

# HEALING LIVES

SUMMER 2025



*"...for by His wounds we are healed." Isaiah 53:5*

  
medical ambassadors  
INTERNATIONAL®  
healing lives...transforming communities

# HEALING LIVES

## SUMMER 2025

### Medical Ambassadors International

1-888-426-9508 (toll free)

PO Box 1302, Salida, CA 95368-1302

email: [info@med-amb.org](mailto:info@med-amb.org)

[www.MedicalAmbassadors.org](http://www.MedicalAmbassadors.org)

EIN: 94-2691184

#### HEALING LIVES EDITORIAL TEAM

Anja Suratt

Madelle Payne

Laura Nelson

Emily Reed

Ravi Jayakaran

Vimla Jayakaran

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

Cynthia Barton

Wayne Jeffers, MD

Steve Belton, MD

Alice Musumba, D.Ph

Chris Dunn, MD

Patty Pell, D.Min

Kathryn Halverson, MD

Stefan Wiecher

Galen Dalrymple, Director of Operations (ex-officio)

Ravi Jayakaran, President (ex-officio)

Steve Otradovec, COO (ex-officio)

#### PHOTO CREDITS

Lightstock.com: cover

Dreamstime.com: pages 3-4, 7-8, 10-13, 15-16, 20-21,  
24-26, 30-31 & back cover

Page 14 courtesy of Dayo Obeweya

Page 19 courtesy of Dr. Bibiana Mac Leod

Pages 22-23 courtesy of Tirus Githaka

Pages 27-29 courtesy of Nugie Nugroho

Donate at [www.medicalambassadors.org](http://www.medicalambassadors.org) or  
use the envelope provided. By partnering  
with MAI you join us in equipping  
communities through Christ-centered  
health and transformational development.

Thank you!



# CONTENTS

- 4 Healing: An Overview and Its Dimensions  
*by Dr. Ravi Jayakaran*
- 6 Cancer, Coma, Chromosomes, and the Comforter  
*by Dr. Richard S. Gunasekara*
- 9 Trauma: Informed Healing  
*by Dr. David Zuccolotto*
- 10 Overview of Spiritual Transformation  
*by Dr. Nzuzi Mukawa*
- 11 Malongo's Spiritual Transformation  
*by Dr. Nzuzi Mukawa*
- 13 The Ipsina Community Transformation  
*by Dayo Obawaya*
- 14 Transforming Lives Through Faith and Skill  
*by Dayo Obawaya*
- 16 Mending Brokenness  
*by Dr. Bibiana Mac Leod*
- 19 A Wounded Heart is Healed  
*by Dr. Bibiana Mac Leod*
- 20 God's Plan for the Environment  
*by Tirus Githaka*
- 22 A Silent Creation Speaks Loudly  
*by Tirus Githaka*
- 24 From War to Wholeness: Local Hope is Rising  
in South Sudan  
*by Tirus Githaka*
- 26 Programs for Economic Stabilization  
*by Nugie Nugroho*
- 29 From Trauma to Triumph  
*by Maria Luz S. Mapiait*
- 30 Enriching the Health of the Soul  
*by Ron Blomberg*
- 31 Further Reading



## from the Editorial Team

### A Focus on Healing

We are a broken people in a broken world, and yet we have hope! We have a God, a Creator and Savior, who has shown us the “Way” in His Word, the Bible. He can bring healing if we allow Him, for we serve a powerful and awesome God in our fractured world.

Scan the QR code with your smart phone to enjoy listening to Phil Wickham sing *What an Awesome God*.



This issue is packed full of articles and life stories that transform every area of life through this wholistic approach.

Begin the journey by reading *Healing: An Overview and its Dimensions* (page 4) to fully understand the areas of focus in MAI's approach.

Explore the amazing scientific aspects of healing in the article by our guest writer, Dr. Richard Gunasekera (page 6).

*Overview of Spiritual Transformation* (page 10) is followed by the real-life story of Malongo in the DRC (page 11). His passion for education led him to seek biblical direction, changing his perspective and enabling him to accomplish great things for his community.

Community healing and transformation were gained through the tireless efforts of one trained leader. His life was so altered by his commitment to Christ that great changes occurred due to his selfless leadership (page 14).

Social and relational healing are issues to which we can all relate and is explored in *Mending Brokenness* (page 16)

Helping others understand the idea that we are stewards of the earth is often a challenge in environmental healing. Check out *God's Plan for the Environment* (page 20).

Wilma, a local champion in Barangay Matangale, Philippines, is uprooting fear in women by inspiring them through practical training and spiritual trust in God. Learn about these courageous women moving *From Trauma to Triumph* (page 29).

All these stories and articles of healing inform us how God is walking among His people through workers He has inspired to use CHE. As Wilma says, “To God be the glory!”

[https://youtu.be/sT5whoRt4wA?si=DIOyqakT\\_FDaeHd0](https://youtu.be/sT5whoRt4wA?si=DIOyqakT_FDaeHd0)

# Healing: An Overview and Its Dimensions

by Dr. Ravi I. Jayakaran  
President

At Medical Ambassadors International (MAI), our tagline claims that we “Heal Lives and Transform Communities.” This is essentially the goal of our Christ-centered, grass-roots level, curriculum-based, holistic and integrated community development program that we refer to as Community Health Evangelism/Education (CHE). Because “healing” is the lead into the rest of the transformational process, it is worth exploring in greater detail.

## What is Healing?

Healing is the process of restoration, renewal, and transformation from a state of brokenness, suffering, or imbalance. It moves into a state of wholeness, well-being, and harmony; that we refer to as “Shalom.” Healing involves the physical, spiritual, economic, social, and environmental aspects of restoration. We recognize that true healing is holistic and interconnected. It can be natural, medical, psychological, spiritual, or even societal, depending on the context.

Healing is not just the absence of disease or conflict but the presence of wholeness, peace and flourishing (Shalom) in all aspects of life. It often requires time,

deliberate effort, and the right interventions, whether through faith, medicine, therapy, community support, or social transformation.

## The Interconnection of Healing

No single dimension of healing exists by itself - **they all influence each other.**

- A *sick body* (physical) can lead to emotional distress (psychological) and financial hardship (economic).
- *Economic disparity* can lead to social conflict and spiritual despair.
- And similarly, broken relationships can cause *emotional wounds*, leading to *physical illness* as a consequence of stress.

Holistic healing must address all these dimensions, enabling *flourishing, peace* and *well-being* across every area of life.

**Let’s explore these various dimensions of healing:**

### 1. Physical Healing

Involves restoring the body to health with medicine, appropriate nutrition, rest, and exercise. The body has a natural ability to heal itself when given proper care.

“...for by His wounds  
we are healed.”  
Isaiah 53:5

Preventive healthcare, including hygiene, vaccination, and lifestyle choices, is crucial. Access to basic medical care and addressing health disparities are essential for holistic physical healing. Faith and prayer often play a role in physical healing for many people, but we'll look at this separately. Our CHE programs all around the world see lots of physical healing.

## 2. Spiritual Healing

Involves reconnecting with God, overcoming spiritual brokenness, and finding inner peace. Prayer, scripture study, worship and fellowship contribute to spiritual renewal. Forgiveness, repentance and faith are central to spiritual healing – and at the core of the “born again” experience. Spiritual healing can bring hope, resilience, and a renewed sense of purpose. Healing includes deliverance from past traumas, fears, and spiritual oppression caused by demonic attacks. Our CHE teams in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South America have many stories of spiritual healing, including liberation from witchcraft.

