

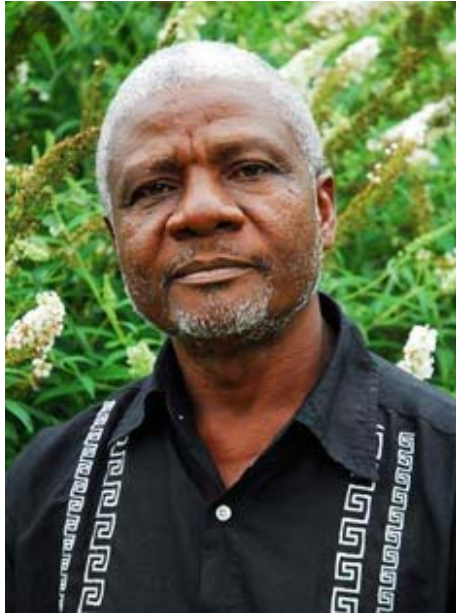
## Hallelujah Moment from Liberia

*"The First to Suffer Were the Children"*

By Dr. Albert Willicor with Jodi Cataldo

January 23, 2009

The first of ten children born to rubber plantation workers, I was brought up in very modest circumstances. However, with the help of a scholarship from the plantation, I was able to further my education and went on to complete my medical internship and residency in 1983 at John F. Kennedy Medical Center in Liberia. I am Dr. Albert Willicor.



The coup d'état of 1980 plunged my country of Liberia into chaos. The general poverty and national malaise that followed culminated in civil war. The first to suffer were the children. They died of malnutrition and disease and were dumped from wheelbarrows into mass graves. In the chaos of war, children were separated from their parents. Some of them never saw their mother or father again.

My oldest child became lost in the early days of the war when she was only four years old. We give thanks to God that, after two years, she was found in a distant border town. She was suffering from malnutrition but she was found. (Today she is well and in medical school in Liberia.)

With mass starvation, disease was rampant. The sick were left unattended. There was enormous human suffering. But in the midst of this anguish and despair, churches of various

denominations and charity agencies stepped in--setting up food centers, orphanages, clinics, and places of worship to raise spirits and give hope in Jesus Christ.

I found myself behind the line of battle, in refugee camps, and participating in relief activities where I witnessed firsthand the role played by various church organizations in alleviating the suffering of the people. This experience gave me the desire to serve the church today as a missionary.

As Chief Medical Officer of Ganta United Methodist Hospital, my work is focused on the delivery of healthcare to people whose conditions have been worsened by 14 years of civil war. Children under the age of five have been the hardest hit—predominantly by malaria with its complications, respiratory disease, and diarrhea. However, as I move around the hospital on my morning rounds, my heart is blessed and my spirit is renewed by the smiles of the patients who now have the opportunity to recover.

### Ways to Support this Ministry

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### Hallelujah Moments

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