NEWSLETTER

Dear Everybody,

Today we arrived in U.K. after an uneventful flight with Lufthansa. In view of the return on July 21, we carried several empty suitcases too. We regret it that we have not been able to send any newsletter this year.

Hospitals:

Ugwueke Hospital has been busy as usual. The number of surgical patients has increased, and as a result of this the income of the hospital has also in – creased. However the number of outpatients and inpatients has reduced.

Hans spends most of his time at Ugwueke with operations and he can see only a few selected outpatients. Most of doctors stay only for a short time so it is difficult to train them and for patients to know them. This is probably the major cause of this reduction. Another cause of the drop in outpatients has been the bad state of the roads during last year. Many outpatients divert to Ozuitem, where they are more likely to see Hans. With the help of an Ugwueke philanthropist it has been possible to upgrade the Ugwueke road, so that it will be more accessible for some time. The heavy rains started early this year, ending April. The total number of hospital staffs has increased till above 100.

The Hospital at Colony Uzuakoli, which had been handed over last year, is not yet operative. The hospital should have opened several months ago. Some issues concerning the management of the new hospital are still under discussion. The new administrator, who was posted here by the bishop, has not been able to do a good job. The bishop wants the management of the Colony hospital to be independent of the Ugwueke hospital, while we (Ugwueke) think that the hospitals have to work together as one. The hospital must start after our furlough, in spite of the existing problems. Many people have been asking when we will start at the Colony. Several times the opening date has been cancelled. The hospital at Colony has a favorable location, electricity, road, water supply and it is much nearer to Uzuakoli and Umuahia. Much of the work at the Colony, the General Hospital, the TB-and Leprosy work has further collapsed since the government has pulled out completely and the vacuum has not been filled. Last week Hans walked around the whole of the Colony to take some pictures. There were only four inmates (ex leprosy patients) living together in a room.

 All other buildings were empty and in a state of more or less dilapidation. All the costs of the renovation at the Colony have been paid by the Ugwueke Hospital. It will be difficult to pay this large amount back to the hospital at Ugwueke.

The hospital has been handling a health centre at Ozuitem, a village not so far from Uzuakoli. However the road to Ozuitem has turned so bad that many patients don’t like to go there again. Most of these patients will go to the Colony hospital instead. Thanks to the Toyota Hi lux car it has been possible to go to Ozuitem twice a week and to carry patients from Ozuitem to Ugwueke. The car was a donation from the Methodist W.C.O. in 2010.

At Xmas 2013 the roofing of the chapel at Ugwueke hospital had finished. On Sundays Hans goes to the service at the chapel and sees some problem patients afterwards. The chapel is a good place for feedback by the patients.

An important aspect of the service is the giving of testimonies by patients about what God has done for them in the hospital. Many patients have been to several hospitals without improvement. At Ugwueke they have been healed.

Maurice and Marcel

They have been schooling at Hillcrest school in Jos since Jan. 2012. Maurice is going to High School (Grade 9 ) in Aug. 2014 and Marcel to grade 7. Maurice has also done very well this year at Hillcrest. Marcel’s report was less than last year. We have to find ways to stimulate him to work more concentrated and disciplined. Often Marcel gets a lower mark because he does forget to do an assignment or he forgets to submit his work. Mary tries to visit them at least once in 2 months. Since last furlough the boys’ hostel has closed and the boys and the girls hostel have been brought under one hostel parents couple. Marcel used to get much support from the former hostel parents. The present parents are much less engaged. In spite of the insurgency in the North East of Nigeria there has been no problem for the school so far. We had expected the school to close after the serious bomb explosions near main Market in Jos, but all remained quiet.

The Motherless Babies Home

The babies at the home are still thriving well in spite of the usual sicknesses as malaria and gastro enteritis – these are the major baby killers - and financial constrains – all the income is from donations. Many individuals / organizations from different churches or from governments visit the home to pray for the babies and to leave their donation. In theory the babies’ home is meant to take care of motherless babies in their first 2-3 years, but the praxis is different. Some babies have become children of up to 7 year old.Because of socio-economic reasons the child cannot go home. Sometimes the contact with the family has gone lost. Sometimes the home is used as a temporary place of care for social mothers, until the family has made the arrangements to take care of the baby or to adopt the baby out. In these cases cooperation with the social welfare of the State is important. A notorious problem in Nigeria is the issue of the “baby factories”. Young pregnant women are kept in a house by a kind of matron. They have unwanted pregnancies and they have sold the baby to the matron, who has sold the baby to parents who want to adopt. One is to be careful not to get entangled in the web of these matrons, who may want to use the babies’ home as a temporary home.

The Colony

Because Mary is the matron of the babies’ home, we are living at the compound of the home, at the Colony. The Colony Hospital is about 1 km from the home. The (Leprosy) Colony is an area of about 3 by 5 km. Within the colony are located a chapel, a hospital, a school (Methodist seminary), the babies home, a leprosy hospital (now empty), a TB hospital ( now empty ), the Methodist leprosy welfare department, many houses for the employees of the Institutions, and an increasing number of private houses.

The colony land is rented to the church by a small group of landowners. Because the land rent has not been paid since the Biafran war, the landowners have threatened to terminate the contract and sell the land to individuals. In the old days people believed the Colony land was haunted and they were happy to rent it to the Church. Today the Colony land has become very attractive because of the location.

That is all.

Thanks be to God for having guided us throughout the last year.

Yours,

Mary, Hans, Maurice, Marcel