## 3. Economic Healing

Focuses on restoring financial stability, breaking cycles of poverty, and promoting fair economic opportunities. This dimension requires addressing systemic inequalities, corruption, and unjust financial practices, which are often rampant in marginalized communities. Economic empowerment through education, skill development, and job creation is crucial. Microenterprises and income generation programs play an important role in enabling economic healing. Stewardship principles, generosity, and ethical business practices lead to long-term economic stability. Sustainable development ensures resources are used wisely for future generations. The focus on economic healing also involves a renewed and regenerated attitude to giving for God's work. To quote Dr Stanley Mooneyham, *“No one is too poor to give. And no one is too rich to receive!”*

## 4. Social & Relationship Healing

Healing broken relationships through reconciliation, communication, and forgiveness is the core of social and relational healing. This involves restoring trust in families, communities, and societies; and healing from social injustices such as racism, discrimination, and oppression. Encouraging a culture of empathy, kindness, and mutual support helps develop strong, healthy relationships and improve mental and emotional well-being. This is one of the strongest

impacts one sees in communities that have been practicing CHE for several years. Vibrant relationships and cooperation are most clearly visible in CHE communities.

## 5. Environmental Healing

Involves restoring and caring for God's creation through responsible stewardship. Addressing the challenge of pollution, deforestation, unhygienic surroundings and ultimately climate change are all essential for a sustainable future. As success is achieved in these areas, implementing conservation practices and promoting renewable resources is the next step. *Appropriate Technology* can play a significant part in this because it is low cost and easy to adopt. The CHE lessons constantly create awareness about environmental responsibility in communities. And, of course, Biblical stewardship principles call for responsible care of the earth for future generations. WE HAVE NOT INHERITED THIS EARTH FROM OUR PARENT GENERATION, BUT HAVE ESSENTIALLY “BORROWED” IT FROM OUR CHILDREN! *(How we treat it has consequences for them to bear.)*

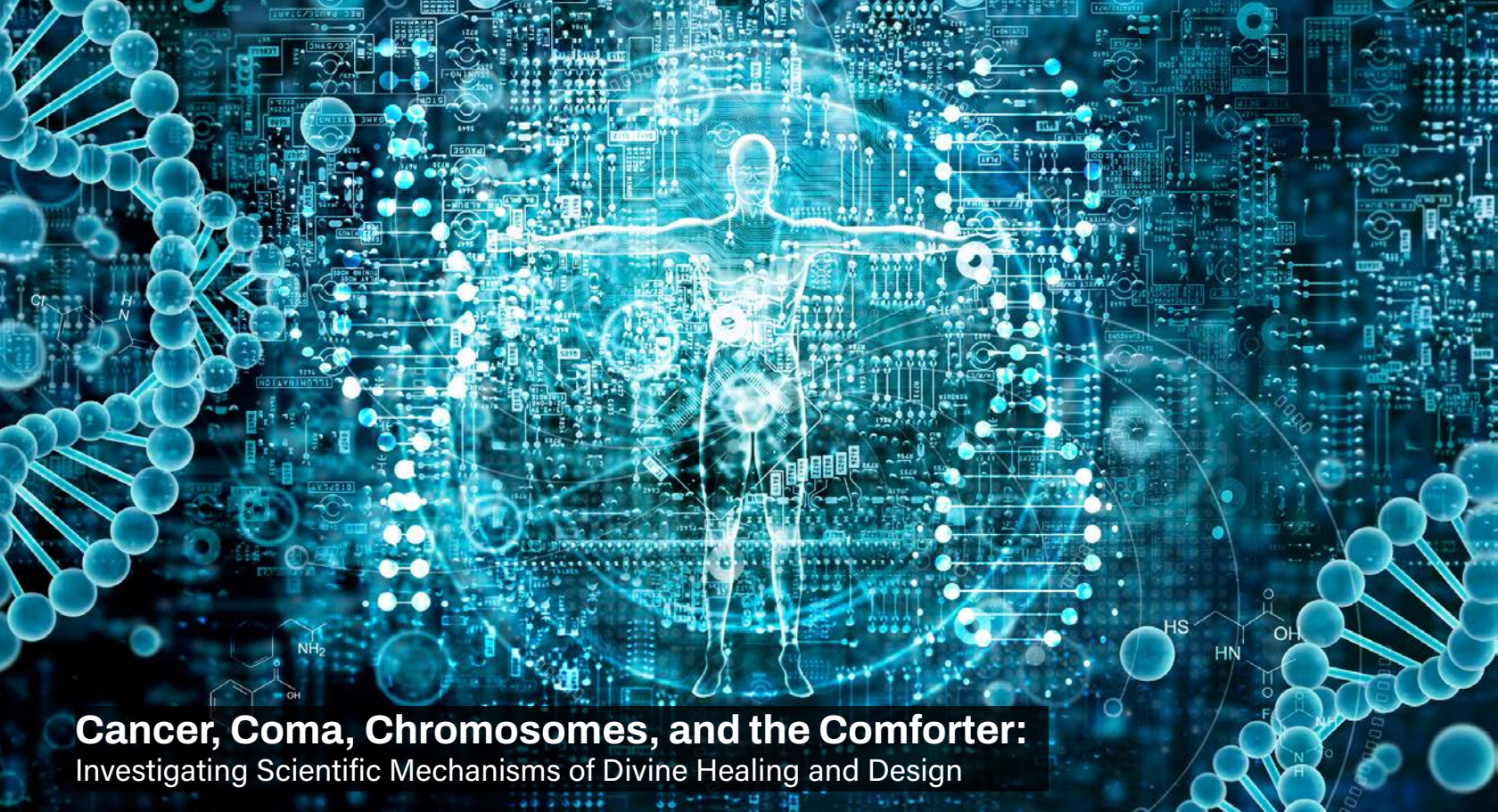
## Seeking and Facilitation Wholistic Healing

It is clear from this overview and exploration of the different dimensions, that all of us, irrespective of our station in life, need some form of healing to move us into a state of “Shalom.” In the developing world, those that are marginalized due to poverty experience multidimensional breakdowns, thus needing healing in multiple areas of their lives. Our Community Health Evangelism/Education (CHE) program is geared to facilitate this multidimensional healing process. Healed individuals result in healed families, which are the basic unit of society, and ultimately the whole community is impacted.



Dr. Ravi I. Jayakaran has long term leadership experience in International poverty reduction and strategic programming. He joined Medical Ambassadors International in May 2017 as President. He is also the Catalyst for Integral Mission for the Lausanne Global Movement, and a Partner of

TBG-The Barnabas Group (Sacramento, CA). Ravi has worked in senior management positions in the Corporate Sector, International NGOs-including World Vision International, the Asian Development Bank(ADB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He has lived and worked long term in India, Cambodia, China and the US and provided technical support in more than 23 countries.



