

Mary & Hans van den Corput, Mission Partners, Nigeria, August 2006.

Greetings to all of you,

We are now on furlough in UK, but soon we will travel to Holland and stay until the middle of September. It wasn't easy to leave Nigeria - Mary had many difficulties in getting a visa for the Netherlands - and maybe I will have a problem with entering Nigeria, because my visa has to be renewed.

After attending the Methodist furlough conference we have been staying at a hotel of the Wesley Guild near Derby. We had a small talk about our project at Ugwueke to the Wesley Guild/parish of Shepley. Mary and the kids will continue to stay there while I am doing a development health course by CMF in London.

In Holland we will be staying in the same location as 2 years ago, that is in a wooden cabin in a forest near Mierlo.

We are happy for the length of this period time, so that we have time to think and talk about and pray for our work in Nigeria and the future.

The Methodist Church UK has, based on the new law in UK, changed the status of "non-employed" mission partners. From next year on they will be not paid anymore as mission partners. This will seriously reduce our combined salary to such an extent that we cannot continue to serve as mission partners, without changing/stopping the necessary insurances in Holland, which absorb a large part of the present salary.

There is however a possibility that Mary will be employed as mission partner as well, probably as matron in the so-called "motherless baby home". This is a small institution on the Colony land nearby are house at Uzuakoli, that takes care of a few motherless babies. The work had almost collapsed during the previous years, until a VSO lady from Kenya brought life to the place again. She will be leaving this August. We are still thinking about how possible it is for Mary to combine this with her homework. It will also mean that she'll have to give up her further teacher's training. She finished the first part of this training this year.

We also have to think again about the schooling for Maurice and Marcel. Although the school they are presently attending is a good "British-oriented" school, Mary prefers that the children go to a very good American boarding school, Hillcrest School, in Jos, where her family will look after them. This will also relieve her from some of the housework. But they are still young - Maurice will now start in primary 1 and Marcel in nursery 3 - and I don't have any experience with boarding schools.

In addition to this there is the problem of my registration as G.P. This registration will expire next year, unless I start doing the required G.P. work now and I do the required schooling before.

Somehow we have already decided that we want to continue with our work in Nigeria, but Mary's employment and the schooling of the children are still the issues to be solved.

Until now the work at the hospital at Ugwueke has continued to grow, more patients, more operations, but not much more personnel. Last year Chief Paul Okorie, an ex-lay president of the MCN and a prominent figure in the community took over as hospital administrator.

Of recent, a Nigerian nurse, who retired in U.K., has joined us (through Christians Abroad). We have also been able to attract a medical doctor, with whom I worked in Uburu for 4 years and he may be willing to stay on contract again. Another doctor may be employed by September. All these are good developments towards a more stable situation and we hope that this will help us to attract more auxiliary nurses. However doctors do cost much and the hospital (s) are not yet in the situation to pay

them fully. Serious efforts have to be made by the MCN to use the available resources overseas (NMS, Wesley Guild, others).

Some more new wards - a pediatric ward and an isolation ward - and a staff house/hostel for 10 staffs have been built in the meantime. The water project however has still not finished. Donations have been received to buy a new generator/water pump.

We also have received a donation of a 2nd hand 67 kV Generator from DFID, but this generator was too big to put at the riverside - but we have to sort out the best solution.

In September the hospital will extend her work to a new centre at Ozuitem, which was handed over to the church in June this year. This centre is at a better location than the one in Ugwueke and it is also nearer to Uzuakoli. Of course we also keep an eye upon the situation at the colony concerning the developments around the general hospital. We still believe that the hospital will return to the church someday.

With the help of other doctors I can be more often at Uzuakoli and visit the hospitals instead of having to live there. It will mean more traveling every day but at a more convenient time.

We thank all who have been supporting us, spiritually, in their letters and prayers, especially the WCO of the Methodist Church UK and the Anglican Church Voorschoten and we ask you to continue doing so. Special support is needed for:

- When Mary takes over the motherless baby home; that she may be able to build up this home again and combine the work with her homework;
- For the new doctors employed at the hospitals that they may be inspired to continue working with us;
- For the uncertainties about the schooling of our children;
- For the recovery of our bishop, who broke his lower leg last year April, that he may finally recover from this illness and finally;
- For ourselves, individually and as a family, that we may find time for rest and being together in Him, in spite of all our busy movements and periods of separation.

Yours' in His name

Mary. Marcel, Maurice

& Hans van den Corput.