



The BMC Update

Winter 2001

An update on the ministry at Baptist Medical Centre
Box 50 • Nalerigu via Gambaga • N/R • Ghana, West Africa

Ibrahima: Miracle at Baptist Medical Centre

Do we believe in miracles at BMC? Maybe some of us were skeptical until this year, when we saw God perform a miracle.

During the meningitis season, a nine-year-old boy named Ibrahima was brought in from an interior village. By the time his family reached the hospital with him, it appeared that irreparable damage had been done to his brain by the ravaging fever. He was treated in the ward and then discharged to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit (NRU). A nasogastric tube was placed for his feeding.

It seemed his body had lost control of all normal functions. He had to be carried when he needed to be moved. All his nourishment had to be placed through the tube. And if he became uncomfortable or annoyed, he could let it be known—loud and long—until he was again comfortable.

His family gave him the very best of care, seemingly never tiring of feeding, bathing, and cleaning him like a baby after normal body functions. When we had done all we felt we could do—basically teaching the family the foods he needed for sustenance—we discharged him and they took him back to their village.

After a few weeks, the family returned to the hospital with him, and he was admitted. The doctor's diagnosis was starvation, but we knew it was not due to lack of care given by his family. Again we was transferred from the ward to NRU. He had become a little stronger but still had to be carried and had no control of bodily functions. But he had very strong lungs and could yell when something did not please him.

It did not please him for his mother to feed him through the tube, and on more than one occasion he pulled out the tube. It would take four or five of us to hold him while the tube was replaced. We tied socks on his hands to prevent removal of the tube.

One day, as his mother had him propped up against her so she could feed him with less fight, he moved his hand in the direction of the bowl of porridge. The surprised mother moved the bowl within his reach. He arched two fingers and swept them through the porridge. All day he did that, but every time he missed his mouth. The next day he was making his mark. Within a couple of days his mother had given him a small soup ladle, and then he was able to get more in his mouth as well as on himself. But he was so proud to be feeding himself. The family began to prepare other foods, and he began to enlarge his diet. Of course, the tube was gone by then.

He was gradually able to change from lying down to sitting. Then he began to scoot around. We began to think about what kind of supportive device we could make to enable him to strengthen his legs and enable him to walk.

Some said he would never walk. Many of us had asked God why he even let the boy live. Life for women here is so hard, and now this mother had this added burden. And we wondered why God had allowed it to be so.

A walker was brought out, and he refused to use it because he could not do it alone. A summer missionary, Jonathon Barron, and Ibrahima's mother assisted him in walking some every day. He soon progressed from being held firmly by them to holding firmly to their clothing and walking around.

In time, he was discharged and returned to his home again. He has come back to the hospital several times for review, and now he is walking, running, talking, and acting like a normal boy his age. In the last month between his reviews he had gained three pounds. The previous month he had gained two pounds.

Do we believe in miracles? Ibrahima is one, and we continue to praise our God of love, mercy, and grace for bringing him to us.

'Pray Around Africa' Report

On August 3 a prayer celebration was held at 1st Baptist Church, Nalerigu, with everyone sitting within an outline of Africa made from rocks. Approximately 125 people attended, including David and Laurel Fort. Members of 1st and 2nd Baptist Youth presented various people-group profiles and led prayer for each group. Several pastors from other denominations led in prayer for the Nalerigu association, Ghana, and all of Africa.

Summer missionaries Jonathon and Seth had led prayer walkings around Nalerigu and 14 surrounding villages prior to this date. Donna reported that during the prayer walk in Gbongu, the group prayed for badly needed rain, and that night the village got rain. The traditionalists and Muslims said that the Christian God is very powerful, and they wanted to know more about him.

Some of the villages that Tommy Harrison works in also had
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Conjoined Twins Delivered at BMC, Doing Well

Dr. Bill Norman was called to the delivery room on Dec. 10, 2000, to see a lady who was having difficulty with labor. After he decided that she could not deliver normally, she was taken to the operating room for a cesarean section. Everything went smoothly.

Dr. Norman was surprised, however, when it was discovered that the lady had conjoined twins. They were beautiful, well-developed females, joined at the abdomen.

Such a delivery in this society would not normally be accepted, and the girls would not have been allowed to live if they had gone home. Therefore, the mother and babies were kept in the hospital until after the holiday season, when they were sent to see a pediatric surgeon at the regional hospital.

He felt that he would be able to separate them and immediately took them to the teaching hospital in Kumasi. They were successfully separated, and they recently returned to Nalerigu. The family brought them to the hospital to proudly show how well they are doing.

The birth of conjoined twins is a rare occurrence. Dr. Norman said that in 40 years of practicing medicine he had never before seen a case. Ten days after this delivery, a second set of conjoined twins was delivered by cesarean section. That set was more severely deformed and did not survive more than a few hours.

We are grateful for the opportunity we had to be a part of this unusual and dramatic beginning to the lives of these girls. We are also grateful for the fact that there are skilled and dedicated

surgeons available who could perform the difficult surgery to separate them.

Thanks to all of you who support us through prayer and giving and who make it possible for us to provide care for the 60-70 women who deliver here each month. Our public health department also provides antenatal care for the women of this area.

'Pray Around Africa' (Continued)

prayer celebrations on August 3. The chiefs sent their drummers out early to call all the villagers together so they could pray as a group for their village. Tommy also reported that several of the Konkomba church leaders gathered material to take to their villages so they could also participate.

The prayer efforts were well received, and it was encouraging to see the people praying for needs of people in other parts of Africa, in addition to their own needs.

BMC Update is an occasional newsletter regarding the ministry of the Baptist Medical Centre, Box 50, Nalerigu via Gambaga, N/R, Ghana, West Africa. Mona Hewitt, Correspondent.

Baptist Medical Centre wishes to thank all of you who support us faithfully with your prayers. We especially thank Margaret Johnston for her help in editing, copying, and distributing this newsletter. It allows us to keep in touch with you and share prayer needs, praises, and updates on the ministry at BMC.