## **Cancer, Coma, Chromosomes, and the Comforter:** Investigating Scientific Mechanisms of Divine Healing and Design

by **Richard S. Gunasekera, Ph.D., D.IDv**

*Research Professor of Nanomedicine and Biochemistry,  
Biola University, California, USA (Guest writer)*

### **A Brief Overview.**

Abstract: Scientific and medical investigations into divine healing are rare although narratives of divine healing are not uncommon. This study begins by highlighting the brilliance of the intelligent design of the human body that has been intricately fine-tuned to work efficiently and to resist various diseases. The study further scientifically investigates divine healing by examining evidence-based data on real significant cases from medical records and scientific literature. The cases investigated of remarkable divine healings are from metastatic cancer, inherited genetic disease, cardiac arrest, and coma in response to prayer for healing after modern medicine offered no permanent solution. This study further discusses how creation harbors plant-derived bioactive molecules strategically placed to safeguard and heal the body of certain cancers and other diseases through dietary means—a testament to the intelligent design and protective work of the Holy Spirit intricately woven into nature.

Thus, the article bridges the gap between science and faith by examining how biological design and medical/

scientific evidence support divine healings through the work of the Holy Spirit.

### **Intelligently Designed Human Body**

The biology of the human body reveals an astonishing level of design and intentionality. From the double-helix structure of DNA to rotating nano-molecules like ATP synthase that provides energy for our body, the body's cellular machinery displays both complexity and purpose. Even before illness manifests, the body is equipped with error-correcting enzymes such as DNA polymerase, tumor suppressor genes like p53, and a highly regulated immune system—each working to detect and repair early signs of dysfunction.

Alongside this internal defense network, there are intelligently designed medicinal molecules in plants that have been providing cures for healing in humans. These plant-based bioactive molecules (PBAMs), found in both common foods like turmeric, spinach, tomatoes, and citrus fruits, and other exotic plants, exhibit antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-carcinogenic properties. In my own research, published in peer-reviewed articles, and in research by other scientists we have shown

that compounds such as curcumin from turmeric and lycopene from red-grapefruit demonstrate the ability to block various stages of carcinogenesis, including initiation, promotion, and progression. It is very interesting to find that our research shows that many of these PBAMs selectively inhibit malignant growth while having no such effects on normal cells.

These intrinsic and extrinsic biological systems suggest that healing is not merely a product of random evolution but rather of a designed and integrated order. Scripture affirms this: “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4). The Holy Spirit, involved in creation, has embedded mechanisms of restoration in both the body and nature.

### Healing Beyond the Natural Limits

While these mechanisms are effective, sickness can occur as the body ages, systems fail, due to disease or other agents. As such, there are cases where disease surpasses the body’s repair mechanisms and medical intervention proves ineffective. In these moments, particularly believers often depend on divine interventions through the Holy Spirit in prayer. “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16-17a).

Here we cite three to six cases where focused prayers of loved ones, usually prayed along side the sick person (sometimes called proximal intercessory prayer), brought about the divine, miraculous healing of gravely ill patients with poor prognosis, bringing about complete recovery and cure. However, critiques and skeptics may argue otherwise. Among the most common objections to miraculous healing are the possibilities of:

- Misdiagnosis or incorrect initial prognosis
- Psychosomatic recovery

- Placebo effect
- Spontaneous remission
- Anecdotal or biased reporting
- Lack of medical documentation
- Religious exaggeration
- Coincidence
- Regression to the mean
- Confirmation bias

These arguments assume a closed system—one in which only material or natural explanations are permitted. However, if we acknowledge the possibility of divine agency, then these peer-reviewed, documented cases may warrant critical examination and serious attention even by the healthy skeptic.

### Case Studies That Challenge Skepticism

#### • Healing from Genetic Blindness

A woman legally blind for over a decade due to juvenile macular degeneration experienced sudden restoration of sight following prayer. Genetic diseases of the retina, such as Stargardt’s or Best’s disease, involve inherited DNA mutations with no known medical cure. Yet in this case, vision returned and remained functional for more than 40 years, with medical records documenting both the prior blindness and subsequent recovery.

#### • Healing and Recovery from Coma and Brain Death

After a cardiac arrest, the author’s father was declared brain dead and placed on life support. Gangrene set in, and medical staff advised the family to withdraw care. Instead, his family prayed. Within days, he awoke, regained full cognitive function, and resumed active life and ministry for over a decade. EEGs and physician documentation had confirmed the severity of his condition, making his recovery a clinical anomaly.

*continued on page 8*



## • Healing from Metastatic Cancer— Dr. Ruth Lindberg

A physician diagnosed with metastatic cancer that had spread to lymph nodes showed complete healing after prayer and a spiritual encounter. CT scans of tumors before and after this episode clearly revealed the disappearance of cancerous lymph nodes without additional chemotherapy or radiation. This outcome cannot be attributed to placebo or psychosomatic factors, as the malignancy was objectively measured and had previously failed to respond to treatment.

[n.b.; \*In the original article each of the above ten skeptic's arguments are categorially refuted for each of these above cases.]

## A Dual Framework of Intelligent Design and Healing

These cases suggest that healing may operate along two dimensions:

**1. Intelligently Designed Body:** Through the built-in mechanisms in the marvelously designed human body and medicinal molecules found in plants, the design aspects of the Holy Spirit sustains health and offers prevention.

**2. Divine Intervention:** When these systems fail or reach their limits, the Holy Spirit can act directly, achieving healing beyond known biological processes in miraculous ways through divine interventions by prayer.

Christianity uniquely claims divine healing beginning from the work of its founder—Jesus, God the Son—and His followers, empowered by God the Holy Spirit. When the Lord Jesus walked on this earth, He healed many through touch and command, often in ways that left observers amazed and physicians today perplexed. The same Spirit that empowered Christ (Luke 4:18) continues His work in the church (John 14:12), offering restoration not just in soul, but also in body.

## Conclusion: Rethinking the Boundaries

While science may question extraordinary claims, it should also remain open to evidence and data that challenges current paradigms. Dismissing well-documented healing events due to philosophical bias undermines the scientific method, which calls for observation, evidence, and explanation. The convergence of modern biomedical understanding and testimonies of healing offers an opportunity—not a threat—to broaden our view of what is possible.

The Spirit who created chromosomes, sustains cellular function, and comforts the afflicted also heals the sick—not only by intelligent design, but at times, through supernatural means. These moments of compelling evidence invite scientific investigation that leads to faith and informed belief.



**\*For more information and to read the full original article, please send your request to [Anja@med-amb.org](mailto:Anja@med-amb.org) and reference Gunasekera Article.**



Dr. Richard S. Gunasekera, Ph.D., D.IDv., Research Professor of Nanomedicine and Biochemistry, Biola University, has over 25 years of experience in higher education, specializing in genetics and nanomedicine. He has also taught at University of Houston-Victoria, Rice, and Texas A&M, integrating research and faith in a Christ-centered setting.



## Trauma - Informed Healing

by Dr. David Zuccolotto

*Guest author and Clinical Psychologist*

Trauma is a very upsetting experience that makes it hard for someone to handle life in a normal way. It can come from things like abuse, violence, a major loss, or anything that makes a person feel unsafe or like their identity is damaged. People who go through trauma may feel on edge all the time, feel emotionally numb, have unwanted thoughts that pop into their minds, or find it hard to trust others.

From a Christian point of view, trauma shows the brokenness of the world we live in. The Bible speaks to the deep pain people can feel. For example, Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Trauma can change how a person sees themselves, others, and even God. It can make people feel fear instead of trust, and sadness instead of hope. But the Christian faith also offers healing. Jesus went through great suffering on the cross. He understands our pain and offers a new life through His resurrection.

