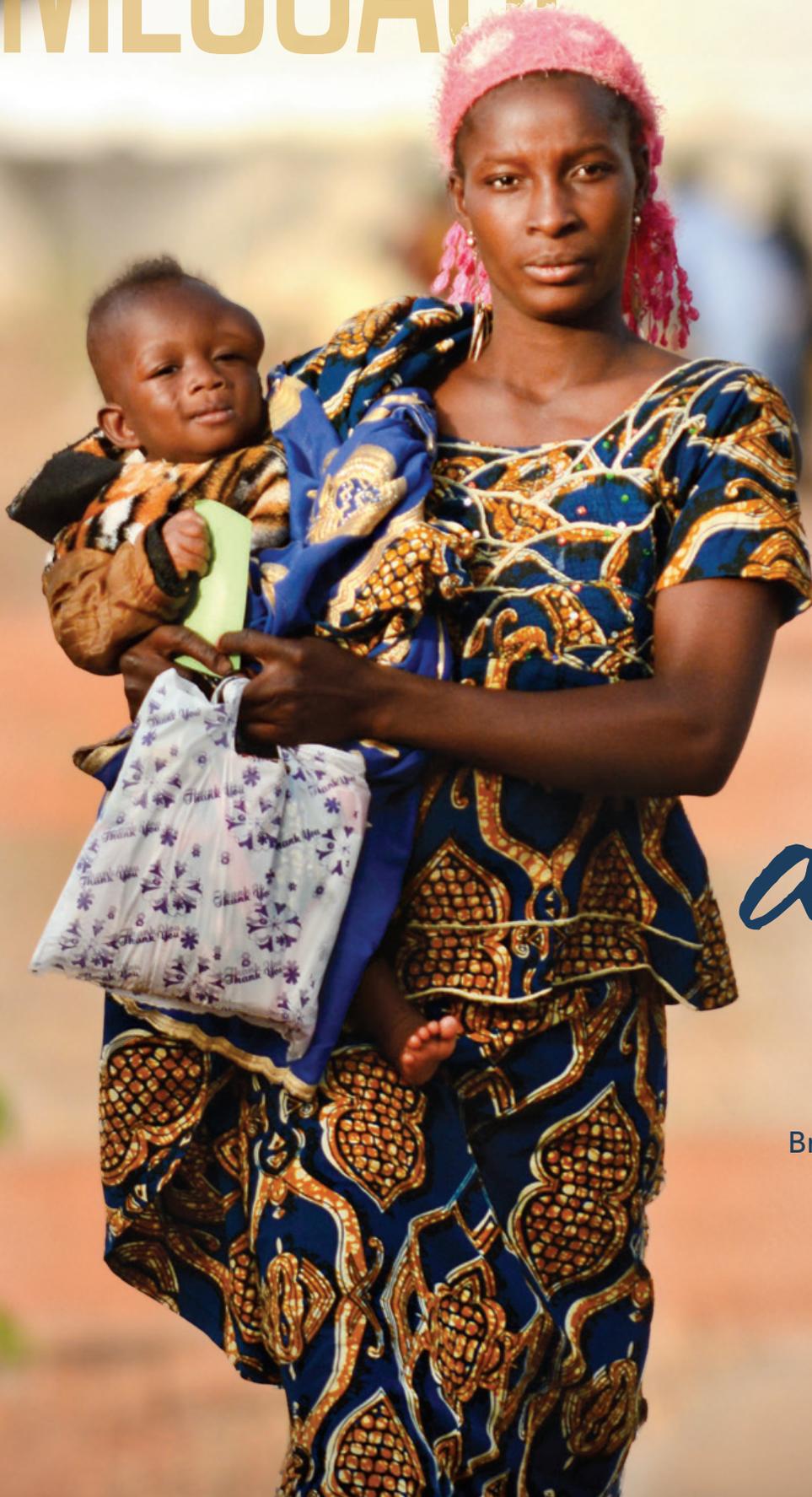


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INTERNATIONAL

Vol 63 | Issue 2 | 2015

# MESSAGE



*the  
doctor  
is in*

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Bringing Modern Medicine  
to Mango, Togo



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## Transforming Barren Fields

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I'm always amazed at how much our God can accomplish when we place our trust in Him. When ABWE began 88 years ago, it had just five missionaries headed to one country — the Philippines — to do medical evangelism. Today, God has blessed us with more than 900 missionaries serving in over 60 countries and ministering through hundreds of different and diverse ministries. We serve a mighty God and that was amazingly evident at the recent grand opening of ABWE's Hospital of Hope in Mango, Togo.

Eleven years ago, our Togo team felt called to bring a high-quality, gospel-centered hospital to the northern part of the country, but all they had was a plot of dusty land and faith.

That was all they needed.

God motivated 1,400 people to give \$6 million during one of the United States' deepest recessions. He also brought more than 550 North Americans halfway around the world to labor alongside the Togolese, and together, they transformed a barren field into a modern medical facility.

I am so thankful for all the people who played a part in bringing this ministry to life and for a mighty God who provides. As you read this issue and rejoice in what God is doing in Togo and around the world, I pray that you will invite Him into the barren fields in your life so that they can also bear fruit.

*Jim O'Neill* | President

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### WHO IS THE ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM (ABWE)?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. The objectives of ABWE are to establish indigenous Baptist churches and to train national pastors and leaders. More than 900 missionaries serve with ABWE to advance God's work in 60 countries around the world by sharing the story of hope, building communities of faith and serving the world with love.

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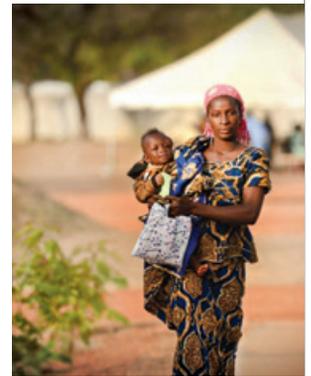
Following one missionary's quest to help bring supplies and hope to victims of a devastating volcanic eruption on the small island of Fogo in Cape Verde



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#### ON THE COVER:

A woman carries her child to ABWE's Hospital of Hope to receive care  
©Judy Bowen

## ONLINE

 [abwe.org/messageonline](http://abwe.org/messageonline)

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CZECH REPUBLIC

## The Dog Who Opened Doors



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throughout their neighborhood, and Annabelle was eventually found and returned safely by a neighbor. The Wendels had never met the man, but he knew them as the American pug owners.

“All of a sudden, these people would light up when they saw us. Annabelle really helped us gain a lot more acceptance in the community,” Steve Wendel said. “It’s a holdover from Communism. People still don’t trust other people, but you can trust a dog. No one would look at us when we would walk down the street, but everybody and their brother wanted to meet Annabelle.”

God also used Annabelle to help the Wendels develop a deep friendship with the family who sold her. Eventually Steve invited the family’s three daughters to help with a summer ministry camp and they accepted. Throughout

**W**hen the Wendel family, missionaries to the Czech Republic, returned after a short furlough state-side, their six children were heartbroken that they had to leave their beloved cat, Rocky Road, behind. After a brief discussion, the family decided on the perfect new pet: a pug puppy.

