

Fall 2015

Tenwek Today

A publication by Friends of Tenwek



Sharing the Light, Restoring Vision

FOT is pleased to begin a new feature that introduces you to the medical missionary families whose service and leadership at Tenwek Hospital and beyond truly exemplifies the founding mission of the hospital. We begin this series with a profile of the Roberts family.

Dr. Ben Roberts first visited Tenwek Hospital in 1998 as a medical student. After completing his residency in ophthalmology and a fellowship in vitreo-retinal surgery in 2006, he and his wife, Jenny, moved to Kenya to serve as medical missionaries at Tenwek through World Gospel Mission. The family – which includes their three young sons – lives out their ministry motto, *Sharing the Light, Restoring Vision* at the hospital, in a local church and orphanage, and through eye clinics in many remote parts of East Africa.

Dr. Roberts provides medical and surgical care to adults and children suffering from a wide range of eye diseases and injuries. He shares and multiplies his expertise through academic and clinical instruction to residents, clinicians, and nurses at Tenwek. He also has led numerous medical missionary teams that bring eye treatments and surgery to remote areas in Eastern Africa where such medical care is unavailable. (See related story on page 3)

Central to Dr. Roberts' approach to patient care is sharing the Person, presence, and power of Jesus Christ – the Light of the world. In nearly a decade of service, hundreds of people have received sight-restoring treatments and surgeries and have come to know, love, and trust Jesus Christ. Dr. Roberts' arrival in 2006 coincided with Tenwek's plan to construct a new eye and dental facility on the hospital campus to meet the every-growing needs in these areas. He became a passionate advocate for the project. Though architectural plans for the new building were developed in 2009, construction was delayed. In 2013, there was only



The Roberts family: Ben, Jenny, and sons Luke, Isaac, and Nate. Dr. Roberts and his family have served at Tenwek since 2006, restoring sight and hope to hundreds of Kenyans.

one operating theater available for eye surgeries and Dr. Roberts led an ophthalmology team that regularly scheduled three simultaneous eye surgeries to maximize use of the available space. "It makes for good accountability and jovial fellowship during long days," he noted at the time, while hopefully anticipating that construction could begin as soon as local approvals were received.

Construction of the eye and dental facility began in April 2014. Phase I of the project will be completed in April 2016, with the completion of Phase II probable by the end of 2016.

Jenny is a valued member of the greater Tenwek community, teaching children's Sunday School, working in orphanage outreach in Bomet, and providing the ministry of hospitality in the Roberts' home. Their sons, Luke, Isaac, and Nate participate in local church activities and accompany their parents to the outreach clinics where they serve together as a family.

The Roberts' dedication to the people of Kenya and the mission of Tenwek Hospital is a powerful example of the life-changing impact that Christian faith and sacrificial love can make in the world. **Please pray for them as they continue to serve.** To learn more about the Roberts' family, visit their website at: www.benandjennyroberts.com.

FOT News & Notes

FOT Donors Make a Difference!

Completion of the Nursing School Expansion Project is Now in Sight!



Construction of the new dining hall for Tenwek's School of Nursing is scheduled to be completed in January 2016. Your year-end gift will help finish the project and position the school for much-needed expansion.

To date, generous donors have enabled FOT to contribute \$35,000 towards this important expansion project for Tenwek's School of Nursing. Only \$65,000 is now needed to fund completion of both the new dining hall and the new dormitory space that was made possible by renovation of the existing dining hall.

Nurses have an irreplaceable role at Tenwek. They are the "24-7-365" staff that physicians and patients rely on for vital services. Nurses are in constant contact with patients and are trained to be critical thinkers who can discern the treatment a patient needs and provide doctors with important clinical assessments. Doctors rely on nurses to guide patients through the therapeutic process and help patients understand what needs to be done.

Mr. Towett, deputy principal of the School of Nursing, explains, "The nurses are the eyes for the blind and mouth for the mute. They are there to relieve both physical and spiritual pain. Here at our program we train nurses to meet the patient's physical and spiritual needs, and to meet the needs with passion and joy."

Tenwek's nurses are trained in three areas: general nursing, midwifery, and community health. In addition, nurses spend eight weeks on a psychiatric unit. All nurses are expected to have knowledge and competency in all areas at any moment while on the job. As Tenwek expands its number of beds and range of services, more nurses are needed; graduates also

are in great demand by hospitals throughout the country. The construction of the new dining hall is an essential piece of Tenwek's plan for growth in the nursing school – an eagerly anticipated expansion that has already been approved by the Nursing Council of Kenya. When its construction is complete in January 2016, renovations to transform the existing dining area into additional student housing will begin shortly after. This will enable the school to enroll more students. The new dining hall will seat 200 students, making it more efficient to schedule classroom, laboratory, and clinic assignments.

