

## CMF's ambassadors to a needy world

CMF has 180 members currently working overseas in 45 countries, from Peru to Papua New Guinea and Tibet to Tanzania. They are doing a whole range of things – some in traditional mission settings, others in government hospitals and universities, some doing basic primary health care, others doing high-powered research – but all using their medical skills to take the love of Christ to a needy world. I interviewed three of them while they were home on leave...

### Jim Harrison

- providing specialist surgery

I work at the Beit Cure International Hospital in Malawi, a slightly novel form of Christian mission setting.

It's a specialist orthopaedic hospital where our main work is the surgical treatment of disabled children. They come from all over the country,

often from very remote areas where their parents have had to walk for hours and hours to get to any transport. They are often down-trodden and isolated because of the stigma that's attached to disability. Often they didn't know anything could be done – they may have been born with a disability – but sometimes with a single operation they can learn to walk for the first time and you can imagine how that transforms their lives.

In order to fund the children's work we also treat adults as private patients, which brings huge variety – we do joint replacements, arthroscopy, and fractures in addition to the children's reconstructive surgery. In doing all this we're teaching in the local medical school, modelling a form of care for the local budding doctors. I really enjoy the clinical work – the breadth of work I'm able to do without being sub-specialised, the challenging cases we see, and the sense of reward in the outcome.

We do quite a lot of research, which has been great fun and very useful. We really feel it's changing our practice as we're learning key things that are just not known, and are useful for us here but interest the wider world as well. All this takes place in a vibrant mission environment and we are seeing the lives of patients – and staff – transformed by God's love.



### Rory Wilson

- leading a mission hospital

I am the medical superintendent of Kiwoko Hospital in Uganda. I spend some of my time in clinical work – as a GP I'm more

at home with medicine and paediatrics but at times I'll be responsible for surgical patients and obstetrics, and for outpatients which is really an A&E.

However, my main role is co-ordinating the medical team. Clinical work's more fun, but the team works better whenever it's being led and organised.

Since going out to Uganda four years ago, our death rates have dropped year on year – having increased for the previous three – not because I'm an amazing clinician but because the team is working well, using their skills and fulfilling their roles.

Professionally it's very rewarding to treat sick people and see them better, and it's a challenge to be stretched and do things I haven't always been trained to do. It's fantastic to be a Christian and a doctor at the same time:

- to be able to pray with patients
- to share my faith
- and to treat people holistically.

It's really inspiring to train junior doctors and nurses and see that in the future they'll be taking over. So having enjoyed being a doctor in Ireland, I confess I've enjoyed the past four years even more.



### Mhoira Leng

- establishing a university department

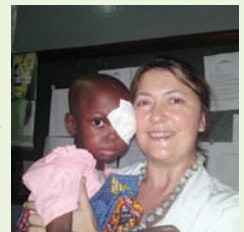
I head palliative care at Mulago Hospital and Makerere University in Kampala.

As well as developing a clinical service my main role is training; teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students, developing curricula up to degree level and encouraging

research. These kinds of roles, where you bring in your skills as trainer and specialty adviser to work alongside local colleagues, can be both effective and sustainable.

I was born in the jungles of New Guinea, where my father worked as a missionary doctor. This certainly shaped my life but I think my motivation for choosing this work for myself is multi-faceted. First, there's such injustice and inequality in the world, and for me it wasn't enough just to acknowledge that – I wanted to do something about it. But it wasn't just about whether I wanted to, it was about whether it was useful and whether God wanted me to serve in this way.

My second motivation was compassion. The passage where Jesus says 'Whatever you did for the least of these, you did it for me' is a challenge and inspiration. How could I reach out in the name of Christ to those who were suffering? I love the words attributed to St Francis of Assisi: 'At all times preach the gospel, and where necessary use words'. And lastly – hope. As Christians we can offer hope through our skills, but we also offer hope in the message of the gospel. Death no longer has the victory! What a privilege to be Christ's ambassadors.



*Vicky Lavy is CMF Head of International Ministries*