

MISSION CONNECTION



Inspiring News from PC(USA) Medical Missions Around the World

Fall 2002 Volume 9, Issue 4

MBF/PROJECT C.U.R.E. HOUSTON CENTER OPENS *MBF's Medical Surplus Ministry Expands*

When the Medical Benevolence Foundation and Project C.U.R.E. joined forces less than a year ago, they shared a dream to expand a mutual ministry of providing medical surplus to people in other countries. Both MBF and Project C.U.R.E., a non-profit humanitarian organization, had seen the impact of refurbished equipment and surplus medical supplies on hospitals and clinics around the world.

Dream becomes reality

Now, with the opening of the new MBF/Project C.U.R.E. Center in Houston, the dream is reality. Thanks to the generous congregation of Grace Presbyterian Church in Houston, the 20,000-square-foot facility is humming with activity, directed by Todd Watne.

Saving lives through medical surplus has been one of MBF's major points of ministry. However, because of limited warehouse capacity and staff, and most recently, the closing of the successful Fresno, CA warehouse operated by Drs. Harriet and Harold Hanson, MBF had not been able to offer what the new partnership makes possible.

"MBF/Project C.U.R.E. is saving lives of people—moms and dads, brothers and sisters, children and grandparents—people like you and me . . ."

Dan Force
MBF Executive Director

How will it work?

To make sure the surplus sent is what is really needed, MBF/Project C.U.R.E. will first do an on site assessment, working with church partners and government officials of the recipient countries. Then, the needed surplus will be gathered, assembled, and delivered to the designated hospitals and clinics. MBF and Project C.U.R.E. share operating expenses.

Turning "garbage into gold"

Every year, the American medical community discards tons of supplies and equipment because of torn cartons, over-purchased product, obsolete models, etc. Offering this surplus to people in need overseas not only frees warehouse space, but helps the environment by giving away valuable resources that would otherwise be buried in landfills.

We need you

The success of the new venture depends on PC(USA) congregations and individuals who have the courage and determination to step forward and become involved in saving lives through medical surplus. From CEOs of large corporations to community volunteers, MBF/Project C.U.R.E. needs people to become as compassionate as Jesus to those in need. (See page 2.)



Director Todd Watne and volunteer Jean Curlee at the new MBF/Project C.U.R.E. center.

Two Events

An ending and a beginning mark what has always been part of our reason for being at the Medical Benevolence Foundation: the ministry of providing medical supplies and equipment. I want to share with you two wonderful events that have recently happened.

One event took place in a meeting of the San Joaquin Presbytery when it honored Drs. Harold and Harriet Hanson. The Hansons, both physicians and retired PC (USA) missionaries to Thailand, were retiring . . . again. For a number of years, with the help of volunteers, they have collected, sorted, and shipped medical equipment and supplies all over the world. This joint project of the Hanson Medical Mission Fund and the Medical Benevolence Foundation was based in Fresno, CA. Harriet and Harold are hard to corner when you want to honor them, but



San Joaquin Presbytery pulled it off. From MBF and the men, women and children who live because of you: THANK YOU!

The second event is the opening in Houston, of the Medical Benevolence Foundation/ Project C.U.R.E. Center for the collection, sorting, and shipping of medical supplies and equipment. (Please see the cover story in this issue.) From this new center, fifty 40' containers a year will carry life saving items. As you may be aware, countless tons of surplus medical supplies and equipment are relegated to warehouses or buried in landfills each year. In a nation that demands the finest in medical attention, such waste can be a natural by-product of success. Like the Hanson's, MBF/Project C.U.R.E. is helping to change the world, one life at a time. "Saving Lives Through Medical Surplus."
Daniel L. Force

Opportunities for You to Be Involved in MBF/Project C.U.R.E.

1. Contact manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, hospitals, clinics, research institutions, and retail stores handling medical supplies and equipment for donations to the project.
2. Arrange for transportation of donated medical surplus to the Houston center or another Project C.U.R.E. center.
3. Volunteer to collect, sort, inventory, and load supplies and equipment. MBF volunteers may help at the Houston location or any of the other Project C.U.R.E. locations.
4. Contact corporations and foundations for grants and gifts for the project.
5. Offer financial support individually or through congregational giving.
6. Be a channel of information about the project, alerting others who may help.

Huge 40-foot containers like this one will be filled with needed medical equipment and supplies and sent to hospitals and clinics overseas from the new MBF/Project C.U.R.E. warehouse in Houston. The goal is to ship 50 such containers a year, each one holding surplus valued between \$250,000 to \$450,000.



WE WILL HELP YOU... PLAN YOUR ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT MARKET

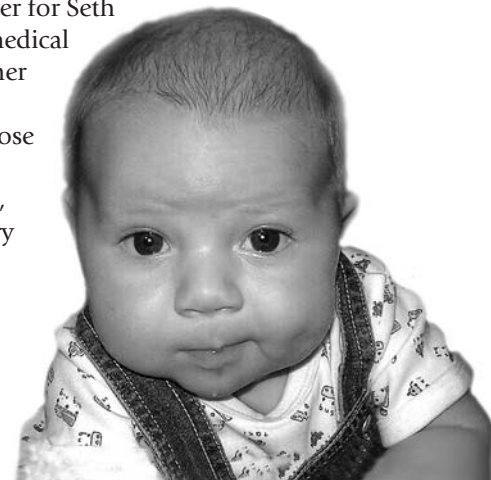
You'll find the help you need in the following materials for planning your Alternative Christmas Gift Market. We'll send you the "Create a Christmas Gift Market" handbook, shopping list items and descriptions, plus additional resources such as "Minute for Mission" scripts, MBF brochures and newsletters, bulletin copy, clip art, and photos. Also available is the video of the PBS Visionaries program featuring MBF/PC(USA) medical missionaries and a Presbyterian congregation.