In addition to the expansion opportunity that the new dining hall makes possible, there are very practical reasons for the nursing students who have committed their lives to helping others. "Our students hardly have space to eat," notes Mr. Towett. "Currently they go out to eat which makes them spend money that they should and wish they could save. I am very excited for the new dining hall because soon we could have even more Christ-glorifying stories to tell the world."

You can help us complete this important project. FOT is accepting gifts through the end of 2015 to help ensure that the project can be completed on schedule and position the School of Nursing to begin expanding enrollment in the coming year. **Please visit www.friendsoftenwek.org/donate to make your tax-deductible gift. Thank you for your support of this transformative project.**

FOT Donors Fund Purchase of Future Outpatient Clinic

Generous FOT donors have provided \$55,000 to date to help fund the purchase of the former Sot Nursing Home in Bomet – the site of Tenwek Hospital's future outpatient clinic. FOT is now committed to raise an additional \$30,000 to complete the purchase of the land.

Tenwek's existing outpatient department has severe space limitations. Acquiring and renovating the Bomet property as an outpatient facility in the community will improve access to care for area residents as well as enable Tenwek to significantly expand its outpatient capacity over the next five years.

The facility will feature a "Fast Track Clinic," designed to serve Kenyan business and professional workers who want to benefit from Tenwek's expertise in patient care but are unable to utilize the hospital's existing clinic because of the lengthy wait times.

FOT Board members have visited the site and agree with hospital leaders that the facility and location are a "perfect fit" to expand the ministry of Tenwek Hospital. For this clinic to become operational, an additional \$218,000 is required! Will you join us in prayer, asking God to direct us to the resources necessary to fund this vital ministry?

You can help this promising initiative become a reality! Please visit www.friendsoftenwek.org/donate to make your tax-deductible gift. Thank you for your support of this important project.



Tenwek Consolidates Spiritual Ministries Under Rev. Elijah Bii

FOT is pleased to introduce you to one of the Kenyan leaders serving at Tenwek Hospital, Rev. Elijah Bii.



Rev. Elijah Bii and his wife, Beatrice. Rev. Bii is bringing his pastoral, missional, and administrative expertise to his new role as Spiritual Ministries Director at Tenwek. Beatrice has served on Tenwek's staff for almost 20 years.

From its founding, Tenwek Hospital has emphasized the intersection of faith in Christ with physical healing. And the hospital's medical missionaries are passionate about the advancement of medical missions around Kenya, leading eye care and surgical care teams to serve many remote and unreached people across the region. The missionaries' desire has been to get all members of the hospital staff excited about sharing the gospel and God's love through medical missions outreach.

Today, the many facets of spiritual ministry at Tenwek include the Chaplaincy School, the hospital chapel (Bethesda Church), medical mission outreach (i.e. Missions Emphasis Committee and South Sudan Eye team), and the Christian Union. Last fall, hospital leaders consolidated these initiatives under one leadership team and in June appointed Rev. Elijah Bii as Spiritual Ministries Director.

Rev. Bii had just returned to Tenwek after departing to earn his Master's degree in theology. He had previously served as pastor of Bethesda Africa Gospel Church, which meets within the hospital gates. His wife, Beatrice, has been the secretary to Tenwek Hospital's CEO for nearly 20 years.

As the Spiritual Ministries Director, Rev. Bii will help all Tenwek staff members to grow spiritually. For example, he visits and prays daily with different staff teams or departments at the hospital. By the end of the week, he often has met with 15 groups of people. Rev. Bii also will facilitate the sending out of more missionaries and medical teams around Kenya.

One major event Rev. Bii recently helped initiate at Tenwek is the Medical Missions Emphasis Week. This celebration featured testimonies of many Tenwek staff who have participated in medical missions in recent months. One group traveled to South Sudan and performed cataract surgery on over 400 people. This ministry resulted in many testimonies of God's grace and healing touch.