They searched, but only found online advertisements for pugs that were located too far away for the Wendels to travel. After a month of looking, discouragement began to creep into their children’s hearts. Then, one day, the

Wendels’ daughter returned home from school and excitedly announced that her classmate had pugs for sale. After calling, they headed over to her classmate’s home and returned with an adorable little puppy they named Annabelle.

The family was instantly smitten, but they never imagined how Annabelle would help further their ministry in one of the most atheistic countries in the world.

Shortly after coming to live with the Wendels, Annabelle got loose and went missing for a day. Word spread

.....  
 ●  
*The Wendels discovered their new puppy made an amazing addition to their ministry team.*  
 ●  
 .....

C

the weeklong camp, each girl heard the gospel message multiple times and one of the girls decided to give her life to Jesus.

“We were astonished just how deep of an impact this little pug made for the kingdom of God,” said Steve.

Sadly, after only a year with the Wendels, Annabelle became sick with an autoimmune disorder. Despite daily trips to the veterinarian for antibiotics, she succumbed to the illness. But the impact of her life and her ministry lives on.

“Losing Annabelle was terrible — as losing a family pet always is. However, Annabelle’s life actually served a great purpose in ministry. Of how many dogs can that be said?” said Steve. “Heaven was eternally altered all because of a short-lived and ornery pug named Annabelle.” ■

**“We were astonished just how deep of an impact this little pug made for the kingdom of God.”**



*A Middle Eastern woman learns to sew, providing her with an opportunity to earn an income and gain a foothold out of poverty.*

MIDDLE EAST  
**Purse Change**

**T**en Thirty Three, a dynamic outreach project, is using purses to give Middle Eastern women an opportunity for change.

Started several years ago, Ten Thirty Three trains impoverished and disenfranchised women to make unique handbags and totes — providing them with a marketable skill and a valuable source of income for their families.

And for many, their situation is desperate. Some are second or third wives whose husbands only give them an

insufficient stipend of about \$50 per month to support them and their children. Others are refugees who have fled various forms of persecution in their home countries. No matter what their story is, all of them are grateful for the way this project is enabling them to provide for their families.

In addition, each woman in the project is given the opportunity and ability to buy a brand new industrial sewing machine. Through a micro-loan program, each of the seamstresses can

gradually pay off the cost of her machine through a portion of her monthly earnings. As a result, she acquires an asset and a skill set that will benefit her for years to come.

By affirming dignity, promoting freedom, and injecting hope, the Ten Thirty Three outreach project is changing the lives of Middle Eastern women. ■

**VISIT** .....  
**www.tenthirtythree.com**  
to get your bag and help a woman in need.

COSTA RICA

## Tell It on the Mountain



●  
*Jon and Joni McGinnis hike seven hours into the mountains of Costa Rica to minister to the Cabécars, an isolated group of indigenous people.*  
 ●



Missions work requires a heart for God, feet willing to go, and, as Costa Rica missionary Jon McGinnis recently discovered, legs that can climb mountains.

Last spring, God introduced Jon to a Costa Rican pastor named Edgardo who ministers to a group of indigenous people called the Cabécar Indians. Rugged terrain keeps them isolated, and although many missionaries lack the ability to make the long, arduous trek through the jungles to reach

them, Edgardo leads a group a few times a year to minister to the Cabécars. Jon's interest was piqued, and he told Edgardo he'd love to tag along sometime.

Two weeks later, Jon found himself trekking with Edgardo to the remote Cabécar village of Hockey for the first time. The seven-hour hike is a non-stop incline and decline that feels like being put on a never-ending StairMaster. When they finally arrived in Hockey, Jon saw a loose community of huts spread throughout

a steep valley. The Cabécar people live very primitively in thatched-roof homes made of bamboo or wood milled from local trees and survive on fishing, hunting, and farming the land.

"This is old school missions stuff," said Jon who was hooked after just one week with the Cabécars. He returned to Hockey five months later with his wife, Joni, and has been back five more times in the past year.

Jon's first two trips were focused purely on evangelism. The team shared the



**“This is old school missions stuff.”**

— Jon McGinnis

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love of Christ physically by bringing them supplies, as well as spiritually through evangelistic Bible studies in their language of Cabéca. With 15 vowels and a very nasally sound, Cabéca is difficult to learn and bears no resemblance to Spanish — the primary language of Costa Rica. Jon and Edgardo’s ministry was made possible by the translation work of the Jones family, missionaries who came to live and work with the Cabécars in the 1950s. While the Joneses finished the translation

of the New Testament in 1993 and were active evangelists, very few Cabécars have come to an authentic faith in Christ.

“They are very responsive to the gospel, but they are very confused as to what the gospel is,” said Jon. “Their understanding is muddled. I’m not sure they’ve made the distinction between who Jesus Christ is and any other story they’ve ever heard in the history of their animistic culture.”

As Jon and Joni’s passion for the Cabécar people grows,

so does their vision. They recently returned to Hockey to help build a 30-by-20-foot shelter that will provide them and other pastors a place to stay during visits and also serve as a place for the local people to meet for Bible studies. Jon, in partnership with Edgardo and five other churches, is in the process of developing a long-term strategy to not only minister in Hockey, but also to equip and empower the Cabécars to share the gospel with their own people. ■

Around  
**10,000**

Cabécars still preserve their language, natural medicine & patrimonial culture in the mountains of Costa Rica.

UNITED STATES

## A Father's Grief



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**“Do I have nights where I doubt God’s goodness? Yes.”**

— Pastor Dan Nichols

**W**hen Gary began exploring a personal relationship with Jesus nearly 20 years ago, he was plagued by the pain of losing his son several years earlier. Gary battled between his anger with God and his yearning for a loving Savior.

“That came to an end when he experienced judgment from flawed Christians

wearing masks of perfection,” said Gary’s friend Tom. “He walked away from the church and from God.”

Gary’s bitterness only grew, and when his marriage fell apart, his life quickly spiraled out of control. Alcohol and drugs consumed him.

As Tom watched Gary crumble, he prayed. Tom had recently started attending Restored Church, a new church in northeastern Pennsylvania that boldly proclaimed “no perfect people allowed,” and Tom knew it would be the perfect place for Gary. For three months, Tom prayed Gary would give faith another chance, and one Sunday in early March, that day came.

Gary finally accepted an invitation from Tom to visit the church, and God timed Gary’s visit perfectly. That morning, Dan Nichols, an ABWE missionary and co-pastor of Restored Church, shared his own doubts and brokenness when he learned his unborn son might have a serious congenital heart defect that would require open-heart surgery immediately after he was born.

“Something happens when you walk into the doctor’s office and find out that your son has a possible heart

defect that could kill him,” Dan said during his sermon. “Do I have nights when I doubt God’s goodness? Yes. But when you hear that news, there is nothing else in this world that can offer the stability and security you need. Only God can do that.”

