

The Calabash Broke in Rotifunk

By Sam Spicer MD, MMM

The calabash is a treasured gourd that can serve as a decoration, a favorite kitchen tool or even as a musical instrument.



In Sierra Leone the broken calabash has a second meaning. When whispered in safe company, it means another mother has died in childbirth. The whispers are used because somehow perinatal mortality is perceived as the mother's fault and brings shame to the family¹. So the secrecy continues.

Doris K. (not her real name) was a 36 year old mother of three. As the child of a local judge (paramount chief) she was well known and respected. Doris received pre-natal care and was scheduled for a cesarean section in the next county because of a breech presentation.

But three days of postpartum hemorrhage led to fever and fatal sepsis, despite three hospital visits. Without ultra sound, blood bank and aggressive antibiotics/supportive care, there was not much of a chance for her survival. The shame is not hers or her family's,

Two local mothers pray at a church in the Moyamba District of Sierra Leone. With one in 17 chance of death in childbirth, odds are they know another mother who has died.



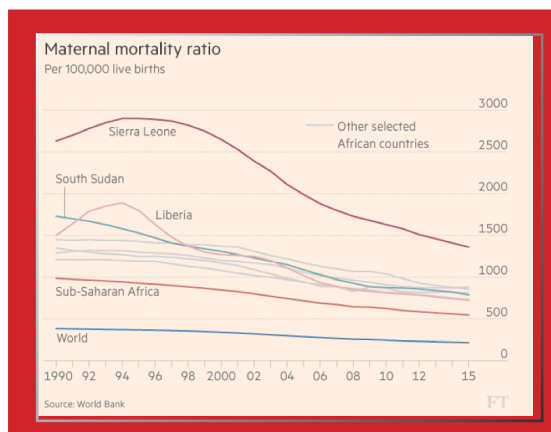
but that of a fragmented, dysfunctional health care delivery system.

This is not the only calabash that has broken. Sierra Leone statistics show a lifetime 1 in 17 chance of a mother dying in childbirth. In 2015, there were 3,100² perinatal maternal deaths. On a percent of newborn delivery basis, Sierra Leone ranks the highest in Africa for percentage of mothers dying in childbirth³.

The government and religious organizations are trying to fill the gap left from the 10 year civil war and Ebola epidemic. The Ebola epidemic caused the general public to distrust medical providers— people treated for Ebola usually died. Trust continues to be an issue for all medical providers⁴.

Outlawing home deliveries in 2010 seems to have made it more difficult to record reliable statistics on perinatal mortality.

In 2018 MOH will be focused on several priorities, with improving maternal mortality at the top of the list.



Mission of Hope will help improve the 3 steps to receiving great perinatal care:

1. Mother decides to seek care
2. Mother can get to the hospital
3. The hospital can deliver the needed care.

This year, we will start a perinatal outreach program, using the portable ultrasound at some of the neighboring 110 villages.

Transportation will improve with the addition of the repaired second ambulance and a new 12 passenger Land Cruiser. The hospital will be upgraded with the addition of a blood bank, severe post partum hemorrhage protocol, ultra sound training and financial support to a nurse anesthetist and a physician. These projects will be sustained financially by revenue generated from a clean water packaging operation. Also we will partner with the Sierra Leone UMC and the Paramount Chief to identify other possible sustainability projects for 2019 implementation.

Come join us to work on these and other projects. Help us to improve perinatal care and prevent more broken calabashes.

Sources:

1. www.unfpa.org/news/breaking-silence-about-maternal-death-sierra-leone
2. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MMR.DTHS> cited Jan 2018
3. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MMR.DTHS>
4. http://b3cdn.net/drofttheworld/54bfeb29ddec73fa1_s4m62058i.pdf



Meet Lumeh

Meet our Hospital Administrator, Mohsen Lumeh.

Lumeh, the name he goes by, was first employed at Rotifunk Hospital in January 2016 as a Community Health Officer.

In June of 2017 he also took on the responsibilities of the hospital administrator.

In 1993, Lumeh fled from the civil war in Sierra Leone into Liberia. In 2003 he returned to Bo, Sierra Leone, where he continued his studies at the government boarding school. Lumeh attended college at Njala University, in Freetown, earning a degree in Community Health and Clinical Sciences.

Mohsen Lumeh was recently thanked by Bishop Yambasu and Dr. Spicer for his excellent work as hospital administrator.

2017 --A Great Year!

