

WAVES OF MERCY

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Issue 2



Hope is a simple word with tremendous reach.

It's the **longing** for it that brings our patients to our hospital ships — some traveling hundreds of miles, clinging to the belief that healing just might be possible.

It's the **desire** to share it that moves our volunteers to pack up their belongings, give their notice, and fly across the world to serve the world's most hurting.

It's the **knowledge that it can be possible** that leads a person like you to give generously, believing the world can be a little better for someone you may never meet.

HOPE keeps people coming back again and again — it's the reason our mission endures even when the challenges seem impossible.

Every day our hospital ships are in service, patients come aboard, volunteers step in and do remarkable work, and hope and healing unfold.

That hope — the kind that fills every hallway and every operating room — **goes back out into the world and changes it, one person at a time.**

In the end, what inspires people to look beyond themselves is simple: the chance to be part of a mission where hope is possible. And we are so grateful.

"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

- 1 John 3:18



bringing *hope* and *healing*



Hope Worth Waiting For

Mather | Orthopedic | Sierra Leone

"People told us that, as she grows, her legs will straighten, but the opposite happened."

Alpha describes his 9-year-old sister, Mather, as "smart, intelligent, and hardworking," traits that define her far more than her bowed legs ever could. Still, the dramatic bowing that began when she was only 2 years old threatened to hold her back.

"Sometimes, when she wakes up in the morning, she will not be able to get up from bed," Alpha explained. "She complains that she's feeling pain in her knees."

While most 9-year-olds were gaining confidence and independence, Mather was learning to navigate her world with unnecessary limitations. "I couldn't fetch water, wash dishes, and even walk long distances," she said. "My friends in the village used to mock me."

Her family longed to help her, but the local doctors could do very little. So they sent her to live with her aunt in a city where healthcare would be easier to access. Even in the city, help couldn't be found.

Instead, they waited and prayed.



Then Mather’s aunt heard a radio announcement about Mercy Ships coming to their country to provide surgical care. She quickly contacted Mather’s parents and made plans to bring her to the registration site in 2023.

But the need for surgery in the country is overwhelming, and only a few thousand people could be seen.

Mather was unable to come aboard at the time, but her family refused to give up. They knew the ship would return soon, and so they made the decision to wait, because they knew hope was within reach.

“I came with pain, and I am going with joy! Jesus did it for me!”

— Mather

Mather remained in Freetown for almost a year — hopeful, patient, and determined. **And when the ship returned, she was ready!**

Aboard the *Global Mercy*, Mather underwent surgery lasting only two and a half hours, but the true transformation would come afterward. Following the operation, she stayed focused through months of rehabilitation, working to strengthen her legs, and regain mobility, building confidence with every step. **“I came with pain, and I am going with joy,” Mather shared. “Jesus did it for me!”**

Today, Mather is healed and standing tall, walking confidently up the hills that seemed impossible to climb not so long ago. And her hopes have grown right along with her strength: **“I want to go to school, learn a skill, and become a doctor.”**



Sign Me Up!

A Conversation with Dr. Michelle White

For years, Dr. Michelle White has served with Mercy Ships, sharing her firsthand knowledge of our mission with many. And today, she leads us as our new CEO.

How did you learn about Mercy Ships?

I first came across Mercy Ships back in the 1990s. I was a medical student when the *Anastasis* came to England, and the students were invited on board. I was captivated by the thought of using my medical skills to help the poor in a Christian context. It just spoke to me of justice, equity, and adventure... from then it was sort of "sign me up".

You've been serving for years. What keeps bringing you back?

There are both head and heart reasons. On the head level, Mercy Ships occupies a really unique space. We have a ship that can model brilliant healthcare. We have government relations where we can advocate and help create policies that promote good health... I think that's a very powerful combination.

For my heart, I connect with the mission. I connect with the why. **We're doing this because we believe that human beings are created in the image of God and are worthy of care and attention.** We're in it to exemplify those core values of loving and serving one another.

Are there any patients who have especially inspired you?