Dan said that as he and his wife have allowed God into their pain, they have discovered a comfort and love that they never knew before. That Sunday, God used Dan’s battle with grief to reach Gary, a man who has been losing his own battle with grief for many years.

After the sermon, Gary went up to Dan and told him that he almost walked out because of the tears welling up in his eyes. “I’ve never heard anyone speak the way you spoke today. Church people have always been judgmental to me, but when you preached today, you moved me like no one has ever moved me before,” he said. “I believed you.”

Now, with the help of Tom, Dan, and the Restored Church community, Gary is working through his pain so he can find healing and comfort in God’s unconditional love. ■

# Raise Your Hand If You Want More Income

Did you know you could make more money while supporting global missions? Helen Smith did it and you can too.

Helen, 75, was looking to invest some of her savings, but her bank only offered an interest rate of 1.4 percent. Helen decided to call ABWE to learn more about a Gift Annuity Agreement and discovered that the annuity rate at her age was 5.8 percent.

Helen was ecstatic because her ABWE Gift Annuity would give her a bigger annual income and also support the gospel.

Is an ABWE Gift Annuity right for you?

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**Lee G. Jantzen CFP® CAP® FCEP**

Director of Generosity Planning

717.909.2332 | [leejantzen@abwe.org](mailto:leejantzen@abwe.org)



In Canada, contact:

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1.877.690.1009 | [planned.giving@abwe.ca](mailto:planned.giving@abwe.ca)

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## JOHN & JEAN PETERSON

CANDIDATE CLASS: 1964

COUNTRY SERVED IN: Brazil



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### MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS



1960

Married on May 31



1966

Arrived in Brazil



1978

Began teaching sign language classes



Appointed to São Paulo, Brazil

1964



Moved to Campinas, Brazil

1974



Started Brazil's first deaf camp

1979

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JEAN PETERSON

**Q: How did God call you to missions?**

**A:** God used a missionary to India, who spoke in my church when I was 16, to open my heart to missions. I told the Lord I was willing to go anywhere, but as years passed, I found myself giving many excuses as to why I couldn't go. The last excuse when I was 20 was that I could not go single — and I had no promise of a husband at the time. After a few months of arguing with God, I finally said, "OK, God! I will go anywhere, any way, as long as it is your will."

Two weeks later I met the man who was to be my husband for 54 years. His first question to me on our first date was, "God wants me to be a missionary. What has He called you to do?" I learned the hard way that God always knows what is best for us!

**Q: How did you begin working with the deaf?**

**A:** While on furlough in the US we took a course in American Sign Language. When we returned to Brazil, we were determined to start a ministry with the deaf, but didn't know

how to begin. Then, while visiting a missionary colleague, I spotted a deaf couple talking in signs as they walked, and we approached them about teaching us. They agreed, and in January of 1979, we organized the first camp for the deaf in Brazil. From that point on, our main ministry was reaching the deaf, preparing interpreters to work with them, and beginning deaf ministries in local churches.

**Q: What moment had the biggest impact on your ministry?**

**A:** Once, a young man, who accepted the Lord at one of our camps, came up to John and asked him, "How long have you known about Jesus?" John explained that he had been born into a Christian family. Then the young man asked another question, "Why did no one come to Brazil sooner to tell us about Jesus? My father and my grandfather died without ever knowing!" We had no good answer, but from that time on, we continually thanked the Lord for calling us to this ministry. It also encouraged us to spread our ministry to the other countries of South and Central America.

**Q: What is your favorite memory from your time as a missionary?**

**A:** During our first camp for the deaf we quickly realized that even though many participants had been raised in the Catholic church, they had no Biblical understanding. One young man asked who the man on the cross was and why they had killed him. I will never forget the look of surprise on their faces when John told them that they could pray because God knows sign language. By the end of the week, 23 of the 32 campers came forward to accept Christ. Many are still faithful to the Lord today, and one man became the pastor of the first deaf church established in Brazil.

**Q: What advice would you give to new missionaries or those considering missions?**

**A:** Be sure to follow the Lord's lead and not turn away when the going gets tough. Unless God definitely closes the door, do not give up. John went to be with the Lord on January 9, 2014, but my call to missions did not end! ■

1986

Organized Brazil's first official deaf church



2000

Began deaf ministry in Cariri, Brazil



2003

Began interpreters course at Cariri Seminary



Published first Brazilian Sign Language book

1987



Established deaf school and church

2001



John made honorary citizen of Juazeiro do Norte, Brazil

2012

**ISLAND IN A**

**SEA OF TROUB**

MISSIONARY HELPS BRING  
**RELIEF & HOPE**  
AFTER VOLCANIC ERUPTION  
RAVAGES THE ISLAND OF FOGO



# A

fter 20 years of lying dormant, a volcano on the tiny island of Fogo suddenly burst to life — threatening the lives of its 55,000 residents.

On Fogo, part of the Cape Verde islands off the west coast of Africa, the people were aware of the volcano’s potential danger, but during the past two decades of serenity, towns and even a national park had grown up around the base of the sleeping giant. Then, last November, their false sense of security was shattered when faint tremors gave way to a massive eruption of molten lava that forced many to flee for their lives.

From the nearby island of Santiago, ABWE missionary Mike Skibinski felt powerless as he watched news footage of widespread fires and lava devouring homes and towns. His heart broke for the people of Fogo, but all he could do was pray and ask God to use this tragedy to make His name known on the Catholic-majority island. Then, one day, a local pastor called and gave Mike the opportunity he had been aching for.

“I just wanted to let you know that I met a Muslim man who is the owner of a water bottling company here and he is donating 600 bottles at a 70 percent discount to help the people in Fogo,” the pastor said. “He is also going to take his truck over to the island to help. Would you and your team like to go to Fogo and help them disperse this water to those who have lost everything?”

