

## **Vicki and Chris Gregg - News from the Anastasis May 2001 Benin, West Africa**

Dear all,

We are in the last few weeks of the Benin outreach now. It's been a wonderful 7 months and a real privilege for us to be involved in all that has been going on here.

One disappointing piece of news we have to share with you is that the Anastasis will not be able to go to Guernsey as planned this summer. This is due to technical difficulties with our lifeboats which has resulted in a delay of 2 weeks leaving Africa. However, there was such a wonderful response from the people of Guernsey to the idea of the ship visiting that our port coordinator has assured us that Guernsey is favoured as a destination for next summer instead.

We have enclosed the ship's latest itinerary (always subject to change!) If you are able to visit us at all during the summer, we would love to show you around and give you a cup of English tea in our cabin!

Thank you for your continued support – we appreciate it so very much,

Love Chris and Vicki



As we come to the end of our time here - cleft lip and palate repairs have been common surgeries. These birth defects stunt a child's growth and development by causing malnutrition and anemia. With less resistance to disease, many children die within months of birth if their mothers don't know how to care for them. Babies who were malnourished and weak when we first saw them in November have been on a feeding programme and are now strong enough for surgery. Without these reconstructive surgeries, they would grow up with unintelligible speech and the emotional pain of having a misshapen face. These little ones can only communicate with their cries as we look for ways to distract them from feeding tubes in their noses and IV lines in their tiny arms.

### **Vicki's news**

Vicki is really pleased to have been offered a new job for next outreach – as a community health nurse. This will give her the opportunity to spend more time off the ship in rural villages, and a large part of her job will be running health education programmes. We are really grateful to God who has supplied all the finance needed for a training course and accommodation in London for 3 weeks this summer in preparation for this. She has already had some experience in health teaching in Africa, and has even been able to run a short teaching course on the ship for locals who want to be health teachers in their own communities.



### **News from the Catholic centre**

On a Saturday last month, we had a great farewell party for the boys on the ship with games, a video, puppetshow and of course a party tea and presents for all. They were so excited, many of them having been locked in the centre with nothing to do since they were 'rescued.' At teatime - they not only filled their faces but also stuffed their pockets with all the goodies they could grab. In recent weeks the numbers of children at the centre has doubled. This is due to publicity about the child trafficking in Benin following the discovery of a slave ship taking children from their families to work as slaves on farms in Nigeria and Gabon.

**Another Patient Story**



Appolinaire noticed a lipoma neck tumor form nearly 15 years ago. When the tumor began to grow, he visited the local hospital where the doctor told him he could not have surgery. He continued working the farm until his body no longer had strength. Then Appolinaire’s eight grown children sent him food to survive but wouldn’t visit him, while his neighbors mocked him and accused him of practicing witchcraft. "Neighbors told me I was being punished," said Appolinaire. In November, Appolinaire attended the Mercy Ships screening, received an appointment, and has now had his tumour removed. Days after the surgery, with a smile on his face, Appolinaire commented on his experience. "God gave the doctors wisdom to heal me... I will now be able to go and see my family and live in peace."

**Chris**

Work in the computer department is less stressful now as our email system is working better. Chris has had one of the students in the school on board doing work experience with him, and he has also been trained as an auditor to monitor safety procedures in the engineering department. In addition to his job Chris is a member of the ship’s fire protection team. Another achievement is that on June 24 Chris will reach the ripe old age of 30!!

**A Closer Look at Water and Sanitation**

The Relief and Development Department have been busy with almost 100 people having received training in water and sanitation and latrine construction.

David Johnson, one of the trainers, took a microscope, got some water out of the local well, put it under the microscope and asked the people to come and look at what was swimming around their water. One man looked in the microscope, then went back over and looked in the bucket of water, then looked in the microscope! He couldn’t believe what he saw. It was a really graphic illustration of the necessity of a good water supply. The team also built the clinic, dispensary, maternity unit and birth centre in the picture.



**PLEASE WRITE TO US!**  
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<b>MV ANASTASIS TENTATIVE ITINERARY</b>		
<b>PORT</b>	<b>ARRIVE</b>	<b>LEAVE</b>
Benin, W. Africa	8 Nov 00	? 15 Jun 01
Cadiz, Spain	3 July	16 Aug
Glasgow, Scotland	21 Aug	27 Aug
Bremen, Germany	30 Aug	11 Sep
Kristiansand, Norway	12 Sep	28 Sep
London, England	30 Sep	3 Oct
Rotterdam, Netherlands	4 Oct	23 Oct
Tenerife, Canaries	29 Oct	7 Nov
Freetown, Sierra Leone	12 Nov	11 Mar 02