Thanks to the leadership of God and many generous donors 2017 was an incredible year of growth and achievement for Mission of Hope and Hatfield, Archer Memorial Hospital (HAM). Many major improvements were made at the hospital, such as solar powered electricity throughout, and a completed Operating Room. Mission of Hope sent three teams to Rotifunk and achieved its budget. While additional patient growth is an important goal for 2018, in 2017, over 4500 patients received care at HAM, including 50 surgeries.

Among the many improvements to the hospital was the solar power system thanks to Haugesund Rotifunk, improved record keeping and financial processing, an upgraded operating room, and new equipment including an ultrasound, oxygen concentrator, a cautery, and an infant C-PAP machine. All provided by Mission of Hope. A new Land Cruiser and a 40 foot container of school supplies, hospital equipment and food will be delivered soon.

In 2017 three mission teams from the US visited Sierra Leone. These teams visited Methodist House, Rotifunk Hospital and two Primary schools. All three teams had an opportunity to meet with Bishop Yambasu, Paramount Chief Caulker and two teams met with the United Methodist Annual Conference Health Board.

Hospital operations and progress toward goals was discussed in several meetings. Solutions to current issues were considered and future plans made.



The September team had an opportunity to visit classrooms in two primary schools and received input from head masters on their needs. However the greatest benefit of all team visits is continuing to build trust, good will, and hope with the people of Rotifunk.

These many accomplishments were possible as a result of very generous support by individual donors, churches, and the North Carolina United Methodist Church Annual Conference.

Nearly \$150,000 was received from over 100 separate donors. We are particularly thankful for support received from Childcare Network. The following chart provides a few details:

2017 Results

Income	\$149,983
Expense	\$128,127
Mission work	\$116,196 (90% *)
Admin/Mktg	\$ 11,931 (10%)
Carry over to 2018	\$ 21,856

Nearly 90% of all funds donated and spent in 2018 went directly to Sierra Leone for hospital salaries, equipment and supplies.

Please say a prayer of thank you to God for His wonderful leadership and support and to all of those who listened and joined His work in Sierra Leone.



Pam Moffett, middle, unveils the new equipment to hospital staff members.

Thoughts on my Medical Mission Trip to Rotifunk, Sierra Leone

By Amy H. Sessions, Pharm.D.

As you are reading this, you are likely sitting in the comfort of your own home. Most everything you need is close at hand. From the basic needs to all of the extras, whatever Americans want and can afford is readily available. As I witnessed in August, 2017, this is not the case for our brothers and sisters in Rotifunk, Sierra Leone, West Africa.

Prior to my experience last August, I had for years felt a desire, a calling, if you will, to participate in a medical mission trip, but had not seriously prayed for God's blessing and guidance. That changed about a month prior to receiving a phone call from Dale Smith from Mission of Hope, asking me to participate in an upcoming trip to Rotifunk. As a result of my experience on my Walk To Emmaus, I really began earnestly praying and asking God to prepare my heart and guide my steps toward a medical mission trip, and, wow, did God ever deliver! I must admit that I was, at first, more than a little hesitant to agree to participate. Surely God didn't intend for me, on my first mission trip, to travel to a remote area in West Africa. That couldn't be the plan for me! After a period of reflection and prayer, I came to the realization of the beauty of God's plan for me. I realized that I didn't pick this trip - God did. My response to Him was "Here I am Lord, send me".

My trip was an amazing, eye-opening, faith journey that has forever changed my life and my outlook. God has given me a new pair of eyes with which I see and experience many things much differently. I traveled many miles across a deep blue ocean to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those less fortunate than myself. Ironically, in reality, the people of Rotifunk blessed me. They served, witnessed to me God's incredible love, and reached out to me during my entire experience. The people of Sierra Leone are warm and welcoming, and it didn't take much effort to place a smile on their faces, even though they



*Mission of Hope Board Member
Amy Sessions, Pharm. D.*

have few of the comforts we enjoy here in America.

The staff at the Hatfield-Archer Memorial Hospital were a pleasure to observe and assist. On a daily basis, I was overtaken emotionally by what the doctors, nurses, and lab technicians were doing with the limited resources available. I witnessed the team of medical professionals delivering the best care possible by their standards of medical and pharmaceutical care to all of their patients.

One of my favorite things to do since I got home is to share my mission trip story with others. Upon sharing my story, I am invariably asked, "will you go back?", and my answer is always that "the better question is, when are you going back?" I believe that God wants us to be "all in" for being the hands and feet of Jesus! For me, my love for Mission of Hope, and the village of Rotifunk, I'm "all in"!