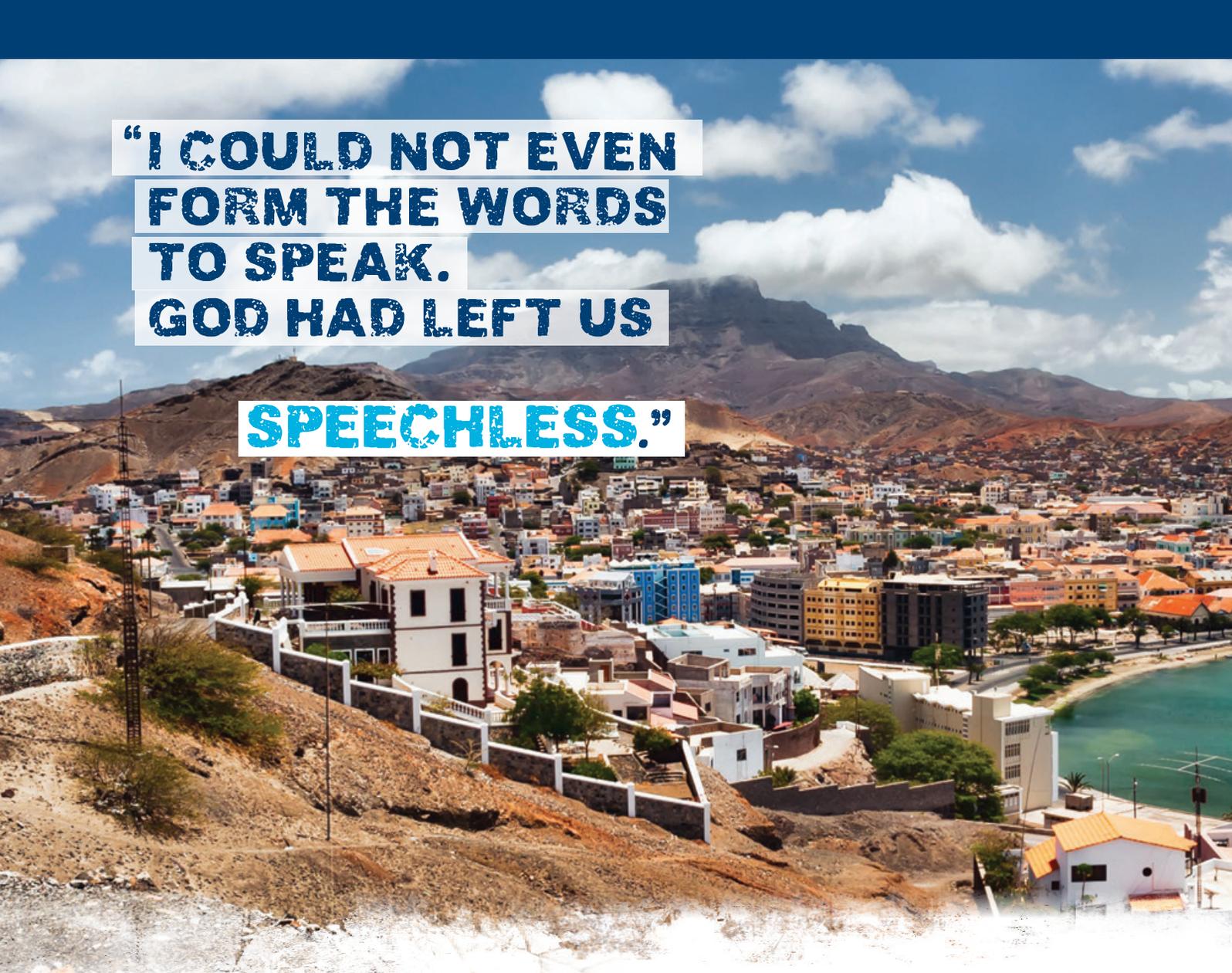
“Yes! Just let me call the others,” said Mike. “Oh, when are they doing this?”

“The boat leaves on Saturday.”

Mike had just four days to put together a complete relief effort. He quickly rallied the other evangelical pastors on his island and got to work. He knew that the people on Fogo needed water, food, clothes, and most of all, hope. God had already provided the water, and when Mike checked his email, he found a letter from a supporting church that read, “We do a missions project every year and we have chosen to help your ministry this year. We will be sending a sizable gift.”

Mike was blown away and knew just what to do with the money. He used it to purchase rice, corn, sugar, and flour for the people of Fogo. ▶

✓ **Water? Check.**    ✓ **Food? Check.**



**“I COULD NOT EVEN  
FORM THE WORDS  
TO SPEAK.  
GOD HAD LEFT US**

**SPEECHLESS.”**

**T**he next and most important item on the list was Bibles. Mike remembered a pastor that had supplied Bibles for another local project, so he went to visit him.

“How many Bibles were you thinking?” the pastor asked.

“We were hoping for 250 if that is possible,” Mike said timidly.

The pastor was silent and gave him a puzzled look. Mike worried he had asked for too many, but then the pastor said with a small smile, “I’ll tell you what, how about we start with 1,000 Bibles?”

By the time they finished loading up the Bibles, they had around 3,000 in the back of their truck.

“I could not even form the words to speak,” Mike recalled. “God had left me speechless.”

 **Hope? Check.**

Mike and his group of the local pastors gathered the supplies and started putting together emergency kits, which included rice, corn, flour, sugar, juice, bandages, and a Bible. They put together more than 250 emergency kits, and as they were finishing assembling the last kits, a truck pulled up and two pastors got out.

“We have a few more things to add if you are interested,” they said.

They led Mike to the back of their truck, which held a pile of new clothing. Chinese merchants from

*Fogo boasts a thriving agricultural and tourism industry, but the volcanic eruption halted travel and destroyed many farms.*



a local church had found out about their project and donated 1,000 new shirts and hundreds of pairs of shoes. It was another miraculous answer to prayer.

### ✓ Clothes? Check.

“God had orchestrated every detail, including the cost of the passage that the boat owner cut in half when he learned of our project,” Mike said.

At midnight on Saturday, Mike and a crew of six pastors and volunteers left on a ship bound for Fogo. The ship was loaded with 600 bottles of water, 250 emergency food kits, 1,000 shirts, 300 pairs of shoes, and a few thousand new testaments, but there were only 10 people aboard. The remaining 290 empty



seats served as a constant reminder of the reason they were there. Each had seen the haunting news images of the eruption and heard stories of those who escaped with only their lives. As the boat cut through the choppy water, they prayed that their work would be a blessing to those who were hurting.

The island was still hidden by darkness when the ship pulled into the port before dawn. Excited to get started, they struggled to get a few hours of sleep, and at 10 a.m., they gave up and set off to the first refugee camp located just outside the volcano region. ►

**M**

ike and his crew spent the morning going from family to family, handing out supplies, and listening to people's stories. The team was flooded with smiles of gratitude because aid was sporadic and hundreds were without clean water.

As expected, they met many people from the evacuation zone who had been forced out of their homes and into makeshift tents, but they quickly discovered that the eruption didn't just affect those living near the caldera. The entire island was suffering. Much of the population of the tourism-dependent island was without work since the airport was shutdown, and many farms had been destroyed, taking the jobs of the workers with them. These downtrodden refugees gratefully accepted the emergency kits, and once every family had received one, the crew left with a promise to come back that evening to share a message of hope with them.

## **MANY PEOPLE WERE FORCED FROM THEIR HOMES AND INTO MAKESHIFT TENTS.**



When they returned, the village excitedly welcomed them, and Mike and his team set up a screen to project the “Jesus Film” to more than 100 refugees who had gathered. The crowd watched quietly and motionlessly, listening carefully to every word. At one point, Mike overheard one man whisper, “Jesus even speaks our language.”

While they have no way of knowing how many people found new hope through their ministry that day, one lady said with a big smile, “This will be the first night that I will be able to sleep since the eruption started.”

The following day, Mike and his crew repeated the same efforts in a different area that was also filled with the heartbreak and uncertainty of many displaced families. After a long day of handing out emergency kits, the team returned in the evening to find the local school’s open-air gym packed with people waiting to see the “Jesus Film.” The team was exhausted but hopeful that they had made a lasting impact.

