

Mission Statement of Mercy Ships: “*Mercy Ships follows the 2,000-year-old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the world’s forgotten poor.*”

Vision Statement of Mercy Ships: “*Mercy Ships uses hospital ships to transform individuals and serve nations, one at a time.*”

Mercy Ships is a volunteer non-profit ministry. The majority of the crew, myself included, do not receive a salary. We pay for all of our own expenses including food and housing on board, travel, taxes, insurance, etc. This provides an opportunity for partnership through financial support. If you wish to share in my ministry financially, please make checks payable to Mercy Ships and send to: Mercy Ships, PO Box 2020, Lindale, TX 75771 Attn: Donor Services with a note designating for the support of Keith Brinkman. You may also support online—please go to the Support tab on my web page for the available options —[www.keithbrinkman.com](http://www.keithbrinkman.com).

I will close with *Micah 6:8* and a big thanks to all those standing with me—in prayer, encouragement, in financial support monthly or periodically. “*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*”



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KRB Update is published regularly and distributed via email and posted on my web page and on Facebook—if you would like to receive a copy please email me.

Currently in Guinea Conakry till June 2019. Next field service location: Dakar, Senegal.



Keith R. Brinkman



*Celebrating 30  
Years of  
Service in  
World Missions  
1989—2019*



January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1989 marked the day I started my training to serve as a Christian missionary with Mercy Ships, at that time a ministry of Youth With A Mission. A scripture verse that was meaningful then and also now is *'Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ'* Philippians 1:6 – such a powerful promise. I have seen God's faithfulness in my life and believe for the future.

Lives are being changed and transformed, from our patients, training participants, day crew (local workers), partners, our fellow crewmembers, and mine. My work is not only with the reports, numbers, planning, travel, etc. even as important that they are to our organization. My service is being present with



them – visiting patients and caregivers in the hospital wards and at the HOPE Center, being a listening ear, sharing words of counsel and advice, being 'uncle', offering prayer and being a member of this living community we call the *Africa Mercy*. Hospital visitation is only a one-minute walk from my cabin and office. My heart and mindset is one of love, helping to build in to others' lives a message of hope. Abou is nine years old and comes from the forest region. He required orthopedic surgery on his deformed legs. Our orthopedic patients are all pediatric and stay a long time with us for their healing in the hospital and at the HOPE Center. I walked to the HOPE Center to visit 'my' patients and there was Abou walking some steps without his crutches and braces towards me – he was smiling so big and I was so proud of him. Abou and his mama have joined us for our times of praise and worship to Jesus and have learned some of the songs in the local languages and French. I trust that during their time with us seeds of life following Jesus are planted and being watered in their lives as we love and serve them.

My managerial and executive responsibilities continue in our planning of our projects in a country, our project budgets, tracking expenses, reporting both in narrative format and in statistical reports, travel arrangements, overseeing Mercy Ministries and serving on the senior managers' team on board the *Africa Mercy*. I have served in this role since 2006 though I am continually learning more and growing as I seek to be a man of integrity and excellence in all that I say and all that I do.

Our medical capacity building/training continues to grow as the host governments and partners greatly desire more training for their healthcare professionals. In many surgical areas we can provide that training through mentoring and/or internationally recognized courses. Beyond the technical aspects, we wish to model for them a compassionate approach to caring for others as each of us are made in the image of God. A good report from Guinea was that one of the surgeons we trained to do the cleft lip surgeries and connected with international funding has been doing more and more and thus the initial amount of cleft lip children we found was small – though later dozens more were found elsewhere in the country. Truly we are experiencing lasting impact in this area.

Recently we have completed 29 surgeries for children who were born blind from cataracts or developed them as a young child. This is highly specialized with the surgeon providing the surgery and the anesthesia



provider for little ones as young as five months. Over a couple mornings, I visited the wards to see the bandages removed and saw their responses – one little boy, Mohamed, was reaching towards the pen light shining at him, another Thierno saw the small stuffed teddy bear and would reach out to the bear when they moved it from one side to the other. They have their miracle-sight now and their whole lives ahead of them. Being a part of this brings tears of joy to my eyes and my heart – lives changed.

Every month we have about a 100 crew arriving from around the world and a 100 crew departing and so much of our community changes. In talking with incoming volunteers, the expected question is *"how long have you been here?"* I share 30 years and some say you have been serving longer than I have been alive – I smile, share that when I joined we were a part of YOUTH With A Mission and try to hide the gray hairs above my ears.

Mercy Ships is expanding in the coming year to have two ships – the *Africa Mercy* and the *Global Mercy* which is being built and fitted in China and the Philippines. Both will be serving in sub-Saharan Africa. You may ask which ship I will serve on; I don't know at this time.

While hosting a high level government delegation, I shared with their ambassador that at one point in my life, I wanted to be an ambassador - probably in part from the stories told by my Granny about my cousin who was an ambassador. My guest shared, *'Keith you are an ambassador – you are an ambassador for God'*.

