. Dr. D'Souza had a help for that too. We were using an apparatus to test for glaucoma that I had only seen 20 years ago in training. It required that we lay the patient flat, and numb the eye and balance this metal scale-like equipment on their eye without them blinking or squinting. You can imagine how successful we were with that! It certainly wasn't even possible in village screening. She brought with her a tonopen. You still have to numb the eye with drops, but you can have the patient sit up naturally, and you just lightly tap the eye and it digitally reads the pressure.. She told me that it costs \$4000. Tom and I prayed that the Lord would bring donors to WAEMM while she was still there, to donate \$4000 so that we could pay her and she could leave the tonopen with us. And He did!!! We are using it daily!

So where does that leave us

as far as the eye patients go? Well God didn't stop with the tonopen! As more and more patients came to be screened it became obvious that there would be too many to do before the doctor had to go back to Canada. So we started a waiting list. 28 people were told we would pray for another ophthalmologist to come! And then we had to send them away! Until I remembered Dr. John Buchan, an ophthalmologist from England who works at the Kissy Methodist Eye Hospital. He had told me that he could do surgery for free, there, if we could find some way to get the patients to him and his equipment. After surveying the need, we knew we could not pay for all these people to get transport to Freetown and to stay there. But now, since we had the equipment, would he consider making the trip to Kamakwie to do the surgeries here? He would! Dr. D'Souza stopped in Freetown to speak with him and frankly tell him what we could do in Kamakwie and he is scheduled to come in late November to do these 28 cases. So what will be done after that? Well, we will keep screening and keep placing patients on the lists, and keep praying for ophthalmologists who will come to serve! I think I remember that there are enough ophthalmologists in Toledo, Ohio alone that if each one came one time and they came every 4 months, we would be busy for at least 5 years! Want to come help?

With his permission, I do want to share one story with you. Mohamed is the boy in picture #4. His father heard on the radio that we were doing eye surgery. Mohamed is 16 and has been blind for 8 years. His father lost his arm in the war from the rebels. His father has to lead Mohamed to the family farm and put him in front of a heap where he blindly digs for his father to plant their crops. He can't see where he is digging, he sees only bright light and blackness. He can't see where the snakes are, so his father has to stay close by him. But his father only has one hand and can not do all the digging and planting alone, and it is just the two of them, The rest of the family, 3 children and the mother, were all killed in the war. By the time Mohamed came to us, we were already placing people on the waiting list. We wanted so much to help him, but there were so many in front of him. I had sent the others on the list away for the day. I had asked Mohamed to stay so I could see if the doctor would do just one more on that Monday, the day before she was to leave. Then there was a commotion in the OR. I went and found that one man had had a reaction to the medication used for the eye block. He had a seizure and his surgery had to be cancelled. He would have to be put on the list for the next time with another pre-op block medication. I ran back outside and there sitting patiently was Mohamed and his father. He had one eye done that day! Perfect timing! Coincidence? I don't think so. I would rather thank a God who has perfect timing! He will come in late November to have the other eye done!



1. Screening the patients with tonopen!



2. Our new high tech equipment!



3. With our old not high tech slit lamp!



4. Mohamed seeing at last!



5. The operating microscope!!



6. Happy, seeing customers in the new OB ward!

Ok, so I said I was going to do a monthly letter while we were in the US, but as usual our schedule got way over booked. But that was good because we were able to meet some fantastic people in PA who sent us a full container of beds and supplies. So we will be opening the second OB ward this month. We used it temporarily as the eye ward last month!

When we came back to the country we went to the internet office and I met a wonderful man there who gave me his card and every time we can't get on I am to call him. He gets it running within a few hours. It is still slow but at least its running. But God even has a plan for the internet at Kamakwie. I will tell you about it in the next letter!

We finally have our website up and running! So please go to the web site and learn a more about what God is doing in Kamakwie. If you want to donate to the electrical project you can do it online or at WAEMM West African Educational and Medical Mission 2509 W. Sylvania Ave Suite 13 Toledo, Ohio 43613 C/O Arthur Allen CPA 419-475-3020. [Click here](#)

Again we thank all of you for the prayers and support. We know you all are serving here with us!
In His service, Drs. Tom and Karen Asher