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## Baptist Medical Centre benefits from Furman connection

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## BAPTIST MEDICAL CENTRE BENEFITS FROM FURMAN CONNECTION .....

“Please keep the need for anti-snake venom on your prayer list,” pharmacist Jane Paysinger reminds the gathering of volunteer physicians, nurses and career missionaries at the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu, Ghana, West Africa. “There are less than 20 vials of the anti-snake venom serum left, and we don’t know when any more will arrive.”

Anti-snake venom serum is just one aspect of everyday life at the Baptist Medical Centre. Spitting cobras and carpet vipers pose a constant threat to the children and farmers in Nalerigu and vicinity, as during the past two years the BMC has averaged 475 admissions because of snakebites. Fortunately, few victims have died because medical personnel are always prepared to administer the serum.

Of late, a number of these medical personnel have had Furman connections. In March of 2006, two Furman parents, Paul and Joan Brock of Rome, Ga., took a team to the BMC. Paul, a surgeon, performed more than 30 operations, and Joan, a physical therapist, worked in the outpatient clinic. The Brocks are parents of Emily and Bennett Brock, a junior and a freshman, respectively, at Furman.

Last June, my brother Freeman Brook '91 joined me, my husband, Jimmy, and our sons, Samuel, James and William, on a mission trip to the BMC.

Jimmy is a family physician and obstetrician, and Freeman is a medical student at Mercer University Medical School. At the BMC they practiced all kinds of medicine, delivered babies and treated unfamiliar diseases. For Freeman, the experience added an entirely new dimension to his medical school experience.

While Jimmy and Freeman provided medical care, my sons and I worked with the village children. Our days consisted of jumping rope, dancing, singing, basketball, soccer, painting fingernails, reading books, sack races, juggling and magic tricks.

What prompted us to become so interested in this West African facility? George Faile III, a 1972 Furman graduate who is the hospital's medical director and one of its three career missionary physicians.

The Faile family was instrumental in establishing the BMC, which is affiliated with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. George Faile, Jr., a 1947 Furman graduate (now deceased), and his wife, Alice Johnston Faile '47, were the first missionaries to Nalerigu.

George Jr. surveyed the area, helped choose the location and oversaw the construction of the hospital. At first the BMC offered only outpatient services, but by the mid-1960s it included inpatient facilities, two surgical units and a residential tuberculosis program.

Having been raised at the centre, George III went on to attend college and

medical school in the States. He completed his residency at Floyd Medical Center in Rome, Ga., and in 1987 he and his wife, Elisabeth, returned to Nalerigu, where they have raised their three sons.

George's work covers everything from surgery to pediatrics, oncology, orthopedics, obstetrics, skin grafts, dermatology and tropical medicine (malaria). Elisabeth, a nurse, directs the outpatient division.

Through the years the hospital has made dramatic contributions to the country it serves, and since its founding 40 churches have been planted through ministries associated with the BMC.

In the late 1980s the hospital responded to a measles epidemic by helping to immunize the local population. It opened a Department of Public Health to further support the region's needs and has created missionary opportunities for engaging

unreached individuals and villages.

In the late '90s the BMC's response to a widespread meningitis epidemic earned it the national Medal of Honor.

Today patients come to the Baptist Medical Centre from as far as 500 miles away. In 2005 alone the hospital treated more than 72,000 individuals and performed more than 3,500 surgeries. Hundreds of people come for treatment each day, and no one is turned away.

In 1997 three graduates of the Floyd Medical Center's family practice program — Paul and Cindy Shumpert and Willie Ree Howell — volunteered at the BMC. After seeing the vital role the hospital plays in the area, they established the George Faile

Foundation to provide supplemental financial support for the facility.

Currently the foundation is supporting a \$250,000 renovation of the BMC under the leadership of Bob Claytor, founder of Carpenters for Christ. Each year the foundation also funds one-month internships for 10 medical school residents. Studies have shown that up to 80 percent of medical students who take part in missions work eventually return to a developing country.

The Baptist Medical Centre is in need of skilled volunteers and welcomes the help of practicing physicians who are interested in medical missions work. Will you be the next Furman connection?

— LAURIE BROOK DOUGLAS '84



George Faile '72 tends to a tiny patient at the hospital his parents founded.

For more about the BMC and the Faile Foundation, visit [www.failefoundation.org](http://www.failefoundation.org) and [www.baptistmedicalcenter.org](http://www.baptistmedicalcenter.org). The author lives in Rome, Ga., and is a member of the foundation's board.

For another perspective on medical missions, visit [www.furman.edu/fumag](http://www.furman.edu/fumag) and click on the "Special to the Web" tab.