Christian counselors have a special role. They can combine psychology with the truth of the Bible. Helping someone recover from trauma means creating a safe and caring environment, being patient, and showing Christ's love. Healing is not just about the mind and emotions—it is also about the soul. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, people can be restored. Trauma doesn't have the final say. With God's help, healing and hope are possible.



Dr. David Zuccolotto is a clinical psychologist. For 35 years he has worked for hospitals, addiction treatment centers, outpatient clinics and private practice. He and his wife, Brenda, live near Lake Tahoe, CA, where they share a blended family with five children and three grandchildren.

# Overview of *Spiritual Transformation*

by Dr. Nzuzi Mukawa  
Regional Coordinator, Central Africa

## Description

Spiritual transformation is a dynamic, evolving process that involves a profound shift in the way we perceive ourselves, others, and the universe. It is characterized by a quest for meaning, a search for spiritual connection, and a willingness to transcend personal limitations. This process can be triggered by significant life events, personal crises, or a simple desire to grow.

## Discussion

This journey is not linear; it can include ups and downs, moments of doubt, and periods of awakening. Spiritual transformation often affects various aspects of life, including beliefs, values, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. It can manifest as an openness to new ideas, greater empathy for others, and a willingness to act following one's inner values.

## What we found in terms of changes in behavior and practice

During this process of spiritual transformation, several changes in behavior and practice have been observed:

- 1. Daily Practices:** Individuals often integrate spiritual practices into their daily routine, such as meditation and prayer, to promote inner peace and mental clarity.
- 2. Relational Changes:** There is a tendency to establish more authentic and meaningful relationships. People become more empathetic and open to communication, seeking to understand the perspectives of others.
- 3. Reduction of Judgment:** A notable change is the reduction of judgment towards oneself and others, enabling a deeper acceptance of human imperfections.
- 4. Social Commitment:** Many feel a call to get involved in altruistic or community actions, seeking to make a positive contribution to the world around them.

## What we found about spiritual transformation

Observations on spiritual transformation itself reveal several key elements:

- 1. Awakening of Consciousness:** Individuals often report an awakening of their consciousness, with a better understanding of their place in the world and the interconnections between all beings.
- 2. Sense of Oneness:** A growing sense of unity with the universe and others is frequently reported, along with a diminishing sense of isolation.
- 3. Emotional Resilience:** Spiritual transformation seems to strengthen emotional resilience, enabling individuals to face challenges with a more serene and balanced outlook.
- 4. Redefining Values:** Personal values can evolve to focus more on love, compassion, and service to others rather than on material or selfish goals.

## Summary and conclusion

Spiritual transformation is a rich and complex inner journey that leads to a significant shift in consciousness and behavior. The changes observed in daily practices, interpersonal relationships, and personal values testify to a profound quest for meaning and authenticity. By fostering an awakening of consciousness and a sense of unity, this transformation enables individuals to navigate life with greater resilience and empathy.

In conclusion, spiritual transformation not only offers personal benefits, but also contributes to collective well-being by encouraging altruistic behavior and mutual understanding. It is an ongoing process that enriches the lives of those who engage with it, enabling them to live with intention and harmony.

# ***MALONGO's Spiritual Transformation***

by Dr. Nzuzi Mukawa

*Regional Coordinator, Central Africa*

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a country rich in natural resources, but it faces many challenges, including armed conflict, poverty, and humanitarian crises. In this difficult context, many people are looking for meaning and direction in their lives. The story I'm about to share concerns a man named Malongo, a teacher living in a small village in the DRC.

Malongo was passionate about education and had always dreamed of improving the living conditions in his village. However, he often felt discouraged by the difficulties he encountered: the lack of resources, the absence of infrastructure, and the prevailing despair. One day, while attending a community meeting, a village elder shared his experience of spiritual transformation after going through similar trials. This resonated deeply with Malongo.

**1. Search for meaning:** Inspired by the elder's testimony, Malongo began to explore his own spirituality. He immersed himself in reading the Bible, seeking answers to his questions about suffering and the meaning of life.

**2. Spiritual practices:** He began to practice prayer and meditation, seeking to establish a deeper connection with God. This enabled him to find inner peace and helped to strengthen his resilience in the face of daily challenges.

**3. Community involvement:** Armed with his new perspective, Malongo decided to take action to improve the living conditions in his village. He organized educational workshops to raise awareness among children and adults about the importance of education, health, and sustainable development.

*continued on page 12*





**4. Creation of a Support Network:** Malongo has also gathered a group of young people from the village to form a local association. Together, they have launched initiatives such as clean-up campaigns, tutoring, and literacy programs for women.

Over time, the impact of Malongo's spiritual transformation has been remarkable:

- **Improved Education:** Thanks to his efforts, the school enrollment rate in his village has increased. More and more children have begun to attend school, motivated by the programs he has set up.
- **Strengthening community ties:** The association he set up has strengthened the bonds between the local residents. People have begun to work together to solve local problems, creating a sense of unity and solidarity.
- **Change of Mentality:** Malongo's spiritual transformation has inspired other community members to explore their own spirituality and engage in positive action. This has led to a collective awareness of the importance of education and personal development.
- **Collective resilience:** In the face of persistent challenges, the community has become more resilient. Residents have learned to overcome obstacles together, drawing on their spiritual beliefs and shared values.

Malongo's story illustrates how a personal spiritual transformation can profoundly impact a struggling community. By seeking meaning in his life and acting for the well-being of others, Malongo not only changed his own life but also helped transform his village.

This story highlights the power of spiritual transformation as an engine for social and community change in the DRC. It shows that even in difficult contexts, positive change is possible through faith, commitment, and solidarity. Spiritual transformation can be a powerful catalyst for creating a better future for all.



Dr. Nzuzi Mukawa is the Regional Coordinator for MAI programs in Central Africa. Nzuzi has a PhD from Trinity International University in Illinois. He and his wife, Chantal, live in Kinshasha, DRC. They have three grown children.

# THE IPINSA COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

by Dayo Obaweya  
*Regional Coordinator, West Africa*

Twelve years ago, Ipinisa community in Southwest Nigeria was a small, struggling community with less than 500 residents. The village lacked basic necessities like clean water, electricity, and healthcare. A single, poorly attended church stood as a symbol of spiritual guidance, but the community's overall well-being was fragile.

That was when the Community Health Evangelists (CHE) team arrived, bringing hope and a holistic approach to development. They worked tirelessly to empower the community, focusing on disease prevention, agricultural training, water purification, and small business development.

The CHE team also facilitated networking, attracting external support for crucial projects like drilling boreholes for clean water and enhancing community security. As relationships deepened, trust grew, and the community began to flourish.

Over time, Ipinisa underwent a remarkable metamorphosis. The population swelled to over 12 times its original size, with people drawn to the community's newfound opportunities. Schools sprouted, providing quality education, and a health post offered much-needed medical care.



The spiritual landscape also transformed, with over 12 vibrant churches emerging, each filled with worshippers. Small businesses thrived, and families enjoyed improved livelihoods. Shops lined the streets, bustling with activity, and jobs were plentiful.

Today, Ipinisa stands as a testament to the power of community-driven development and the impact of the CHE team's work. From humble beginnings, the community has risen to become a beacon of hope and prosperity, inspiring others to follow in its footsteps.



The Royal Poinciana tree blooms during the summer season in Nigeria.