On their last day, they decided to head out to the largest and most organized of the camps. They left early for the two-hour ride to the city of Mosteiros where they were able to bring aid and hope to hundreds more, including volunteer workers and police officers. As they were leaving for the day, they decided to journey out to the police checkpoints to pray for the overworked police force. The team gave them water and shared why they were there. They prayed with the officers and were about to leave when the commander asked, “Do you want to see it? If you can get the word out to those who are helping, maybe they can find more ways to help the people here.”

The officers escorted Mike and his crew to the base of the volcano where they began snapping photos. It was eerily beautiful as it spit crimson red lava into the dark night sky. The sight held all the wonder of fireworks on a warm July evening, but as Mike was trying to capture its beauty on film, he suddenly saw the same image through the eyes of the people of Fogo. ▶



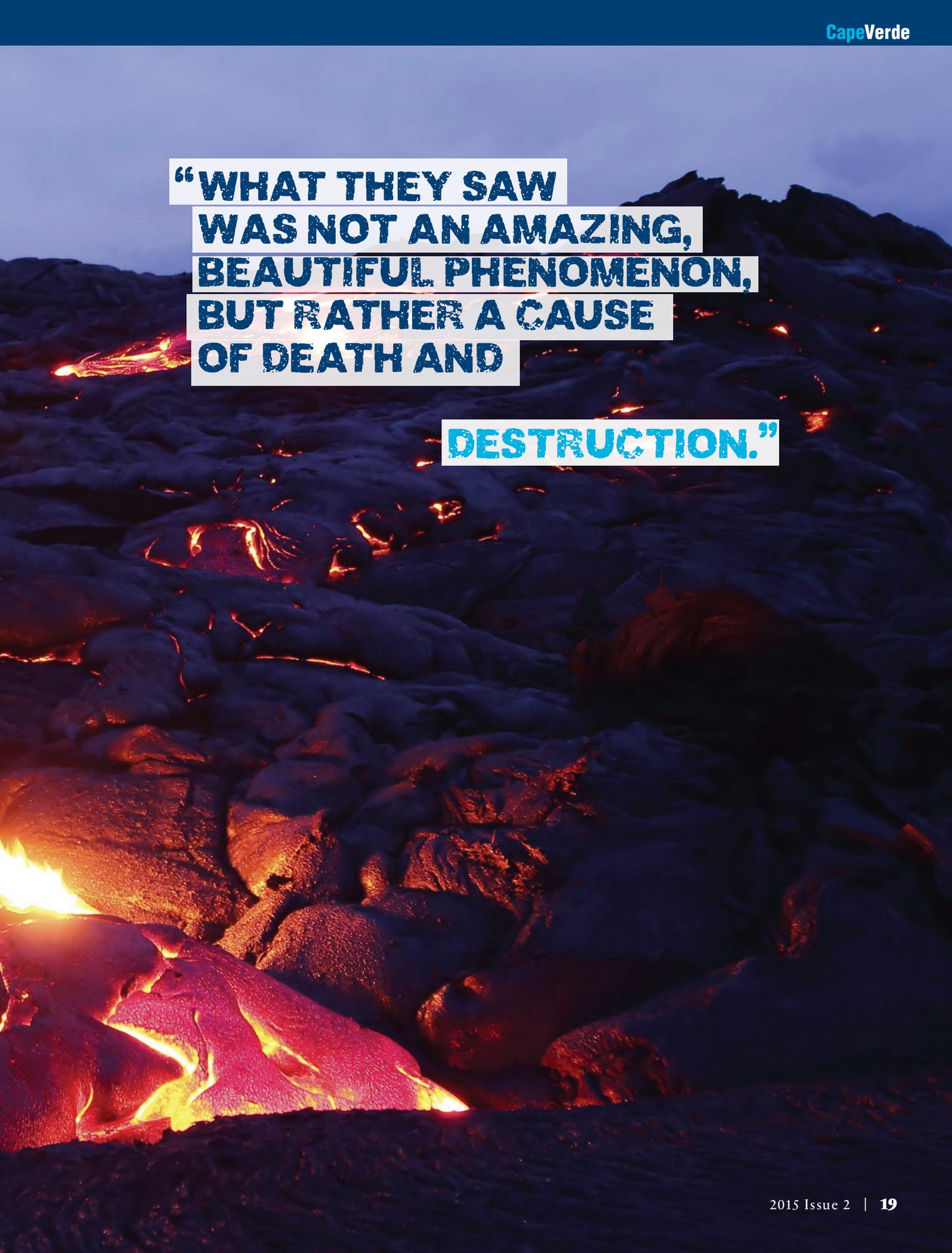
*Mike (top right) and team deliver relief kits to families forced to flee from the volcano's path of destruction.*



“What they saw was not an amazing, beautiful phenomenon, but rather a cause of death and destruction. To them, it would be like talking about how beautiful and powerful Lucifer is,” said Mike. “It’s almost unthinkable.”

In that moment, Mike felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude that they were able to play a part in God’s plan. In just three days, they handed out thousands of Bibles, one ton of food, thousands of liters of water, and more than 1,000 articles of new clothing.

“God brought everything together. And we were blessed with the privilege of giving hope to the people affected by this volcano and letting them know that God loves them and has not forgotten about them,” Mike said. ■



**“WHAT THEY SAW  
WAS NOT AN AMAZING,  
BEAUTIFUL PHENOMENON,  
BUT RATHER A CAUSE  
OF DEATH AND  
DESTRUCTION.”**

By LEAH PICKARD | Photography By JUDY BOWEN

# The Doctor is in

Bringing Modern Medicine to Mango

Soon after I stepped off the plane into the sweltering heat, I became aware of two things: my luggage hadn't arrived and the man in front of me was being pick-pocketed. A small smile crossed my face. Welcome to Africa.

With nothing more than what I carried on my back and an unhealthy fear of snakes, I climbed into a weathered SUV with ABWE missionaries, Dave and Doris Totman, and began the bone-jarring journey east across Ghana into the bordering country of Togo.

As we drove through towns and villages, people saw us coming and enthusiastically waved. Despite the 100-degree heat, one man wore a pair of women's furry UGG boots. Another grinned and pointed at his English T-shirt, which read "Baby on Board," with an arrow pointing down to his stomach.

It was 2010 and I was traveling to Mango, a small city in northern Togo, for the groundbreaking of the missions' largest building project to date — a \$6 million, 43-bed surgical hospital and ministry center called the Hospital of Hope. ▶



# HOSPITAL Espérance



*Leah Pickard, director of communications at ABWE, poses with children at a Togolese Christian school on her first trip to the country in May 2010.*



***“After six long years of fundraising, prayer, recruitment, training, and construction, a hospital complex spans across a once empty field.”***

*More than 5,000 people arrive to attend the grand opening of the Hospital of Hope, built in honor of past ABWE president Wendell Kempton, on February 26, 2015.*

*The people of Mango were integral in the planning and construction of the facility and now many locals work on the hospital's staff.*

### **DIRE NEEDS**

While Mango already had a hospital, it was known by the locals as “the place where people go to die.” Each week between 10-to-20 children and adults died in Mango from preventable diseases — and all never having heard the good news. Things were so bad that a government surgeon appointed to serve at the hospital refused to go to Mango.