Good things are happening in the village of Rotifunk, where I left a piece of my heart last August. I am looking forward to what the future holds as Mission of Hope seeks God's vision for the hospital and the surrounding community. My simple life in Africa during my trip truly made me appreciate life on a different level, particularly the quality of healthcare available in America. My message is that today and everyday, we must smile, live life with a big heart, and always give back!

Building Bridges

Childcare Network and Mission of Hope have partnered to improve the education and lives of children and families in Rotifunk, Sierra Leone, Africa.

Childcare Network has developed curriculum that teaches their school age children about Global Citizenry. As a part of this, children learn about Rotifunk and other impoverished countries and what life is like for the people there. Incorporated into the curriculum, activities such as artwork and building a hut help make the connection between life here and there.

Already Childcare Network and one of its vendors, Discount School Supply, have contributed school supplies. Board members Pam Moffett, and Lorraine Garrison, who is recently retired from CN, are leading the education and health initiative by working toward goals such as:

- Providing school supplies
- Funding and building toilets where needed and wash stations at the Methodist schools
- Repairing wells at two Methodist primary schools and the high school
- Pursuing community health education including hygiene and immunizations
- Teacher Training

In the future, Childcare Network hopes to foster direct personal relationships between the children attending Childcare Network and the schools in Sierra Leone. Watch for more information as another team will travel there in April to distribute supplies and spend time in the schools.

Dr. Spicer Elected to Chair the Board

Dr. Sam Spicer was elected chair of the board on December 13, 2017. At the same meeting Dr. Richard H. Morrison was elected Board Member Emeritus, Dale Smith was appointed Executive Director and a new board member was elected to a three-year term, Amy Sessions. She received a doctorate degree in Pharmacy from Campbell University and has been employed by Baldwin Woods in Whiteville for 20 years. Amy also went on one of the fall mission trip (read her account of the trip on page 3).

The five member executive committee is made up of Dr. Sam Spicer, Chair, Ivan White, Secretary, Donna Hudson, Treasurer, Dale Smith, and Tom Barber, member-at-large.

Dr. Spicer has been a member of the board for three years and a member of the executive committee for one year. He has been a very active member of the board, traveling to Sierra Leone four times as the medical advisor and team leader. Dr. Spicer

retired from New Hanover Region Medical Center after 30 years of service as an ER doctor and 11 years as VP Medical Affairs at New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

Dr. Richard (Dick) Morrison has been a significant contributor to the mission in Sierra Leone since the very first team went over in March 2013. He has traveled to Sierra Leone a total of four times and attended the partner's meeting in Haugesund, Norway as a member of the executive committee in January 2016. Dr. Morrison has been a major contributor to the Mission of Hope strategy, fundraising, and leadership. His reputation within the Methodist Church and business relationships have been invaluable.



New MOH Chairman, Dr. Sam Spicer, (right) explains a procedure on a fall 2017 medical mission trip to Rotifunk.

We look forward to his continued participation.

Dr. Spicer, Clifford Kip Robinson, Donna Hudson and Ivan White were all elected to a second three year term. We also thank Craig Relan and Pat Ebert for their many contributions over the past three years of service.

Mission of Hope is extremely blessed to have such a diverse, hardworking, dedicated group of Christian leaders.



Gather Us In

Partners Conference held at WUMC

The 2017 Sierra Leone Partners Conference came to Wrightsville United Methodist as Mission of Hope: Rotifunk became the host to around 70 participants and at least 12 different organizations.

We all “gathered in” during the two day conference as we worshipped and broke bread, while we discussed the progress as well as the challenges still before us in Sierra Leone and explored how to tackle them together.

MOH Advocate Newsletter

Dale Smith, Executive Director
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or visit or donate online at
www.rotifunk.org

The sessions explored Education, Health and Pastoral Compensation. There was also a General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) update by Dr. Olusimbo Ige who is a general physician originally from Nigeria and the current director of Global Health.

After the presentations with updates and the creation of new goals by the three committees, a rousing worship service concluded the time together. In it, Bishop Yambasu described the rugged road we are on (symbolically and literally in Rotifunk) and what that means for the people there. District Superintendent Edie Gleaves brought us to a close with her benediction encouraging us to go forth in service and an ending hymn where by the end we were all “Marching to the Light of God” by the end. Go to <https://vimeo.com/255197762?ref=em-share> for a short video clip.

A new communications group headed by group member, Carter Jewell, was created and we are looking forward to the exciting updates from the Partners in the next few months. The next Conference will be in Sierra Leone in 2019. Look for announcements on the website.