# Transforming Lives Through Faith and Skill: The Journey of a Community Leader

by Dayo Obawe  
*Regional Coordinator, West Africa*

In the heart of Akure, a remarkable individual by name of Benson embarked on a journey that would not only transform his own life but also the lives of countless others in his community. Trained as a Community Health Educator (CHE) trainer, he dedicated himself to empowering those around him with knowledge and skills that would lead to healthier and more sustainable living. His commitment to service soon evolved, and he became a pastor trainer, combining his passion for health education with spiritual guidance.

As he served various communities, his influence grew, and he was appointed as the Southwest Coordinator, overseeing initiatives that aimed to uplift and educate. His work was not limited to health; he recognized the importance of economic empowerment and took it upon himself to learn and teach the art of soapmaking. This skill became a vital tool for many families, providing them with a source of income. The proceeds from the soap sales not only supported his own family but also served as a model for others, demonstrating how entrepreneurship could lead to financial independence.

His commitment to community development did not stop there. With a heart for evangelism and a desire to spread the message of hope, he planted churches in Ipinsa and Idogun. These congregations became beacons of light in their respective communities, offering spiritual nourishment and support to those in need. Through his leadership, many lives have been transformed, both in the present and for eternity. The impact of his work is profound. Families have learned to sustain themselves through the skills he imparted, and individuals have found purpose and direction through the faith he nurtured. His dual role as a trainer and pastor has allowed him to address both the physical and spiritual needs of his community, creating a holistic approach to development. Several factors likely motivated him to become a Community Health Educator (CHE). Here are some key motivations that may have influenced his decision:

- 1. Desire to Serve Others:** A strong sense of compassion and a desire to help others often drives individuals to pursue careers in health education. He



may have witnessed the struggles of his community regarding health issues and felt a calling to make a difference.

**2. Personal Experience:** Personal experiences, whether through family health challenges or community health crises, can ignite a passion for health education. He may have seen firsthand the impact of poor health practices and wanted to empower others to make informed choices.

**3. Community Needs:** Recognizing the specific health challenges faced by his community could have motivated him to become a CHE. Understanding that education is a key factor in improving health outcomes may have inspired him to take action.

**4. Empowerment through Knowledge:** He may have believed in the transformative power of knowledge. By educating others about health practices, he could empower individuals to take control of their health and well-being, leading to a healthier community overall.

**5. Holistic Approach to Health:** His training as a CHE likely provided him with a broader understanding

of health that encompasses physical, mental, and social well-being. This holistic perspective may have motivated him to promote comprehensive health education in his community.

**6. Spiritual Calling:** As someone who later became a pastor trainer, his faith may have played a significant role in his motivation. He may have felt called to serve not only in a spiritual capacity but also in a practical way, addressing the health needs of his community as an expression of his faith.

**7. Role Models and Mentorship:** Influential figures in his life, such as mentors or community leaders, may have inspired him to pursue a path in health education. Their guidance and support could have encouraged him to take on this important role.

**8. Impact on Future Generations:** A desire to create a lasting impact for future generations may have motivated him. By educating the community about health, he could help ensure that future generations are healthier and more informed.

Overall, Benson's journey in becoming a Community Health Educator was likely fueled by a combination of personal experiences, a deep-seated desire to serve, and a commitment to improving the lives of those around him.

Today, as he continues to serve and inspire, the legacy of his efforts is evident in the smiles of those he has touched. The lives changed through his ministry and teachings are a testament to the power of faith, education, and community service. His journey is a reminder that with dedication and a heart for others, one person can indeed make a significant difference in the world.



Dayo Obaweya is the Regional Coordinator for the West Africa region that oversees the CHE ministry in 17 countries including several languages. He has worked with MAI for over twenty years. Dayo serves along with his beautiful wife, Tope. They make their home in Nigeria.



# MENDING BROKENNESS

by Dr. Bibiana MacLeod  
Acting Regional Coordinator, South America &  
Technical Advisor for Disaster Response

***“He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”***  
*Luke 4:18b-19*

This is our business, our calling, our life: transformation and restoration, a new beginning, a new stage in life. Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ means we serve as facilitators of challenging processes.

Some areas of transformational health which have emerged as focus points are emotions and relationships. At Medical Ambassadors International (MAI), Community Health Evangelism has been described as a journey to holistic development for individuals and neighborhoods. But it has expanded to more than disease prevention and alleviation of poverty, accompanied by spiritual growth and abundant life in Christ. Why? It has to do with the emergence of new challenges in the world. You can argue that the world has always had wounded hearts, broken relationships, social dysfunctions, and violence. What is different now? Massive movements of people, exponential growth of acts of violence, migration, abuse, and human trafficking. And it changes as we navigate the use of technology. We must review our strategy, open our eyes to emerging needs, respond with tools people can use, and multiply facilitators in this changing environment.

Medical Ambassadors International is embarking on this endeavor to consider, learn, and serve among those hurting the most, those living under the oppression of old wounds in their hearts. Often, we push aside losses that we experienced in the past because we were not taught how to process the pain. We avoid the hurt and the memories, not wanting to relive those painful moments. Some people experience ongoing pain because they cannot ever get to freedom. There is continuous suffering. Exposing and expressing the pain may leave us vulnerable, so we hide our heartache.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, did the same. In Genesis 42, he hid his pain behind a mask. He pretended not to know his brothers. As a hurting leader, he acted out his wounds. Of course, that provoked a chain reaction in each of the brothers. They had been living with guilt and shame for what they had done to their younger brother, Joseph, selling him into slavery and lying to their father when Jacob assumed Joseph was dead.

We find in the Bible men and women who were suffering because of emotional damage. Hannah poured her heart out to God in anguish. She describes her feelings in 1 Samuel 1. The constant mocking of her rival became agonizing. She had to vent her sorrows.

David cried out to God in Psalms of lament about his anger towards those who persecuted him. Saul was after his life. David had to run and hide, unsure whether he would become the next king or the next casualty.

Elijah was so depressed while being persecuted by Queen Jezebel that he wanted it all to end quickly. He did not want to live any longer.

How can healing of emotions become part of community development? More precisely, why do we believe this is part of the ethos of our organization? What is the relationship between reconciliation and integral mission? For many years, I watched communities embrace the dream of seeing long-lasting change. We trained locals to draw a map of how their villages would look in the future, challenging the status quo, imagining how God was interested in their growth, achieving their full potential, receiving Christ and walking in Him. They dared to imagine a bigger picture, recognizing their collective gifts and talents and setting up priorities. They learned stories from the Bible, improved their living conditions, and protected water sources. They improved the nutritional status of their children, learned to read and write, developed micro-enterprises, gardening techniques, and took care of their environment.

In recent years, we incorporated specific topics for men, women, families, and younger community members. When we started exploring challenges like human trafficking, grooming, people living with disabilities, and emerging vulnerabilities, we found a gap that needed to be addressed: trauma and losses that have marked people. Some are still living with broken relationships that come out of old wounds that were never totally healed. Hurting people hurt people. A community that is made of hurting people invariably has many stories that show a profound need to understand the healing power of the cross of Jesus Christ.

When we started to offer healing groups in different communities, we found a little resistance. We also had some severe cases that needed professional help. Like any other situation, sometimes God heals through mental health professionals, and sometimes people just need the right space to find healing. We are not doing counseling sessions; we do not train counselors. We just learned to facilitate the process of looking at trauma from a biblical perspective and practicing a few techniques for active listening. We open spaces to express pain and, most

importantly, to go to the cross, a place of healing. We do it in small groups, certified by the Trauma Healing Institute, a network that has worked with these tools for many years.