Government officials began asking ABWE to help — giving us a prime opportunity to establish a powerful ministry in the 10/40 Window — an area known for

containing the largest population of non-Christians in the world. These officials had heard about the quality of care at ABWE’s Karolyn Kempton Memorial Christian Hospital located 250 miles to the south, and they wanted their own hospital in the north.

Good medical care is extremely scarce in West Africa. For every 100,000 people in Togo, there are only four doctors, compared with 256 doctors in the United States. As a result, most people rely on witch doctors or tribal doctors to attend their medical needs — often causing more harm than good.

I witnessed some of these horrors firsthand when I visited ABWE’s southern Togo hospital before traveling north to the groundbreaking. Walking through the hospital ward, doctors pointed out two teenage girls who sat covering infected wounds on their bellies. They had sought help from their local “doctors” after being raped, and instead ended up receiving primitive abortions that, if they survived, might prevent them from ever having children. On a bed nearby, a woman who had been bitten by a dog almost a year earlier was dying of rabies. She hadn’t sought medical attention until it was too late, and now she appeared manic, her eyes darting wildly back and forth as she struggled to live a few more hours.

Soon, another woman arrived looking nine-months pregnant. I watched as doctors discovered a tumor on her uterus that had been growing for almost eight years. It was slowly taking over her abdomen, and her kidneys could no longer function. She grabbed at her husband’s hand as she was whisked away to have a surgery that saved her life.

Never before had I seen such extreme conditions, and I quickly understood why God had called us to this country and these people. Not only were we providing medical treatments by trained professionals in a sanitary environment, but our staff was also praying with, encouraging, and introducing patients to God's love.

The spiritual outcome of the medical work at the Karolyn Kempton Hospital in Togo has been incredible. More than 2,000 patients profess faith in Christ every year and upwards of 40 churches and 16 Christian schools can all be traced back to this medical ministry.

Having seen the success of this type of ministry, we dreamed of the spiritual impact another hospital could have, especially in a Muslim-majority area like the city of Mango.

## A DREAM REALIZED

Fast forward to March 2015. We are now seeing our dreams for Mango becoming a reality.

After six long years of fundraising, prayer, recruitment, training, and construction, a hospital complex spans across a once empty field and 141 trained staff members are on site, serving the people of northern Togo.

From the Togolese students who were dismissed from school early to help haul rocks from the property, to the men who toiled in the sun to dig trenches, haul cement, and build thousands of blocks by hand, the people of Mango had worked hard for this day. But they were not alone. More than 550 North American volunteers donated their time and talents to push the project to completion. And in the face of an

economic recession, ABWE donors rallied behind the project to raise more money than any other project in the mission's history.

When it came time to celebrate the hospital's grand opening, several thousand people poured into the streets, surging toward the hospital complex. Soldiers, brought in to help with the crowd, tried to control the masses as they vied for the best view by climbing on trees and shoulders.

As missionary Judy Bowen took in the scene of the completed campus, one man said to her, "You have brought life to Mango! We thank God!" His sentiment could be echoed by the whole town.

From start to finish, the hospital has truly been a labor of love and an amazing display of God's faithfulness. ▶







*The President of Togo, Faure Gnassingbé, greets the crowd at the hospital's grand opening ceremony as a military band plays.*

“As we look over the past five years of construction and preparation, we see that God has been in control of every detail and has accomplished what others might consider to be impossible,” reflected Alain Niles, ABWE missionary and hospital director.

### **OPEN DOORS**

Ever since ABWE missionary and Medical Director Todd DeKryger and the President of Togo cut the ribbon to the Hospital of Hope on February 26, 2015, patients have flooded in. The day the hospital opened more than 200 people were seen, and before noon, clinic appointments were booked for the whole week.

Two months later, more than 3,500 patients hailing from all over West Africa have already received treatment. Babies have been born. Broken bones have been mended. Ten people, who would have otherwise died, have been given anti-venom and saved from poisonous snakebites. Five patients have professed faith in Christ.

One man traveled for three days and arrived at the hospital weathered and exhausted. Not understanding the check-in procedure, he found a bed and lay down. Soon, he was being treated, prayed with, and told the good news of Jesus Christ. ▶



***"If you hadn't told me this news, I would have never found out about Jesus."***

*Above: A patient, raised in the heavily folk Islamic culture of northern Togo, sits with a nurse. Many who have never received traditional medical care are coming to the hospital in search of answers and hope, including the wife of a prominent local Muslim healer. She came to the new hospital after her husband was unable to cure her.*

Down the hall, a woman was told she had a life-threatening illness and asked a chaplain if she could learn to pray. He shared how she could build a personal relationship with God through prayer.

"If you hadn't told me this news, I would have never found out about Jesus," she said to the chaplain. Later, hospital staff provided her with an audio recording of the gospel in her language so she could listen and continue to learn.

Even the wife of a local prominent Muslim healer came to the hospital after her husband was unable to cure her. Missionaries were able

to pray for his wife in Jesus' name and showed them the "Jesus Film." If his village found out he came to the hospital, it could shut down his business, but he admitted to doctors that the power of God was stronger than his powers. Later, hospital staff overheard the couple talking about Jesus and what they were learning.

"The Hospital of Hope has only been open [for a short time], and already there are so many stories coming from the ministry every day," said ABWE missionary nurse Melissa Friesen. "We had thought that the initial flood of patients would die down after the novelty of



## “What kind of place is this where you walk around and pray for patients?”

the new hospital wore off, but the clinic continues to overflow with new patients.”

In fact, even though the hospital’s limited staff continues to work at maximum capacity, they are still forced to turn away more than 100 people a day.

### TRUE IMPACT

It is amazing for me to see that the barren, desolate field where I stood five years ago for the groundbreaking has been utterly transformed into a bustling, modern medical facility that is changing the community of Mango forever. And while the full spiritual impact of the hospital remains unknown, in God’s hands, the opportunities are endless.

As one ABWE missionary reported, “I’ve shared the gospel and prayed with more families in the [first two days of the hospital’s opening] than I had in the past two months. Never have I had such opportunities to enter the lives of families in the community and surrounding villages.”

“It astounds us just how many people say that they have never heard that God loves them, let alone that they can have a personal relationship with Him,” adds Kelli Thayer, ABWE missionary in Togo.