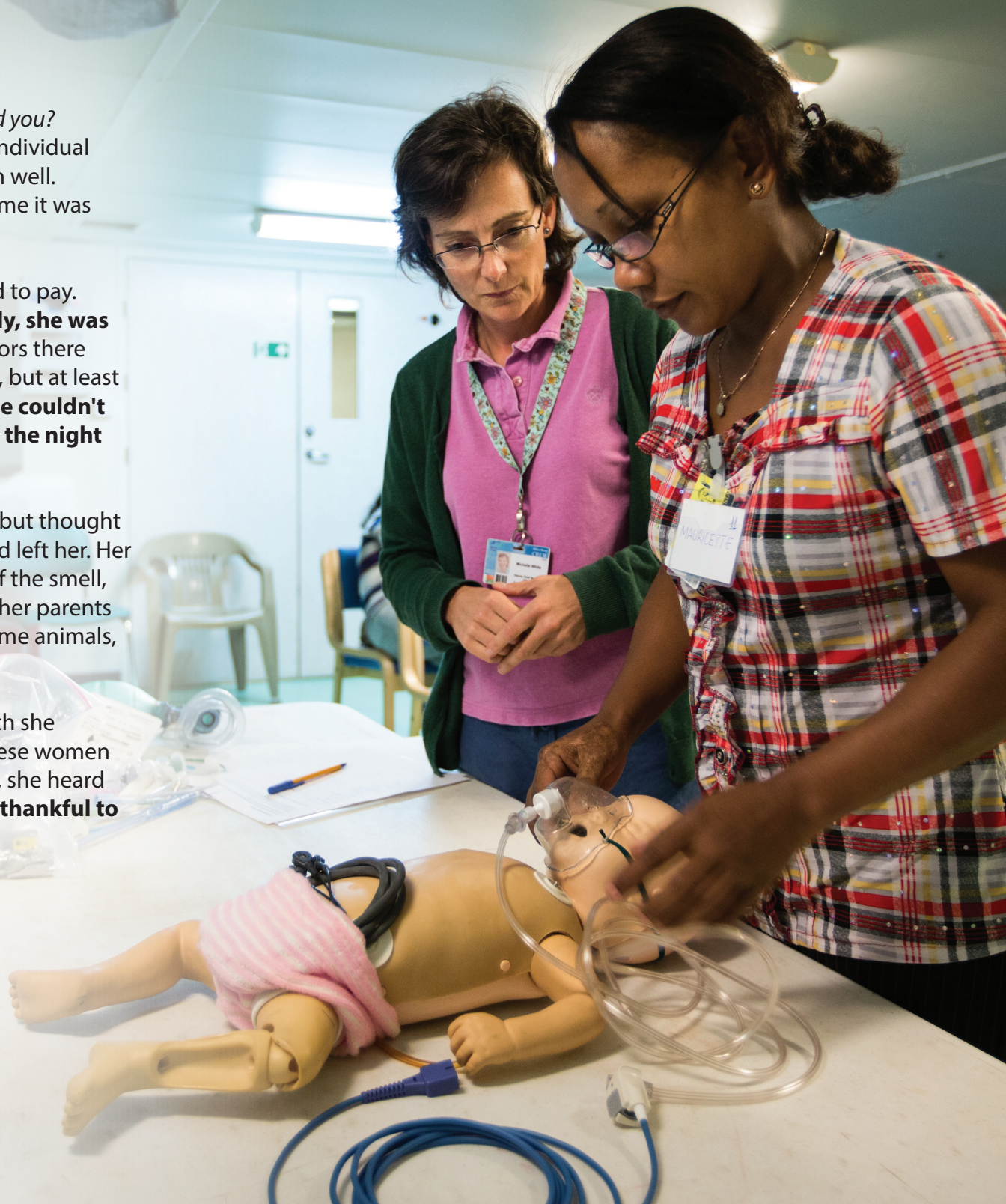
It's hard to describe why you connect with one individual rather than another, but I remember one woman well. She was in labor with her fourth child, but this time it was different. The baby got stuck.

She went to one hospital, but she couldn't afford to pay. She went to another one. Same again. **Eventually, she was forced to lie so they would let her in.** The doctors there performed a C-section. Sadly, the baby had died, but at least she wasn't going to die in labor. **But because she couldn't pay, she was forced to get up in the middle of the night and flee the hospital.**

As she ran, she could feel she was leaking urine, but thought she'd get better. It didn't. Eventually, her husband left her. Her parents took her into their house, but because of the smell, their neighbors didn't want to come around. So her parents built her a little shack next to where they had some animals, and that was where she lived.

This story always struck me because of how much she persisted despite her circumstances. Some of these women commit suicide. But she kept hoping. Eventually, she heard about a ship that could fix her problem, and **I'm thankful to report she was healed on our ship.**

During her time on board, Dr. Michelle trained and mentored local medical professionals to help bring hope and healing years after our ships leave port.



What are some things you want to focus on as we move forward?

It's really important to me that that **we hold tightly to our faith and we lead with the fact that we follow the 2,000-year-old model of Jesus.** By following the model of Jesus, we focus on serving the poor, reducing inequalities, improving the health of nations, working for a peaceful and just society... and I think everyone, whatever nation or culture, buys into that vision.

There are so many ways to bring hope and healing — through giving, serving, or praying — what do you hope readers take away from this conversation?


My heart for Mercy Ships is that we're not just best in class for our patients, who are clearly at the center of what we do, but also for our people and our partners.

I think I've experienced all of those [giving, serving, praying] at different times and in different ways in my Mercy Ships journey. But I recognize that that's a unique position. **Not everyone can do all three, but any one thing that anyone does is extraordinarily valuable, and we're grateful for them.**

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our incredible Mercy Ships supporters?

I want to honor every single person that's a part of this great work. **Every little thing that people give, big or small, is truly valuable and we're very, very grateful.** We treasure every single little "give, go, or pray." Nothing is too small and it really does make a difference.





The Hope for Tomorrow

In 2014, Dr. Michelle White was the anesthesiologist during Emmanoel's surgery. His story was one of hundreds that Dr. Michelle helped rewrite:

Elodie and her husband, Maurice, had tried everything to help their baby, who struggled with every breath. After many false diagnoses, they finally learned the cause of his suffering — a tumor was slowly suffocating him. **He needed surgery, the doctors said, but it was a procedure they were unable to perform.**

With each passing day, Emmanoel's breathing worsened. Soon, he began losing consciousness. His parents lived in constant fear that one day he wouldn't wake back up — a thought that haunted them both. **But hope has a way of opening doors that once felt closed.**

When Maurice and Elodie brought their son to our hospital ship, they waited with more than 7,300 people, hoping for a miracle. One that came just in time. Emmanoel received surgery that saved his life, and as he slept, his mother shared her dreams for the future: **"I can't wait to hear my son say my name."**

Before he left the ship, Emmanoel was able to grant that wish, learning three new words: **"mother," "uncle," and — family's favorite — "tomorrow."**

Be someone's
hope.



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