The results? A growing team of facilitators in churches and communities have found healing for themselves at the foot of the cross. They, in turn, can assist others to let Jesus heal them, by coming to the cross regularly, making time there to reflect on what hurts. They express it in various ways: writing, praying, singing, spending time in a garden with specific tasks that make them aware of the process, drawing, meeting with others to pray, and sharing experiences. As we practice being fully present for each other and allow emotions to be identified, expressed, and dealt with, personal healing has ripple effects in our relationships, prompting social healing.

Participants of healing groups want to see this movement expand to family members and friends. Some of them have become facilitators and are actively promoting new healing groups in their churches and communities. We have seen multiplication of groups in Maracay, Venezuela; Cordoba, Buenos Aires; Rosario, Argentina; Serbia, Albania, and Hungary. One participant from a Creative Access Nation in Africa shared his pain during a healing group, and he told us about his experience in refugee camps. Barely two months later, he had to serve among six villages that were attacked and burned by nomadic cattle herders. They had lost everything. He told us how timely it was to have received healing and training right before that happened. It was as though God had orchestrated the process so he would be able to help others. By helping with their immediate needs as well as their emotional needs, he was able to express God's care in the midst of their losses.

During the last session of our healing groups, we talked about forgiveness. One aspect we discussed is that we do not need the other person to repent or apologize to forgive them. We also talked about the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation. Though there are more sessions offered, and one of them covers the topic of reconciliation, these basic six sessions make people aware of the need to recognize their wounds and bring them to the cross. Unless people take their hurts to the cross, forgiveness may be a very difficult step towards reconciliation. And though in our Western societies, we mostly think of a personal process of forgiving an offender or being forgiven if we were the

*continued on page 18*



medical ambassadors  
INTERNATIONAL®  
healing lives...transforming communities

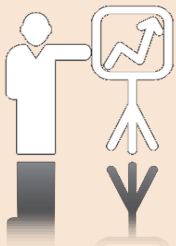
with  
Community Health Evangelism



Countries Where  
We Work Directly

40

Countries Where  
We Partner  
36



Population  
Impacted  
3.4 m

MAI Communities  
Practicing CHE  
3,007



Worldwide CHE  
Volunteers  
59,102

**Mending Brokenness - continued.**

ones hurting others, many cultures see the value of a collective action of forgiveness. Leaders that can facilitate this collective action are hard to find. They first must recognize the need, be aware of available tools to help their people, and take the time to process together the pain and their lament. This is exactly the position of our Haitian team during these days of extreme violence when the country has been overpowered by gangs that have dominated entire departments ("states") of the nation. Coming together to cry to God, participants of healing groups find solace and hope. As a result, we see resilience in communities that continue to monitor their children for malnutrition, gather their internal savings groups, and produce honey for income generation.

In summary, the power of the cross to heal is being proclaimed. Focusing on the forgiveness of sins some of us have neglected the significance of the passage: "by His wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus himself talked about this in Mathew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (NRSV). Emotional wounds are burdens we carry for a long time until we realize that Christ is calling us to bring them to the cross, and to find rest in Him. But first, we need to identify the burden, give a name to what we feel, and express it, allow ourselves to recognize the pain in front of another person, on a piece of paper, or through other forms of art. We need to pause and step into this process in the company of others. This is why being trauma-informed is an essential task for God's people to embrace as part of our mission.

We see God at work in our groups, and it helps us understand each other at a different level. You see, we all need to be healed, even from small daily hurts inflicted by others, or done by us to those around. We cannot leave the emotional transformation out of integral development, and it must start with our own hearts.



Dr. Bibiana Mac Leod is MAI's Technical Advisor for special projects including Oral Cultures, Disaster Response, Anti-Human Trafficking and Trauma Healing. Bibiana is a Medical Doctor and lives in Nova Scotia, Canada with her husband, Alexander.

# *A Wounded Heart Is Healed*

by **Dr. Bibiana Mac Leod**

*Acting Regional Coordinator, South America & Technical Advisor for Disaster Response*

Juana was born in an indigenous community in Argentina and suffered abuse from her stepfather from a young age. Juana felt a lot of resentment toward her mother because she knew her mother noticed and did nothing to stop the abuse.

As a teenager, Juana knew the only way to get away from her abuser was to move to another community with family acquaintances. There she learned to read and write. In time, Juana met a young man named Samuel who encouraged her with songs and playing his guitar. Samuel learned to play the guitar and sing Christian songs as he was just beginning his journey of embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Shortly afterwards, as is customary in this ethnic group, Samuel and Juana began living together.

They moved to a community where they met Sofía, a Medical Ambassadors missionary who lives and practices the principles of Community Health Evangelism. Sofía taught Samuel and Juana the lessons on Healing the Wounds of the Heart. One of the lessons tells the story of Eduardo and Margarita, who suffered from the loss of Eduardo's hand, along with losses caused by his disability.

As Sofía told the story and they began to list the many losses Margarita and Eduardo experienced, Juana identified with the characters and began a healing process in her life. She realized she still harbored anger and lack of forgiveness. She was able to express her feelings and talk about her story with Sofía.

As a child, her anger toward her stepfather and mother, the loss of trust in others, and the lack of support from her family and from her uncle, who was the community leader, had formed in Juana a feeling of abandonment and depression. Talking with Sofía, she began to identify her grief and the need to let God act in her life.

In January of this year, I visited the community. Our team spent an afternoon with the women, talking about family planning, watching them weigh their children, assessing nutritional status. Juana waited until



everyone was gone and called me aside. She asked me to pray for her depression; she seemed sad and discouraged. I shared with the Medical Ambassadors' staff the need to pray for her. With tears in her eyes, she asked if I would intercede before God, asking Him to remove this sadness in her heart.

When we returned with a training team in March, many things were changing. Juana had been able to forgive her mother, and their relationship had been restored. Sofía tells me that Juana likes to talk to her mom often. She is excited to work in the community and is part of the village's traditional children's choir, singing with her husband. She is part of the team of mothers who monitor the growth of children under five and is learning many skills related to home and family care from Sofía. Juana has received Jesus into her life and is a prayer warrior.

We recognize that working through the wounds of the heart is a long and painful process, but we also discover that God has been with us throughout our sad experiences. Juana's story reminds us that, like Sofía, we can be part of God's healing process, each with the skills and talents God has given us, to bear witness to His glory and liberation for wounded hearts.

# God's Plan for the Environment

by Tirus Githaka  
Regional Coordinator, East Africa



*Man is meant to care for the environment. Man is not meant to worship the environment. The environment is meant to serve man to fulfill his call from God.*

We all live and share this planet and are all dependent on the resources placed here by God for our life's sustenance. All persons are therefore stakeholders of God's resources, which He has so graciously allowed us to use. At the core of the management of the different resources are the beliefs and values held by all humans and how these beliefs interrelate with their faith. One will, therefore, observe different levels of caring for the environment, depending on the faith of the person. As Christians, our beliefs are supposed to be directed by the Bible, but they sometimes get clouded by our cultural beliefs, and there exists a tug of war in our lives regarding the values to ascribe to the environment. Should we allow the environment to be destroyed to provide employment and increase the country's GDP? Should we allow a worldview that places the environment above human life and denies services to some, including water, so that we can protect the "so called" environment. There is a sensitive balance to be reached in all these matters. Genesis 1:26-28,31 (NIV) states:

*26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

*27 So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.*

*28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

*31 God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*

Therefore, God created the world, and He placed resources in it. He saw His creation as being very good. He created man and ordered him to care for the environment. He also reminds humans that the resources on earth don't belong to them, but that mankind is a steward of them, and we will give an account of how we use them.