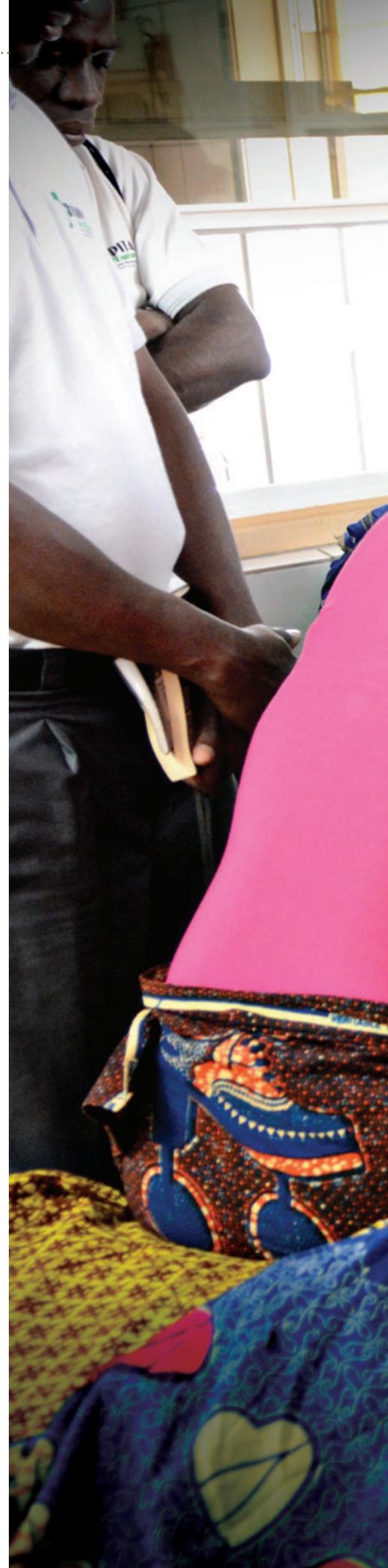
Recently, an older patient approached a hospital chaplain and asked, “What kind of place is this where you walk around and pray for the patients?”

The chaplain smiled kindly and asked the older man what he thought about it.

“I think it is a very good thing,” the man replied. “Can I pray too? And will you come bring this news to my village?”

This is what the Hospital of Hope is all about. And I pray that our efforts have prepared this land for God’s work and make His name known. ■

Staff members and a hospital chaplain pray over the Hospital of Hope’s first patient, Mauwena. She came for medical treatment after an aerosol can was thrown into a nearby fire and it exploded, causing extensive burns on her face, neck, arms, and upper chest. Mauwena could have been killed, but God’s grace and the treatment she received saved her life.





**LEARNMORE** about serving in Mango at [hospitalofhope.org/serve](http://hospitalofhope.org/serve)

# The Hospital of HOPE

On February 26, 2015, ABWE joined with more than 5,000 Togolese to celebrate the grand opening of our Hospital of Hope in Mango, Togo. The hospital was the product of many years, many laborers, and many supporters who all rallied behind the dream of sharing Christ's love with the people of West Africa.

**1.3 million**

people live in the Mango area and will be served by the hospital

**THE NEED**

**4/100,000**

doctors-per-patient ratio in Togo

**25,000**

**patients expected in the first year**

**200**

**patients seen the first day**

**1,000**

**patients seen in the first**

**10 days**

From Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Benin, Nigeria, & Ivory Coast

**“We view every patient as a field.**

**FROM SOME WE ARE PICKING OUT ROCKS,  
OTHERS WE WATER, OTHERS WE PLANT SEED,  
AND EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, GOD ALLOW US TO HARVEST FRUIT.”**

*- Alain Niles, ABWE missionary and Hospital of Hope general director*

# 100%

PATIENTS EXPOSED TO THE GOSPEL

**8 full-time &  
12 short-term  
missionaries on  
staff**

**110**  
**Togolese from  
35 ethnic groups  
on staff**

**33 full-time  
missionaries**

involved in planning  
and construction

**6**  
**years to  
plan**

**CONSTRUCTION**

## DEPARTMENTS

- Pharmacy
- Radiology
- Lab
- Men's Ward
- Chaplaincy
- Pediatrics
- Delivery/Maternity
- Woman's Ward
- Operating Room
- Clinic



**15-30**

**Togolese  
employed  
in construction**

**230,000**  
hours of labor

**42,000**  
sacks of cement  
used, weighing  
a total of

**46.3**  
million pounds

**5**  
**years  
to build**

**580**

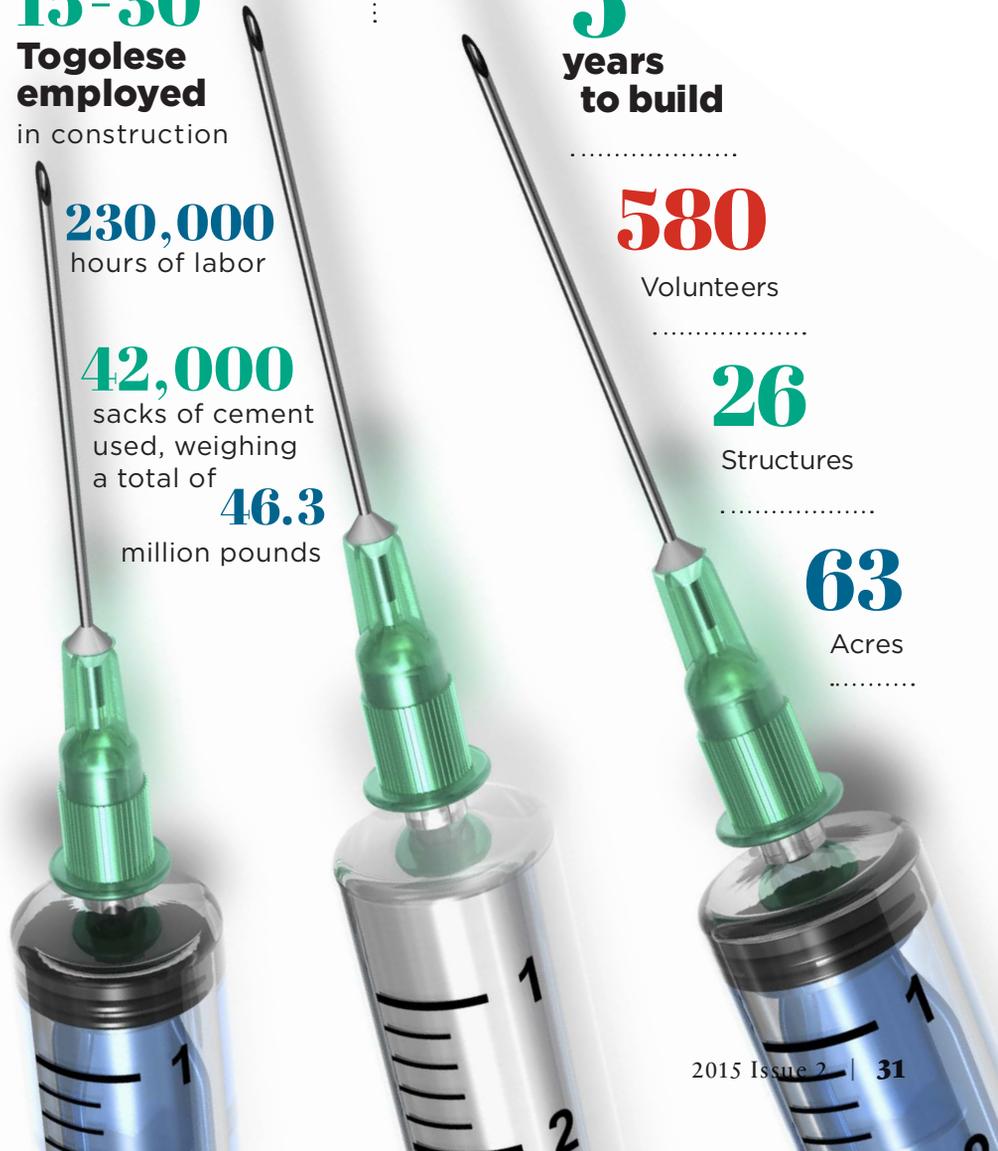
Volunteers

**26**

Structures

**63**

Acres





# Flying Through the Storm

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By **Dan Stoner**

*ABWE Missionary to Togo*

**Through the fog of drugs and chemotherapy, one question kept surfacing in my mind: Is God going to come through this time?**

