

MISSIONS

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APRIL 2021

Medicine or Missions?

WHY NOT BOTH?

DR. HEIDI HAUN TENDS TO THE PHYSICAL
AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN GHANA.

The Master's Plan

LEARNING TIME MANAGEMENT
PRINCIPLES FROM JESUS

SALT AND LIGHT

A YOUNG WOMEN'S GROUP FILLS A GAP IN MISSIONS DISCIPLESHIP
AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF AMARILLO, TEXAS.

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BY CYNTHIA PRICE

DR. HEIDI HAUN WOULD DESCRIBE HER CHOSEN VOCATION AS JUST "FOLLOWING GOD'S LEADING." EVEN THOUGH EXPERIENCING A SEEMINGLY IDYLIC CHILDHOOD, HEIDI RECOGNIZED AS A FIVE-YEAR-OLD HER NEED FOR A SAVIOR. WITH THE EXAMPLE OF PARENTS WHO LIVED A LIFE OF FAITH AND A NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMER BIBLE CLUB HELD IN HER HOME, THIS FUTURE SURGEON SEALED HER COMMITMENT TO GOD.

BUT WHAT PROPELLED THIS YOUNG GIRL TO BECOME A MISSIONARY AND PHYSICIAN TO PROMOTE THE WELLNESS OF INDIVIDUALS' SOULS AND BODIES? HEIDI SAID HER PARENTS ALSO PUT IN FRONT OF HER THE EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE TO FOLLOW GOD TO THE NATIONS.

THIS MONTH, FIND MORE MISSION
STORIES AT WMU.COM/BLOGS:

- This Month's Spotlight Update:
Dr. Heidi Haun
- Seeking God's Guidance in
Determining "the Greater Yes"

- **LEAD WOMEN ON MISSION:** Use with meeting
plan on page 10 in Women on Mission Leader
(Spring 2021).



EARLY INFLUENCE

"My parents have always been very mission-minded," Heidi said. "Some of their best friends were on the mission field all around the world. Growing up, we shared our dinner table with many missionaries, heard their stories, and supported them through our church."

Then when she was 12, she attended a Christian summer camp with a missions focus.

"It was during that week I first heard God call me to international missionary service," she said. "From that point forward, that call was in the back of my mind as I finished high school and became interested in the medical field. I realized that as a doctor, I would be able to help people with their physical needs. But as a believer, I could also tend to their spiritual needs."

With that, as a young teen, Heidi cemented her decision for Christian service, wherever it might take her.

WEST AFRICA BOUND

Now Heidi—along with her husband, William; son, Trey; and daughter, KJ—serves in Ghana, located in West Africa.

Appointed career missionaries in May 2014, the couple and Trey arrived in Nalerigu, Ghana, five months later. KJ was born a few months after that at Baptist Medical Center. The first year was spent in culture and language studies, along with building relationships in the

village. Baby KJ endeared the Hauns to the community. Heidi soon began working at the hospital as a general surgeon. The following four years would include 1,000 major and minor procedures.

"In my interactions with patients and their families, I have been able to share the hope and peace I have in Jesus," she said. "I am able to pray with my patients, show them compassion through Jesus' name, and share the gospel."

Because Heidi learned the local language, she is usually able to speak directly to the patients. This knowledge also allows "opportunities to speak truth to townspeople, share the gospel, and listen to their problems," Heidi said.

SENSORY SMORGASBORD

Today's Ghana offers a sensory smorgasbord of sounds, smells, colors, textures, and animals. The Hauns live in northern Ghana, south of the Sahara Desert. Two major seasons dominate—dry and rainy. Winter, between November and April, is dry with only a couple of rainy days. Grass dies, everything turns brown, and farmers burn their fields. Then rains come in June and continue until October. Farming season begins, producing a lush and green landscape. Thus the cycle begins again.

Heidi likened a walk through town to a stroll on a farm. "Donkeys, cows, goats, sheep, pigs, chickens,



guinea fowls, and dogs are encountered daily, along with their corresponding smells and sounds,” she said. “Hornbills, starlings, bats, and other birds are seen and heard in the skies. A mix of mosquitos and flies, moths, ants, termites, and bees also share the air and ground. Snakes—vipers, cobras, and nonvenomous ones—are seen infrequently, thankfully. When large ones have been found and killed, they also make it to the dinner table.”

The dinner table in Ghana is interesting in ways that don’t involve snakes too. Had any groundnut stew recently? This is a sauce made with peanut butter and tomato sauce served with rice or yams. Ingredients include beef, goat, chicken, or guinea fowl. Heidi also suggested hibiscus tea, as many variations of this tea made with dried hibiscus flowers are served. Pineapple juice, lime juice, ginger, hot pepper, cloves, or other spices may be added to this hot or cold tea.

THE PEOPLE’S BELIEFS

Another intriguing facet of the region is its belief system, African traditional religion. Followers try to appease their ancestors and manipulate the “spirits” to improve their own well-being. The people are fear driven, Heidi reported with sadness. Further, she said, “They offer sacrifices, use magic charms and amulets for protection, and will seek many ways of manipulating the spirits to give them favor.”

Conversely, Heidi described an entirely different atmosphere when she and her family gather for worship with other believers. “During a Sunday worship service, the singing time is also a time for dancing. The congregation gathers in a circle, like a congo line, to dance in celebration. Many children will also come up front to join in the dance. As the children get older, they sing as a choir, lined up in synchronized stepping to give their praise to God.”