The health coordinator at the Samaritan's Purse Hospital in Maban, South Sudan where the surgeries took place, wrote:

"The presence of your team has been a huge success right from their arrival. We have had huge turnout of patients and the need for eye care is overwhelming. Your team has so far done a record 314 eye surgeries by the close of day today and the excitement of the blind seeing is sweeping across the whole Maban County and beyond. Both young and elderly are camping at the hospital waiting for their turn of surgery, reminding me of the story of the invalid man who stayed by the pool for the angels to stir the water. The sight of a blind person led by a stick as they walk into hospital and later walk by themselves after cataract surgery is the most liberating experience I have ever witnessed in the recent past. I can never express my gratitude enough to your professional, committed, dedicated, efficient, and God fearing team. I can say without fear of contradiction that your team have not only touched the eyes of the patients but more so their hearts!"

Rev. Bii's desire is that Tenwek would receive, train and send out ministers and medical professionals throughout Africa. His vision is to plant both churches and hospitals in unreached areas by sending medical teams to those areas that will create an entry point for ministers to follow and begin churches. Once churches are started, hospitals and clinics can be planted as well.

Spotlight

Meet FOT Intern Joel White!



School children welcome FOT's new intern at Tenwek, Joel White.

Joel White is FOT's new communications intern – serving on-site at Tenwek Hospital for the next two years to help us make essential connections with visiting U.S. physicians and to gather the news and information we need to keep FOT supporters informed about what's happening at Tenwek today.

Joel is a 2015 graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas. He majored in business administration with a management emphasis. During his college years, Joel worked summers in a range of hospital, retail, and recreational settings. He was an accomplished football player and held leadership positions with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Joel's international mission experience includes assignments in Japan, Guatemala, and Mexico.

Through these diverse experiences, Joel acquired and strengthened his skills in leadership and public speaking and is a diligent worker who desires to serve the Kingdom of God. His career vision is to enter the field of hospital administration and enable physicians to focus on what they do best – treating the sick both physically and spiritually – by effectively administering the financial and operational aspects of a hospital.

Joel arrived at Tenwek in September and reports, "As the Friends of Tenwek intern I have the opportunity to learn and grow in many areas in my life. Though I have many desires and objectives while I am here, I hope to leave Tenwek truthfully saying that I loved the people with all of my heart every day: 'I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.' (2 Corinthians 12:15). I hope to serve the Tenwek family passionately so God may work in the lives of the community surrounding us. I am honored to work alongside these God-fearing men and women and to be the successor of several great and successful FOT interns."

Stay Connected

FOT's Mission

Friends of Tenwek is committed to fostering communication among U.S. physicians who have served at Tenwek and know first-hand how vital the hospital's medical and spiritual mission is to the people of Kenya and beyond.

How You Can Help

- **Pray** for the hospital's staff, operations, and specific needs we will bring to your attention.
- **Be an ambassador** for Tenwek to your church's mission and/or service board and leaders.
- **Encourage colleagues** to consider a volunteer service assignment at Tenwek.
- **Return to Tenwek** for a volunteer assignment in your area of medical expertise.
- **Make a financial gift** to meet critical needs at Tenwek Hospital or become a Sustaining Friend – www.friendsoftenwek.org/donate

Serve at Tenwek

If you want to use your medical skills and specialty training to serve the people of Kenya, it's never too soon (or too late) to visit. Physicians from all specialty areas are needed and welcomed. Short-term service trips to Tenwek Hospital for Christian physicians, dentists, and other medical professionals are arranged through World Medical Mission, a division of Samaritan's Purse. For information about short-term assignments, please visit the World Medical Mission web page at www.samaritanaspurse.org/medical/mission-hospitals-tenwek-hospital-bomet-kenya

Share Your Story!

In our experience, every U.S. physician who serves a short-term medical mission at Tenwek has a deeply personal experience. Your Tenwek experience is important to us – and to your colleagues. Please visit the FOT website to learn how to share your story. We want to hear from you!

Visit the Friends of Tenwek Website & Facebook Page!

The Friends of Tenwek website (friendsoftenwek.org) brings you the latest news from Tenwek Hospital, and keeps you up-to-date on what the missionary doctors and their families, visiting physicians, and hospital staff are doing in support of Tenwek's unique medical and spiritual mission in Kenya. The site includes links to the blogs maintained by Tenwek staff and offers you the opportunity to share your own Tenwek story.

Visit our Facebook page (facebook.com/FriendsOfTenwek), to join a vibrant online community of Tenwek "alumni" who want to remain in touch with the hospital and with their Tenwek colleagues.

Tenwek Hospital Mission: *Tenwek Hospital is a Christian community that seeks to exemplify Christ in all aspects of what we do. Our motto, We Treat – Jesus Heals, is Tenwek's guiding belief and the hope that we offer to each patient.*

www.tenwekhospital.org

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