Becoming a missionary aviator has been my calling and dream since I was 12. After years of work and schooling, my wife and I joined the ABWE family in 2009 with the African country of Togo on our hearts. The opportunity to carry the gospel to unreached people thrilled us and propelled us through the next three years of prefield ministry, and in August 2012, we arrived in France for language school. After a year, our French was improving, and I went on a short trip to Togo to help ship our plane's engine to the US where it would be overhauled and prepared for use. My lifelong dream and our ministry was on the horizon.

But then the clouds rolled in.

While I was in Togo, I had some excruciating stomach pain. Thinking that it was side effects from anti-malarial medications, I went to a doctor when I returned to France and instead was told I had aggressive cancer. We immediately packed up our lives in France, and just three days after receiving the initial diagnosis, I checked in to the Cleveland Clinic. This aggressive form of lymphoma had formed into an abdominal mass that was completely blocking the exit from my stomach and preventing me from eating or drinking. As they began pumping an artificial nutrition and chemotherapy cocktail directly into my body, my view of the horizon was fading away, but I clung to my belief in God's power.

It was a rough five months. My body felt weaker than it had ever been, but my faith grew stronger, and nine months later I ran a 5K without a trace of cancer in my body. I was living proof that God can calm any storm, and when the doctors cleared me, we moved forward with our calling to start an aviation ministry in Togo. Our family celebrated the start of 2015 in Togo with the two other missionary families on our aviation team. Through the generous contributions of many churches and individuals, we were able to order our first shipment of airplane fuel in January and flight testing was scheduled for April. The long-awaited dream of an aviation ministry was finally coming into focus.

But the clouds have rolled in again.

As we were readying the airplane for flight testing, we discovered some unexpected problems — unexplainable, frustrating, big problems. Flight controls needed to be completely rebuilt, major components were corroded and needed to be replaced, and it was clear that further disassembly was required for complete inspection. We had been eagerly counting down the days until our ministry finally got off the ground, but instead, we are now shipping the airframe back to the US.

God's calling remains clear to us, but the pain of leaving Togo to make these repairs is just as real as the stomach pain that would wake me in the middle of the night during my battle with cancer.

It is in these frustrating and incomprehensible moments that I'm thankful for my fight with cancer. I was able to see God work and it taught me to expect the impossible, just like Elijah did on Mount Carmel when he poured water over the offering. I also learned that when God comes through in the midst of the impossible, He gets the glory. My cancer story is a story of God's faithfulness and amazing power, and I believe that the story of the Togo Aviation ministry will be as well. When this airplane finally takes flight, it will be clear that it was not by our doing, but by God's sovereign plan. ■

***“It is in these  
frustrating and  
incomprehensible  
moments that I’m  
thankful for my  
fight with cancer.”***



***Dan & Rachael Stoner***

are missionary pilots who have joined with two other families to create the Togo Aviation ministry. Learn more at [www.togoaviation.com](http://www.togoaviation.com).



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## 4 Things God Taught Me During My First Year in Africa

By **Anna Doenier**

*ABWE Missionary Nurse in Mango, Togo*

### 1 It's all moment-by-moment grace.

Often, I try to do things in my own strength, but in Togo, I am regularly pushed far beyond my capabilities. In my helplessness, God's infinite grace is my sustaining breath of life. When sleepless nights, 100+ degree temperatures and the frustration of not having electricity hit me like a wall, I fall on His grace to sustain me. When I feel overwhelmed by the needs all around me and am cloudy from exhaustion, I pray for His grace so that I can care for the patients He has given me. And when I feel that I can't handle losing another patient, I feel His arms of grace wrap tightly around me. It is only by living in God's grace, moment-by-moment, that I have been able to see all that I am in light of all that He is.

### 2 Compassion isn't spoken. It is shown.

In Togo, there are days I can't wipe the smile off my face, and then there are days when all I can do is weep. Through it all, I am reminded that Jesus understands. He's been there. He not only spoke of His love for us, he showed it. He tasted death for our broken, helpless, and hopeless race. I often find myself in situations where I cannot communicate with others through spoken words, but I'm thankful that sometimes no words are necessary — just feet willing to go, hands ready to work, and most importantly, eyes and hearts filled with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.

### 3 We're resource poor but rich in the sovereignty of God.

In a resource-poor region of the world, there are times when my belief in the sovereignty of God is tested, and my humanity screams out, "Why?!" My human eyes see a death that could have been prevented, but I must remind myself that God knew. He numbered their days even before they took their first breath. So I grieve for a life lost and thank God that He never leaves or forsakes us. Then I return to the hospital floor and pray for the strength to care for the others He has called me to serve.

### 4 The God of the impossible brings hope to Mango.

I recently took care of a Togolese woman who was one of the most hostile patients I've ever seen. But when she learned she had HIV, God used this terrible news to pry open her heart. She began really hearing the gospel for the first time. I have never seen "the old has gone, the new has come" so clearly displayed.

It doesn't seem possible that such a beautiful change could come from such an ugly diagnosis, but I was reminded that God brought us here for this very reason — to do the impossible by bringing His hope. Every day, our God of the impossible is accomplishing great and mighty things in Togo, and I am so humbled to be a part of it. ■



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## *Opening Closed Doors*

At first glance, the old-world charm of Portugal is captivating. But despite its old-world appearance, a new age has taken root and the doors of many hearts are closed to the gospel. Most Portuguese are far more interested in other pursuits, and ABWE missionaries are creatively using these other interests to connect with them. Missionaries are reaching people through community choirs, running clubs, and a bookstore, and we pray Christ will use these ministries to open doors and hearts to His grace.



*Jeff Raymond* | Director of Visual Communications at ABWE

Jeff is passionate about training and equipping missionaries to be strong visual storytellers. He also strives to find ways for creative people to use their skills to serve the Lord in missions. To learn more about his ministry, go to [www.raymond.abwe.org](http://www.raymond.abwe.org).

You've got the  
**FAITH, HEART & PASSION**



We've got the  
**training, expertise & support**

**TOGETHER**

we can share the Good News of Jesus Christ  
around the world.

Let us help you fulfill God's calling on your life.  
**Get started today at [www.abwe.org/go](http://www.abwe.org/go).**