Psalms 24:1-2 (NIV) clearly highlights this.

*1The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; 2 for He founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.*

While there are no biblical writings that support the physical and spiritual split in ministry, it can be noted that this dualism in ministry originated during the First Century church. Some elements of the church were being influenced.

The duality of the physical and spiritual worlds can be noted in the thought processes regarding creation within Christianity, starting in the First Century church. This was much influenced by Gnosticism, which was heavily influenced by Plato's philosophy. The gnostic worldview taught that the spiritual world contains all that is good, and the physical world contains all that is bad. Therefore, the physical world should be avoided so as not to corrupt what had been created good for man. The physical world should be viewed as a negative influence.

Unfortunately, this doctrine remains current, albeit silent, in some congregations. Among Christians, there can be a division between those who feel the physical world is a matter for concern and those who want their focus to be only on spiritual matters.

Some Christians do not treat Genesis 1:26-28 with the weight it deserves as one of God's commands. In East Africa, we use the lessons of Community Health Evangelism as a tool to teach and restore this relationship between man and the environment. Using godly principles, participants can realize the mandate to care for the environment is as important as all other commands found in the Bible.

Please listen to All Creation Worship You sung by Tony Melendez and written by Kirk Dearman and Jim Mills, 1998, Integrity's Hosanna! Music.

<https://youtu.be/8MZHhk43NA?si=wlaTIONglwcuIS>

(Note: José Antonio Meléndez Rodríguez is a Nicaraguan-American guitar player, composer, singer, and songwriter who was born without arms. Meléndez learned to play the guitar with his feet.)





## A Silent Creation Speaks Loudly

by Tirus Githaka  
Regional Coordinator, East Africa

The silent environment in Psalms 19:1-4 (NIV) proclaims loudly: *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech; they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.*

Does it surprise you that the scriptures are full of assertions about the environment? What is surprising is that we often miss them! Let me give you an example.

A few years ago, I was conducting training in an equatorial country. One afternoon I was encouraging participants to plant trees. Some laughed. Their response to me was shocking. "Teacher," one said, "between here and our country's borders, there is an equatorial forest so large that even if we decided to each cut down trees every day for the rest of our lives without replanting, we would not deplete them."

Environmental issues are multifaceted. By digging deeper and trying to establish an aspect of responsibility from the attending church leaders, I

asked, "Why is this area so dirty with plastic bags all over our fields? Who is responsible for picking them up? Is it the people who throw them all over? Or is it the responsibility of the government workers to clean the area and pick up the trash?" I suspected their answer would be to point fingers at others and to avoid the blame for their grimy environment. And that is what they did.

However, two days prior, they had told us that about 60% of the church's congregants lived in the area, indicating some may have been involved in the pollution. We noted that the homes in the area did not have pit latrines, including the church building where we were training. Therefore, I appointed the loudest reader in the class to read Deuteronomy 23:12-14 and requested all attendants to listen.

*v12 Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. 13 As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. 14 For the Lord your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.*

You could hear a pin drop in the silence that followed. Suddenly, everybody reached for their Bibles to confirm whether the reading was really there. The participants started looking at each other. "What does this mean to us?" they seemed to ask.

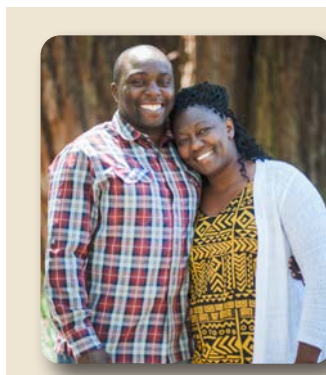
"What does that scripture highlight to you?" I asked. Naturally, the response was muted, but I knew the message had been understood. Living a careless lifestyle regarding the environment is not glorifying to God. God is around us, and we need to care for His creation since it has been entrusted to us.

At the end of the week, during the evaluation and planning process, we all agreed each church leader would construct a pit latrine and start a movement of the same within their congregations. To date, we have seen a one hundredfold response in the construction of pit latrines and the digging of compost and rubbish pits, as well as increased tree planting. Compost is being used to improve their vegetable gardens. Later, we gave training to the community members on how they could extract different scents from plants in their locale and use these scents to make soap rather than buying expensive commercial scents. Community members are now identifying benefits from their environment and being challenged to keep it clean and healthy. They are using the skills they learned to reach out to their neighbors, increasing the evangelism aspect for God's glory.

The Community Health Evangelism tools have been an integral part of our work in transforming communities



both physically and spiritually to serve God better. The creation around us is silent, as the psalmist reminded us, but it also speaks loudly as the earth reflects the magnificence of God. Christians should care for the environment as mandated by God in Genesis 1:26-28.



Tirus & Winnie Githaka are the co-Regional Coordinators of MAI programs in East Africa. They have served with MAI for over 20 years. Tirus and Winnie live in Nairobi, Kenya. They have two sons, Toria and Tugi.





## From War to Wholeness: Local Hope is Rising in South Sudan

by Tirus Githaka  
*Regional Coordinator, East Africa*

Once devastated by war and displacement, communities across South Sudan are beginning to rediscover their strength—not through outside aid, but through the quiet work of local leaders, humble tools, and unwavering faith.

In the first quarter of this year, Medical Ambassadors International (MAI) and its South Sudan team supported over 200 participants across multiple regions in CHE (Community Health Evangelism) vision seminars, trauma healing gatherings, and wholistic training programs. Each step was grounded in a simple, powerful truth: the solutions to poverty and brokenness are already in the community—if people are equipped and empowered to act.

The journey wasn't easy. Due to floods and poor infrastructure, team members had to travel by boat, motorbike, and on foot to reach remote areas. But the commitment was clear: to walk with communities, not talk at them.

### **A Story of Change: A Village Begins to Heal**

In one village near the Nile, 43 local leaders gathered under a tree for a multi-day training. Among them were church pastors, women's group leaders, youth, and even a few chiefs. Their initial mood was cautious—years of

broken promises and brief interventions had left them wary.

But by the second day, something shifted. Instead of prescribing solutions, facilitators invited the group to map their village. Where were the water sources? Who owned livestock? What resources were already present? As they drew together, laughter emerged. So did insight.

One woman stood and said, "We always wait for someone to come fix our problems. But today, I see—we have the people, the strength, and even the materials. We just never believed we could start."

That week, the group organized a sanitation campaign and built eight tippy taps—simple handwashing stations made from sticks, string, and gallon jugs with handles. Mothers reported fewer diarrhea cases within weeks. Community members began clearing trash, digging latrines, and teaching their neighbors what they'd learned.

It was just the beginning.

