



KRB Update #2231 – Guinea

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships

19 August 2018

“Welcome Back to Guinea” – was what we heard having arrived back in Conakry, Guinea last week. This is the fourth visit of a Mercy Ship to Guinea, the first two done by the *Anastasis* in 1992 and 1998/1999 and then the one was I was greatly involved with the *Africa Mercy* from 2012/2013 including assessment in 2011. We had planned to return earlier to Guinea at the invitation of the president and the great need of the population. Due to Ebola disease in Guinea which also spread over to the neighboring nations of Sierra Leone and Liberia, we had to delay our visit as we are not equipped in our hospital for Ebola. So we had to communicate to the president that we were postponing our visit, not cancelling. Now, there is no Ebola in West Africa and the World Health Organization (WHO) has cleared Guinea so now we are fulfilling our promise. A sub point to our Core Value of ‘Be People of Integrity’ is ‘Doing What We Say’.

On the Human Development Index from 2016, Guinea ranks near the very bottom in position #183 of #188 nations. 55% of the population live on less than \$2/day. During the time of Ebola, next to no elective surgeries took place and regrettably hundreds of their healthcare workers died from Ebola as they were caring for their patients. I can tell you from my experience, they did not have a surplus of surgeons, nurses and anesthesia providers. So we are coming to partner together with the country (government, church, and NGOs) to provide 2,500 life changing and some lifesaving surgeries free of charge to the population. Some patients will travel from the neighboring countries (including my friend Daouda from Liberia for a follow-up surgery) in order to receive care as they know Mercy Ships and our history in Africa.

Photo Caption: Arrival Day – even with the rain we were out and waving the flags – I have the Greek flag in the far left



Population of 12.6 million in the three largest ethnic groups (82%) in Guinea – Fulani, Malinke, and Susu.
Religions in Guinea: 86% Muslim, 10% Christian mainly in the Forest regions, and 4% other.

There is great excitement among the healthcare workers in both public and faith-based hospitals (like Hope Medical Center in N’Zao which I first visited in 2008 – they have brought severe surgical cases to us whenever we have been close) about the opportunities to receive continuing medical education. The training will be in surgical-related subjects that we offer through our Medical Capacity Building (MCB) mentoring and courses.

I look forward to reunions during the early part of this field service with friends I knew in 2013. Some of these friends are former patients, caregivers, training participants, day crew (local workers) and partners.

Prayer Requests:

* For our prescreening for potential surgical patients – Monday August 20th starting at 6am – so between midnight and 2am if you are in the States. Please pray that the people God has purposes with Mercy Ships at this time they will come and nothing will stop them. The surgical need is greater than we can meet during our visit. The ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ is a difficult decision. Pray for our healthcare professionals. I will assist with patient escort and will see all the patients and caregivers coming in – a great opportunity that I am thankful to be a part. In order to better reach patients in the interior, four more screenings will take place in the regions in October and November.



Photo Caption: Those serving with the Prescreening from our rehearsal on Friday.

* God to use our hands and feet for His work and purpose in Guinea.

Serving Together, **Keith**

Email: keith.brinkman@yahoo.com [kreb@keithbrinkman.com](mailto:krb@keithbrinkman.com)
www.KeithBrinkman.com