

Each year, the Medical Coordination department of the Congo Baptist Convention (CBCO), International Ministry's partner church in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) holds medical meetings with the medical directors of each of CBCO's 11 medical institutions. On January 23 and 24, medical directors again traveled to gather in Kinshasa for the 2008 meetings which proved unique in several ways.

Ten of the eleven CBCO hospitals represented themselves at the 2008 meeting - the best participation in several years. CBCO's hospitals are scattered throughout a geographic area the combined size of NY and Pennsylvania, and in a country with almost no roads, getting together is an achievement. The sense of pride in being able to gather as a group of physicians, key actors in the larger effort to bring health to the people of DRC while serving hospitals in isolated corners of DRC, percolated through the meeting. As each physician Medical Director reported on the financial status, achievements, and challenges of their institution during the past year, others offered wisdom, empathy, solutions, camaraderie, and strength. Through the CBCO health care network, and against innumerable odds, these physicians and the rest of their staff, persevere in offering the best possible quality of health care to ten of thousands of Congolese and their children who would otherwise have no access to care.

Also attending the medical meetings were Reverend's Kembo, Ngutu, and Bemba, executive leaders of the CBCO church community; and Dr. Bill Clemmer and Katherine Niles, IM medical missionaries to DRC. This annual opportunity for CBCO church leaders, missionary partners, and medical directors to be together, discuss challenges, and seek God's direction in their mandate to bring health and hope to the people of DRC is a special privilege. The effectiveness of an integrated approach to health, where church leaders and medical professionals work in support and cooperation to bring care for the whole person was highlighted this year in a presentation by Dr. Daniel Fountain, retired IM medical missionary whose 35 year medical career in DRC founded and grew the health ministry of CBCO. Several of the physicians present were trained by, or served with, Dr. Fountain. His presence and presentations at the meetings, after 11 years in retirement, blessed and encouraged all who were there.

At the 2008 meetings, the Medical Directors of each hospital again voiced sincere thanks for the on-going support received through the annual gift of White Cross supplies. The importance of these supplies in providing patient care in CBCO's hospitals cannot be overestimated. The 2007 container of supplies has arrived in Matadi (the port city), and will soon be in Kinshasa for re-distribution to each of CBCO's 11 hospitals. At the meeting, each Medical Director received a list of the supplies their hospital will be receiving including: rolled bandages, OR gowns, OR masks and caps, uniforms, baby blankets and kimonos, gloves, gauze, cotton, adhesive tape, and HIV tests. Each physician expressed sincere gratitude for this partnership with International Ministries which has enabled them though the years to provide better patient care and protection for their hospital staff.



CBCO hospital medical directors, CBCO church leaders, and IM missionaries, participants at the 2008 annual medical meetings



Dr. Daniel Fountain, retired IM missionary, using a pair of socks to demonstrate a surgical technique for 2 physicians at the 2008 CBCO medical meetings.