

## July 2015

Hello everyone. We have started our leave in Holland. There was some delay because my residence visa for Nigeria was expired and had to be renewed. We hope that Hans will be able to get a spouse visa next year which does not require a quota letter of the church. We will be staying in Holland at our usual place in Mierlo until August 3.

Maurice will enter 2nd year of high school and Marcel the 3rd year of middle school. Marcel has been having a tough time at the new hostel but his results have much improved. Mary has been travelling regularly to Jos to take care of them and of the requirements made by the school for us as affiliate missionaries. Because of the distance and the bad roads, every trip to Jos is a challenge.



The Motherless Babies Home has seen another year. Last year the number of babies was 30, which is the highest since Mary has been there. Many babies come shortly after birth. Because of the age of babies, sicknesses - especially malaria and gastroenteritis - are a big challenge. With the opening of the Methodist Hospital at the Colony, the babies can be attended to nearby in the home. Gastroenteritis is a killer. In the morning the child is all right, but in the evening, the child can be in a

serious condition. Another challenge is the "repatriation" of the older babies to their families. The Father or other family members do not show up or cannot be reached. None of the families has ever paid the minimal fees of the home. The agreed age limit is until the age of 3 years. The older children have to attend school. The accommodation is not suitable for the older children. The church is thinking of adopting the older children out as the MBH is not a good place to stay.

In November 2014, Hans started work at the hospital at the Colony (Nkechi Rosalind Colwell Methodist Hospital Imenyi). At first there was only a doctor on two days. Since the posting of several youth coppers patients can come every day. The basic structures are in place. But many more staff houses are needed. At present there are about 15 auxiliary nurses, 5 youth coppers, one administrative staff and one doctor. Hans goes to the hospital 2 days per week.

On May 25, the prelate of Methodist Church Nigeria commissioned the hospital. He was very impressed by the state of affairs and he promised to give a yearly support. He also showed great interest in the future development of the hospital. The ceremony lasted for an hour but it was a great moment.





Because of the medical work that was being done by Hans, the prelate of MCN honoured him with the title of "Knight of John Wesley". This is the highest title of honour in the church for a layperson. This ceremony took place two weeks later in Okigwe, the home archdiocese of the prelate. A strong delegation from the hospital at Ugwueke and several church members from Colony undertook the travel to the location. The ceremony made a deep impression on us. Hans was honoured as a Knight, Mary honoured as a lady of a Knight. Some

of Mary's family had come from Jos. Two days later, we had a Thanksgiving service in the church at Colony with a small party at home.

Besides the 2 days at Colony, Hans works 4 days at Ugwueke. There are four other doctors. Most of the time, Hans stays in the theater doing surgery with one of the doctors. Because of the absence of any grants, the theater work is essential for the survival of the hospitals. In due course, Hans wants to start also surgery at Colony too. It is not always possible to work at two locations. Although work must continue at Ugwueke, because of its location, the hospital at Colony is much more accessible. Also, the prelate shows more interest in the Colony than in Ugwueke. The only problem is the lack of funds to develop the Colony.

Living in Nigeria is not completely without risks. The most important danger is to travel by road. The road to Ugwueke is still partly a mud road. In the rainy season, this looks like a river that is at times "dry". The tarred road to Umuahia or to Ugwueke, has potholes in many places. At some places the road has partly been washed away (erosion). Some vehicles - lorries and trailers - use to take priority when there is a blockage on the road. Long distance travelling is therefore quite stressful and it takes much time. The problems with Boko Haram and the kidnappings may deter people outside Nigeria, however for us they are not a serious problem.

There are some health risks like malaria - Hans still takes prophylaxis and HIV. Needle prices in the hospital can't always be avoided. Earlier this year, Hans had to take a PEP-prophylaxis for 1 month after a prick with a needle that broke off, in a known HIV patient.

Needless to say, a prayer before a long distance travel or before a risky operation is much needed.

We thank God for always being with us and helping us through these dangerous moments. We also thank Him for being with the children in Jos while we are doing our work in Colony Uzuakoli.

And don't forget to say hi to the MBH kids.

Greetings from Mary, Hans, Maurice and Marcel