UNMOVABLE COMMITMENT

It’s a good life, but Heidi said working as a missionary in another culture, away from friends and family, can be difficult. “As a wife, mother, surgeon, and missionary, I have many responsibilities,” she said. “Finding a balance in the way I use my time has been a struggle. I have had to rely on God to give me strength. Trusting Him, I also have to be intentional about stopping to rest.”

Further, Heidi said, “My faith in God is so important to my life as a Christian and as a missionary. I believe God is who He says He is in the Bible. I also believe He will do what He says He will do. I also have faith He has called me to be a missionary and will take care of me and provide my needs.”

An unsettling time in the Hauns’ early missionary life proved the stability of their proclaimed faith. Many West African countries were in the throes of a ravaging

Ebola outbreak. Though the virus was not present in Ghana or the surrounding areas, the Hauns' family and friends questioned their decision to go to West Africa.

"I studied Scripture and was reminded of God's promises and faithfulness," Heidi said. "I had faith God had called me to Ghana and He was strong enough to take care of me no matter what happened. I was then, and am still, prepared to give my life if that is required of me in order to obey God."

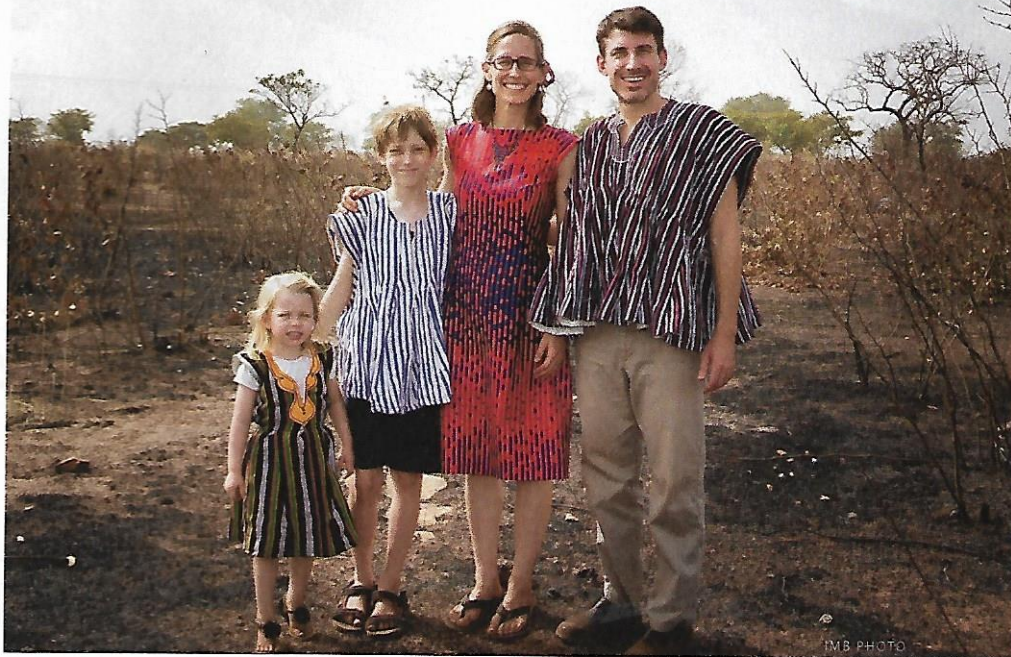
The first year in Ghana also challenged the Haun family. William became severely ill with typhoid fever, and Trey showed similar signs. Back home, Heidi's grandfather died. And during this time, Heidi was pregnant. "It was a very stressful time, but the Lord reminded me that He was always with me," she said. "His promises gave me hope."

A TYPICAL DAY

Heidi begins mornings with a cup of coffee and her Bible. Hospital ward rounds begin at 8 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. She sees postoperative patients and new consults. Tuesdays and Thursdays are spent performing surgeries that have waited three to four months. These cases include hernias, lumps, bumps, amputations, or breast surgery. Of course, emergencies interrupt. These procedures are often related to intra-abdominal illnesses such as typhoid-related perforation of intestines or small bowel obstructions.

"As I evaluate my emergent patients, especially those requiring surgery, I try to encourage them in the Lord and pray with them," Heidi said. "After building rapport, I take the opportunity to share the gospel with them and the family. Often patients arrive with advanced cancer. With the chaplains' assistance, I try to explain the poor prognosis and encourage them not to squander their resources on 'medicine men' or other local treatments. I also share the hope that can be found in Christ alone."

She said she knows it is God who brings healing, but she is grateful He allows her the chance to be a part of



His plan. "I also enjoy the privilege of being able to speak the truth to my patients and to share the love of Christ with those around me," she said.

RESULTS AND REWARDS

One such story happened on a day when a man showed up at the hospital with a bowel obstruction and needed emergency surgery.

"The patient had an uneventful recovery, and before going home, I shared the gospel, but he wasn't ready," Heidi said. "Two months later he returned with another obstruction. His vulnerability made him more open to the gospel. Listening to the compassionate story of Jesus healing the lame man, both the patient and his wife became followers and began attending church. A year later I saw the man, and he greeted me with a huge smile on his face. He and his wife radiated their newfound joy in Jesus."

Heidi asked for prayer for the hospital where she works to continue to serve as a light in the darkness so more people would come to faith in this way. She is devoted to her mission there.

"As a general surgeon at Baptist Medical Center in Nalerigu, my joy is being used by God to bring healing to broken and sick bodies through surgical and medical interventions, from ages nine days to 90 years," Heidi said. "While taking care of physical needs, I can encourage and pray with them due to the hope I have in Jesus."

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CYNTHIA PRICE'S most gratifying articles to write are about people and their service. It is a true joy to see how God uses those who commit to Him.