

MISSION CONNECTION



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

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MBF NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Reverend Doctor George F. Pope has been chosen as Executive Director of the Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF), and will assume his duties on January 1, 2005. Most recently, Dr. Pope was Pastor of the Community Presbyterian Church in San Marino, CA. The new Executive Director is well acquainted with MBF and the work of medical mission. Since 1999, he has served as a Trustee of MBF and as Board Treasurer for the past



two years. He has traveled extensively on the mission field.

Dr. Pope is a member of the Presbytery of San Gabriel. Previously, he served congregations in Michigan and Illinois. He received his Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and his Doctor of Ministry from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

The Reverend Doctor George F. Pope, new Executive Director of the Medical Benevolence Foundation.

FUNDING ALMOST COMPLETE FOR MIRAJ CARDIAC CATH LAB

By the end of this year, a cardiac cath lab will be ready for use at Miraj Medical Center in north India. The center offers the only comprehensive health care within a 150-mile radius.

Wanless Hospital, the first medical facility at Miraj, began when Dr. William Wanless opened a one-room dispensary in the city market in the late 1800's. Today the center has facilities for specialized services like neurosurgery, hemodialysis and kidney transplants, and heart surgery.

The cardiac cath lab is made possible through an ASHA (American Schools and Hospitals Abroad)/USAID grant of \$700,000. With this grant, the Medical Benevolence Foundation has a shared funding commitment of \$70,000 and Miraj Medical Center, itself, is contributing \$50,000.

Already, Nebraska churches have gifted the project through MBF. United Presbyterian Church of Pawnee City, NE contributed \$20,000,

and \$10,000 came from Homestead Presbytery of Nebraska. MBF must now raise the remaining \$40,000. Churches or individuals who would like to contribute can call MBF at 800.547.7627.

Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes for the place is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on people's dreams. More serious still we may forget that God was there before our arrival.

**The Primal Vision
by John V. Taylor**

SEVEN YEARS...AND ALMOST THERE HOLY CROSS NURSING SCHOOL HOPES TO OPEN IN JANUARY

Civil unrest in Haiti has delayed the opening of the newly completed nursing school at Hôpital Sainte Croix (Holy Cross). The first classes are scheduled to begin in January of 2005 with the recently named Dean of the school, Hilda Alcindor, RN in charge. Ms. Alcindor, a Haitian-educated nurse who has been living and working in Florida the past 25 years, has already begun recruiting students and assembling the staff, library, and supplies needed to begin the first school year. The school will offer a curriculum equivalent to leading baccalaureate programs in the United States.

Haiti, is only one hour and forty-five minutes from Miami, but with its high infant and child mortality rate, it could be across the world. Dr. Guy LaFontant, General Director of Holy Cross Hospital, knows that qualified,

well-trained nurses can be significant in providing the health care Haitians need. Seven years ago, when MBF interviewed Dr. LaFontant, he was dreaming of a nursing school that would "influence the quality of nursing education in Haiti and expand the role of nurses in the hospital and community health program." Groundbreaking for the school came two years later, in 1999, but construction did not begin until 2003.

MBF and the PC(USA) have been committed to the construction of the nursing school, obtaining grants and funneling donor dollars to the project. First Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor, MI has been involved in facilitating the nursing program, with Ruth Barnard, PhD, RN, retired professor from the University of Michigan School of Nursing, leading the effort. Dr. Barnard and her colleagues, Dr. Jessie Colin from Barry University and Dr. Donna Marsolf from Kent State have worked together with Haitian nurses to develop the four-year nursing program. The program is now part of the Episcopal University of Haiti.



In September, the School of Nursing Board at Holy Cross Hospital toured the new facilities. From left: Mme Gabrielle Tranchant, RN, Director of Nursing at Holy Cross Hospital; Donna Marsolf, PhD, RN; Ruth Barnard, PhD, RN; Architect Jimmy Hite; Margie VanMeter, MS, RN; Dean Hilda Alcindor, RN; and Jerold Veldman, MD.

URGENT NEED

Students at Holy Cross Nursing School will need about \$2000 each to cover tuition, uniforms, and other fees. Holy Cross is hoping to provide minimum annual scholarships of \$800 per student to help cover these costs. Funds are also needed for faculty and staff salaries, operating costs, educational materials, utilities, and transportation. Donations may be made through MBF by mail or online at www.mbfoundation.org.

THANKS (AND APOLOGIES)

As the end of 2004 approaches, we at MBF are especially grateful for your support. This is the time of year when grant applications come in from our overseas partners, and we know we will not be able to fill these requests without your continued support.

While our new database will eventually streamline many office functions, getting it up and running has resulted in a delay in acknowledging your gifts. We apologize for this, and plan to be back on schedule with these mailings as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for being our partners in bringing health and hope to our suffering brothers and sisters around the world. We wish you God's blessings for the New Year.

A Message From Marian McClure Director, PC(USA) Worldwide Ministries Division

Countless lives are transformed every day by the healing ministries supported jointly by the Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF) and the Worldwide Ministries Division.

