

Dr Philip Wood's (CME Medical Director) final report – February 2009

[Translated by Dr Gary Wannan]

Dr Philip Wood, Executive Director of the Centre Medical Evangelique (CME), reports from its Annual General Meeting this year. Since its foundation in 1965 it has given birth to new organisations, such as Medair. Since its destruction in 2002 progress in rebuilding has been remarkable, and we thank God for this who has given us friends to help in the task. Changes, which are the fruit of this rebuilding, need to be consolidated into our constitution.

Our purpose as a hospital is to provide the best care to the whole person, and train high quality health staff. Although it is difficult to provide the best after a war, we are once again the reference centre for medical care in North-Eastern Congo, despite our lack of specialists, treating referrals from MSF, as well as a local senior Governmental doctor.

My work is largely in two parts. Firstly, training newly qualified doctors, of which there were 14 in 2008; most are eager to learn, but many need encouragement to take responsibility. There are more senior doctors undertaking speciality training, and there are hopes to use postgraduate training by correspondence with periods abroad, easing family and work arrangements. Supervision for training is important for all staff, and sadly there have been some thefts of equipment and of money patients had paid towards treatment.

Secondly, administration, which one would think could be undertaken by the Associate director. Most of the building projects are progressing well, including the new operating theatre (OT) in Beni, which when completed the Friends of CME will finance the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). A pharmacy is also planned for Beni. The rebuilding of Nyankunde continues, and an OT and ICU are being funded by Samaritan's Purse. The OT in Bunia is now being used.

The major problem with the finance is a lack of liquidity, meaning that we do not have cash available at times for those who keep their money in our bank accounts. The reasons for this are complicated, and due in part to the book keeping being unclear and there being some looseness with funds. Despite this our debt is only \$9 000 with a budget of \$900 000. Computerisation is increasing, and will hopefully improve information available.

In working with our managers, I am very encouraged by the many young people who are committed to the organisation. I am also saddened that a disciplinary needed to heard by the CME General Assembly. Despite the difficulties of providing a quality service in a country in which there is poor infrastructure, I am sure that we can do better, using what the Lord has entrusted us with.

Although we are incorporated into the State medical service we are a Christian organisation, and must consider the Christian witness for the new members. We are also very willing to have professionals teach us new techniques on a part-time basis, and have a new fee system to accommodate this.

I thank all those who have supported the CME in the last year, including members of staff and the President, whose door has always been open, and the Vice-President for his encouragement and advice. Thank you your prayers over the last three difficult years. We have many friends abroad and thank them, including the Friends of CME in England.

May God bless you.