

To Nigeria ... With Love

Mike & Barb Blyth, Serving with SIM in Nigeria

March 8, 2005

Spring of Life Kids

"Jefferson, you look so fine today!" Jefferson, one of the first of our kids to start taking anti-HIV drugs, was back today for a check up and prescription refill. He and his mother were indeed looking fine. Jefferson, who is not quite nine years old, has gained 12 pounds since last August when he started treatment. He is doing well in school and enjoys sports. His friend Ndubuisi, who started treatment at the same time, has also changed. People are remarking that now he smiles.

Our program is gradually expanding, with fifteen to twenty children coming regularly, half of them on anti-HIV treatment. Even those not on treatment are benefiting. Faith and Favour, for example, are twins who were quite sick last fall, wasting away. I decided to try treating them for tuberculosis before using anti-HIV drugs, and they



started getting better. Favour is doing quite well now; Faith is still not eating well and is not gaining weight.

We have had some problems getting the drugs, especially the syrups we need for the smaller children. Sometimes they're available, sometimes not. Suppliers promise that a shipment is coming in "today," but days stretch into weeks. Because it is so important to be consistent taking the drugs, we have had to be creative with crushed tablets and alternate schedules. So far we've avoided any complete interruptions, but it is a matter of concern.

We've yet to get any help from the US government anti-AIDS initiative (PEPFAR), but it looks as if we might at least start discussions this month.

Book: AIDS is Real and It's in Our Church

What started as a minor revision on the book turned into much more. Jean Garland and I were elated to (finally) send the second edition to the publisher. This edition is more complete and written for Africans in general, not only Nigerians. It's now being translated into Amharic, with plans to distribute it to 10,000 pastors in Ethiopia. You can see or download the book from our website, missionary.sim.org/blyth/hiv. This picture is from the book ... can you guess what it illustrates? (Answer at end of this letter.)



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Missionary Neighbors Shot in Robbery

A group of five or six men armed with guns entered our neighbors the Naatzes' house at 7:30 PM on January 3, while they were all home. One man shot 19-year-old Elias Naatz, hitting him in the arm. Our friend and chief surgeon, Bill Ardill, heard the noise and screams and rushed to help, thinking there had been a gas explosion. On the way, he ran into the escaping gunmen who shot him, too, in the arm. Quite a night followed.

Elias and Bill both needed surgery in the US and both are recovering well. Needless to say, we in the mission community are re-evaluating our security measures. Please pray for our safety but also that we keep our confidence in God, not becoming paranoid or too preoccupied with security.

Family News

- Early this year we enjoyed a wonderful four-week vacation with our kids and grandkids in the US. What a blessing they all are.
- Rowan Michael was born to Jonathan and Lori on December 30. He's ultra-cute, of course, and learned to smile while we were visiting.



- Sara is studying pre-med subjects and plans to spend the summer as a short term SIM missionary here at Evangel. Meanwhile, she is doing part-time and free-lance editorial work. If you need proof-reading or editing, get in touch!
- Steve and Lisa hope to take the family to Scotland this fall, so Steve can do graduate study in Islamics at the University of Edinburgh.



- Luke has been in kindergarten this year and loves it. We started afresh pursuing adoption, but the lawyer we consulted said the Plateau State law is quite clear and does not allow non-Nigerians to adopt Nigerian children. No exceptions. Please pray with us as we try to be persistent, creative, and sensitive to God's leading on what to do next.

Thanks for your prayers, financial support, and encouraging emails and letters. We always enjoy hearing from you!

*Lori,
Mike and Barb*

Answer to "what is the picture:" the picture shows HIV, the virus, locked in prison by antiretroviral drugs (locks). The virus is waiting to break out. One lock alone will not keep it in.