Every time I visit one of these community health programs, clinics or hospitals, I wish everyone could see the difference being



made there in the name of Christ.

I am clear that the generous gifts of Presbyterian congregations and individuals help make all that I see possible.

Thank you for your gifts and volunteer involvement through the Medical Benevolence Foundation! Please continue to give generously through MBF.

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW BUILDINGS AT EKWENDENI HOSPITAL

In November, MBF Interim Executive Director Dr. Eugene McKelvey visited Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi along with MBF Board President, Jimmy Hite, and Rev. Bob Ellis, Interim Coordinator for Worldwide Ministries Division of PC(USA) International Health Ministries. While they were there, they inspected the ongoing construction of new facilities at the hospital, met with administrative personnel, and spent time with Jim and Jodi McGill, PC(USA) mission co-workers. We interviewed Dr. McKelvey just after he returned from Malawi.

MBF: How will the new facilities at Ekwendeni Hospital be used? How will the buildings affect the work of the hospital in that area of Malawi?

Ekwendeni Hospital is not far from an urban center, and many people there would prefer Ekwendeni's care over the care they receive from the government hospitals. But they also would prefer a private ward. So the new private ward will be for those people who can afford to pay for their care. (Rural people have virtually no money.) The hospital hopes

that the dollars coming from paying patients in the private ward will help subsidize the operations of the hospital and its

Bob Ellis (second from right) and Jimmy Hite (third from left) tour a building site with Ekwendeni Hospital officials.



ministry to the poor.

Building new staff housing is a deliberate attempt to attract quality doctors and nurses who can make more money working for a government or city hospital. Ekwendeni believes that if they can offer a place to live with electricity and a sewage system (something the surrounding villages do not have), that this will make up for the higher salaries. Of course, Ekwendeni has a staff, but they are hoping this will cut down on the turnover.

What encouraging signs did you see during your trip to Ekwendeni Hospital?

This is the area that David Livingston explored more than 150 years ago. He wrote back that the people needed Christianity, civilization, and commerce. Today, the church has a very strong presence in that area and it looks as though Livingston's goals are being achieved. We have some very dedicated mission personnel in Africa. We should be very proud and humbled by the work that is being done on our behalf—bringing the benefits of civilization by providing for health needs, disease prevention, reducing malaria, and making sure that even the most remote villages have access to clean water.

In the face of what appear to be insurmountable odds, our people there are making a difference. They need our prayers and support.

The red earth of Malawi will soon support a private patient ward, a primary health care building, staff housing, and a security wall for Ekwendeni Hospital. A grant from ASHA (American Schools and Hospitals Abroad), awarded to MBF on behalf of Ekwendeni, will fund the projects.



Medical Benevolence Foundation
P.O. Box 770636
Houston, TX 77215-0636

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Building Hope in India, Malawi and Haiti



INVOLVE YOUR YOUTH GROUP IN MEDICAL MISSION AND **WATCH YOUR YOUTH GROUP GROW**

Many churches have discovered that teens burst out of the woodwork and bored kids come alive when a youth group gets involved with service projects. MBF area director Lynn Swinke-Workman has seen this happen with her own children (her daughter is now in medical school preparing to be a doctor in a mission hospital). Lynn offers these basic guidelines for involving youth in a medical missions project.

First, select a project, specifically one that is hands-on. The MBF office will be happy to make suggestions. Then, announce the project and emphasize what the group can accomplish. Next, allow youth to assume as much of the responsibility for the project as possible: cost, publicity, equipment needs, transportation arrangement, and skills needed (everyone will have at least one skill to offer such as sorting and cleaning, carpentry, guitar playing, second language, childcare). Then, form committees from the youth group to handle planning, publicity, and fundraising.

When the project is completed, give the young people a time and place to share their experiences with the congregation and celebrate the completion of the project.

Teens from First Presbyterian in Amarillo, TX help with a building project in a developing country.



Administrative Charge Continues

Restricted donations increasingly outstrip unrestricted donations coming to MBF. The Foundation is dependent on unrestricted gifts, not only to send overseas, but to continue the ministry of mission interpretation to Presbyterian congregations and to collect and ship medical supplies and equipment. Due to the shortage of unrestricted funds, the MBF Executive Committee continues to place a 5% administrative charge on restricted cash donations. In other words, out of every restricted dollar, five cents will be used for mission interpretation and administration.

**Already tired of winter?
Think Arizona in springtime.**

Plan to Attend Mission Conference 2005

While the rest of the country is thawing out, you could be enjoying springtime in Paradise Valley, Arizona at Mission Conference 2005 International Health. The conference will be hosted by Valley Presbyterian Church April 8 and 9.

If you are concerned about the health of our global community, you will not want to miss Mission Conference 2005. Hear medical missionaries and representatives from our PC(USA) partners in Africa, Haiti, India, and Cameroon. Attend fascinating workshops. Meet interesting people. Enjoy an Arizona spring.

Call the MBF office or register online at www.MBFoundation.org.

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P. O. Box 770636
Houston, TX 77215-0636
phone: 800.547.7627
e-mail: info@MBFoundation.org

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