

A Ticket to Hope

Imagine being handed a death sentence. There is nothing you can do to change things. The world immediately closes in on you and your sights narrow. Your vision blurs and your future plans are quickly snatched from your sight. You switch gears into survival mode and it takes all the energy you can gather to put your feet on the floor each day. Your world is suddenly hopeless. Your faith in everything is shaken to its core.

Imagine living in a world with no hope- a world that offers nothing but a painful, sorrowful death in its future.

Now imagine a dear friend coming to you in the midst of your despair and handing you a ticket. This ticket is the one chance you have to life- a ticket to freedom, hope, and peace.

To many in Tanzania, the letters H-I-V are a death sentence. Those three letters have turned "Positive" into a negative. In a moment, the diagnosis of HIV brings about a future of discrimination, stigma, hatred, and sleepless nights. There is no cure- only a life of constant infections, mouth sores, diarrhea, and pain. But we at the Chimala Mission Hospital have an incredible opportunity each day to offer hope...where there is none. Peace...where there is only anxiety and depression. Love...where there is only hatred and discrimination.

Tumaini was laying lifeless in the crowded female ward at the Chimala Mission Hospital. She had been diagnosed with HIV encephalopathy - an advanced brain infection that would most likely lead to her death. The mosquito nets had been lowered over her body as she lay in a deep coma. We prayed over her body and prayed with her husband, offering nothing more than a gentle touch on the shoulder, some prayer with the Father, and a few medications. The staff had all but given-up on the hope of her recovery. Two days later, her eyes opened. Three days later, her feet touched the ground. A week later, we all had our breath taken away as we saw her walking toward us being helped by her loving husband Jonathan, white teeth gleaming through her beautiful smile. Tumaini was a dedicated Christian but her husband had not decided to follow Christ. But this week, we introduced him to our Savior. He began attending our morning chapel services daily and he listened intently to the life-saving messages. He had seen God at work in the staff and in the healing of his wife's frail body. His life would never be the same. Jonathan was immersed into a new life in Christ that week.

The "Good News" of Christ in its written form is filled with stories of Christ touching the untouchables, healing the outcasts, and giving an ear to those who had no voice in society. Imagine the impact he had on the people of his time on earth! Now, we are to be Christ to the people of *our* time on earth. This is an incredible opportunity, but also a heavy responsibility.

Everyday, we at the Chimala Mission Hospital encounter individuals who have received a death sentence. *Christ* is their ticket to freedom. All we have to do is share it with them! Know that every dollar donated is affecting the lives of hopeless, lost people every day. Souls are being added to God's kingdom every month as a result of God's work at the Chimala Mission