To order, call 800.675.9250

Another Alternative Gift Idea

"Seth has no idea that his blessing us has blessed so many others," said Pastor Jan Nolten-Carter of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS. A baby shower for Seth raised almost \$3000 in medical "gifts" for PC(USA) partner hospitals and clinics. Women of the church chose from a list of alternative gifts such as vaccinations, prenatal care, and delivery costs suggested by MBF Regional Director Lynn Swinke-Workman.

Seth Nolten-Carter



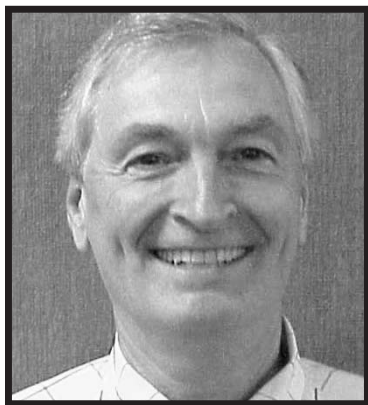
MBF/PROJECT C.U.R.E. PARTNERSHIP WILL BENEFIT HOME AND ABROAD

A CONVERSATION WITH REV. HARRY SLYE IN U.S. AND LARRY STHRESHLEY IN CONGO

Rev. Harry Slye, a member of MBF's board of trustees, talked to us from his office at Grace Presbyterian Church in Houston where he is Associate Pastor of Mission. Running on the edge of the church property is a six-acre shopping center which the church purchased to expand their space. The empty Office Max there is the new MBF/Project C.U.R.E. Center.

MBF: Was your church involved in a medical supplies and equipment ministry before deciding to donate the warehouse?

Rev. Slye: We've been involved in MBF work in Kenya and have been supporting a medical missionary, so we have quite a history . . . We sent teams out to assess the equipment and



"Not many are equipped to serve in a short-term medical capacity, so I saw the medical supply thing as something we could do . . ."

Rev. Harry Slye

Project C.U.R.E. has developed 175 categories of surplus and a system for sorting.

So, there is plenty for volunteers to do. What response have you received so far?

Our church groups have asked, "What can we do?" and our 100-voice choir has adopted this as their main mission project. Of course, volunteers are already over there setting up racks, and so on.

supplies in MBF's warehouse and hired medical technicians to separate out usable equipment, because MBF didn't have the staff to do this.

How will the new center impact your congregation?

I'm responsible to see that the people in my congregation have a hands-on mission experience. Not that many are equipped to serve in a short-term medical capacity, so I saw the medical supply thing could be something we could do . . . Supplies and equipment are brought in and sorted into like with like—needles, sutures, etc.

Larry Sthreshley is the PC(USA)'s Regional Health Care Consultant for West and Central Africa, working with hospitals and clinics in the area. Larry brings first-hand knowledge of the medical supplies and equipment needs of our overseas partners.



"We need knowledgeable volunteers in the U.S. to check used equipment, and we also need volunteers to go overseas to do the same. This is very important."

Larry Sthreshley

MBF: What will be the benefits of this medical surplus ministry to our overseas partners?

Larry Sthreshley:

We'll be able to tell MBF/Project C.U.R.E. specifically what we need and they will look for it. In the past we've received containers and had to pick from what was there which had probably already been picked over by another hospital, so you might or might not get what you needed.

Will the containers come more often?

Yes, and more regularly. In Congo we're planning to receive four to five containers a year. Also, we'll be able to get consumables. The African economy is going down so much and consumables like bandages, syringes, sutures (which are very expensive), blood bags, drapes for surgery—things like that, MBF/Project C.U.R.E. can send.

Will the other Project C.U.R.E. warehouses be available to MBF?

That will be one of the benefits. And with the many PC(USA) congregations around the country with volunteers who can look for what is needed overseas, it will be more possible to get it.

So you see volunteers needed here, not only in the warehouses sorting, etc., but out looking for donations.

We also need knowledgeable volunteers in the U.S. to check used equipment. It's hard to find a bio-medical person in Africa to check out equipment when it comes, and it's so important that this is done on both sides.



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HELP: US Post Office lost our change of address notice and may have returned your mail. MBF moved on July 29 to another area in Houston. Please send your mail to our NEW P.O. Box above. We need your support and apologize for any inconvenience. Thank You.



**Looking Ahead to ...
2003 INTERNATIONAL HEALTH
MISSION CONFERENCE**

April 25-27, 2003

**INDIANOLA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
COLUMBUS, OHIO**

WORKSHOP CHOICES:

**Volunteers – short and long term and beyond
The ABC's of planning a mission trip
What MBF can do for your congregation
Women's health issues in the developing world
Serving the world's refugees
Diseases of Poverty—
AIDS and TB issues and programs
Malaria and the NetWorkers Program
Public Health Initiatives
Christian Healing Ministries in the context
of other faiths
The role of faith in healing**

Whose Idea Was It, Anyway?

The concept of "alternative gifts" was born at Pasadena (CA) Presbyterian Church in 1980 when Harriet Prichard, Children's Ministries Director, needed a way to model authentic, non-commercial gift giving for children in the church. The concept grew into a non-profit corporation, Alternative Gifts International (AGI), which has raised more than 10 million dollars for people in need around the world. You can make gifts to an MBF malaria project through AGI's 2002 Alternative Gift Catalog. (www.altgifts.org)

The mission of Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF) is to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel of Jesus Christ through a healing ministry. In partnership with the Presbyterian Church (USA), MBF provides mission education in congregations, solicits financial support, medical supplies, and equipment, and recruits brief-term volunteers for overseas service in health care.

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