### **Measurable Progress, Lasting Impact**

During the first quarter of 2025, the South Sudan team

achieved the following:

- 3 full CHE trainings held in remote villages
- 218 people trained, including 89 women and 52 youth
- 8 new CHE committees formed, now actively leading local initiatives
- 26 tippy taps installed in three communities
- 14 small group Bible discovery groups launched following CHE teachings
- 32 people participated in trauma healing workshops, facilitated by trained locals

***But perhaps most encouraging were the outcomes beyond the numbers:***

- Local ownership increased dramatically, with communities initiating projects without waiting for outside help.
- Churches re-engaged as community hubs, moving beyond Sunday services to serve as centers of healing and hope.
- Women's voices gained strength, with female leaders spearheading health and hygiene campaigns and being publicly affirmed for the first time.
- Youth emerged as peer educators and problem-solvers, launching two youth-led clean-up drives and leading songs and lessons in local dialects.

In one region, a young facilitator named James organized a group of teenagers to teach other children about handwashing and basic first aid. They proudly called themselves "Community Life Promoters." No outside funds. Just vision, empowerment, and support.

**Trauma Healing: Addressing the Unseen Wounds**

South Sudan's pain isn't only physical—it's emotional and spiritual. Decades of civil conflict have left deep wounds, especially among the women and the elderly.

This year, trauma-healing gatherings—simple circles of storytelling, prayer, and biblical reflection—have given people space to lament and begin healing. One elderly

woman who had lost two sons shared, "For the first time, I said their names out loud. For the first time, I wept and felt safe doing so."

Healing, they are learning, is more than survival. It's restoration.

**MAI's Role: Walking With, Not Over**

At MAI, we don't believe in rescuing people. We believe in *releasing* people—equipping them with Christ-centered tools to solve their own problems, lead their own transformation, and restore dignity in their own way. Our model is not a short-term project, but a long-term movement.



Christians worshipping in South Sudan

Through CHE and trauma-informed discipleship, we help communities integrate biblical teaching with practical solutions for health, relationships, and livelihood. We invest in local trainers, not just programs. We don't build for people—we build with people.

***And in South Sudan, that approach is bearing fruit. What's Next?***

As communities gain traction, our goals for the coming months include:

- Training 30 additional local facilitators to expand the reach of CHE in hard-to-access counties
- Supporting the multiplication of at least 20 new DBS (Discovery Bible Study) groups
- Launching a new initiative focused on peacebuilding and reconciliation, particularly in areas prone to ethnic conflict
- Developing trauma healing storybook resources in local languages for churches and schools

In a country scarred by conflict, hope is rising—quietly, from within. South Sudanese believers, equipped with faith and tools, are becoming agents of change in their own villages.

At Medical Ambassadors International, we believe every community—no matter how broken—has the seeds of transformation waiting to be watered.

# PROGRAMS for ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

by Nugie Nugroho  
Regional Coordinator, Southeast Asia & South Pacific



When Medical Ambassadors holds a community awareness seminar in our part of the world, it is extremely common for the people to focus on their financial needs. This is a common experience because, in general, people think that having money can fulfill the various needs of life—for both essential and non-essential needs.

During a community visit in my region, I heard an interesting phrase from the locals: “**Money is not everything, but everything needs money.**” This phrase reflects the reality that almost all aspects of life require money. However, there are many things that do not depend on money. For example, in some rural communities, people help each other selflessly through the *gotong royong* [“mutual assistance”] system to rebuild their neighbors’ houses when they are damaged due to landslides.

In reality, many community members struggle to earn a subsistence income. Improving their quality of life seems out of reach for most. They are trying to survive and overcome the economic challenges they face.

We are grateful that holistic community empowerment through Community Health Evangelism (CHE) can help people experience holistic well-being. The trainings that teach economic empowerment not only restore their financial condition but also positively impact

other aspects of their lives. The programs that have been conducted prove that economic empowerment can bring holistic multi-faceted changes for whole communities.

CHE’s approach allows people to experience *financial healing*, helping them get out of economic stress and build a future in God’s design and plan. I will share some examples of programs in the field that are done in that context.

Here is a brief description of these programs:

## 1. Revolving Capital Loan Groups

Revolving capital loans are financing plans which provide funds to individuals or groups to run productive businesses. The outline of this program:

- Funds are rotated and managed collectively.
- There is no interest.
- If there are members who have difficulty repaying the loan on time or have problems, all members are responsible for covering the loan according to their agreement. This brings great mutual accountability and trust.

## 2. Community-Based Small Business Stimulus

Small business stimulus funds are given as a form of appreciation to CHE committees home-visiting



volunteers who have participated in the program for over a year, or under special needs or conditions. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many small businesses were threatened with closure, and income dropped. Through this plan, they received capital assistance and mentoring from a team of trainers that enabled them to survive and thrive. The program funds came from donors who wished to contribute by empowering small businesses in the community.

### 3. Livestock Profit-Sharing Programs

Livestock profit-sharing programs cooperate with farmers, where the donor entrusts the animals to the farmer for raising. After the animal breeds or is sold, the profit is divided according to the agreement of both parties.

The above programs are accompanied by Christian-based character teaching, such as integrity, responsibility, orderliness, accountability, creativity, and financial recording and planning. This mentoring helps them experience changes in their behavior, values, and mindset toward money and business.

### Tangible impacts of this broad focus on financial healing:

#### ❖ Economic and family recovery

A family experiencing economic hardship due to a pandemic often has family conflict over financial matters. Income is reduced while needs continue. Their business can survive and thrive with the stimulus provided and regular mentoring through character development lessons. The impact is not only on the economic aspect but also on family relationships—

*continued on next page*



despair recedes, husband and wife become more harmonious, family members respect each other, and children grow mentally, socially, and spiritually.

❖ **Education savings for children.**

Farmers used livestock profit-sharing programs in a hilly area to save for their children's education. As a result, they were able to send their children to high school, and some even managed to send their children to university through their cattle savings. One of their children graduated from university with good grades and became a young entrepreneur.

❖ **Taro Chips Project and Knowing Jesus use unique terms.**

A Catholic women's group has started a small business using local resources to make taro chips (similar to potato chips). Through this initiative, they learn the Bible with a unique approach to knowing Jesus. In mission circles, this is called the Discovery Bible Study approach. The women call this method "*Sembayang Kertas*" or Bible Study Paper. Because they may not own a Bible, we print passages on paper, and they discover new truths transforming their lives by studying Scripture on paper. Transformation extends to families and communities.

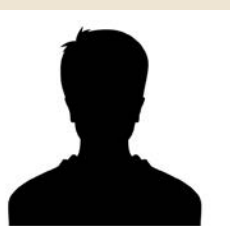
❖ **Small businesswomen's group brings peace.**

Local CHE champions in Surigao, Philippines, initiated small businesses to maximize local resources and were supported by the local government. This association

has brought about peace amidst the threat of tribal or religious conflict.

On the next page, a local trainer shares a story of transformation from an economic project initiated to bring "healing" to a community in the Philippines.

We believe that only Jesus can change people's lives. Every truth that is sown will never come back in vain. John 8:32 says, "*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" The actual, life-changing truth comes from Jesus Christ, and it has been proven through the CHE ministry, carried out in communities.



Nugie Nugroho is the Regional Coordinator for the Southeast Asia & South Pacific region. He has served with MAI for 14 years and is passionate about bringing holistic transformation through mentoring coaching and discipleship. Nugie and his wife, Tari, reside in the Southeast Asia region and enjoy learning new things, organizing and encouraging others.



# From *Trauma* to *Triumph*

by Maria Luz S. Mapait ("Lot Lot")  
Area Team Leader, Surigao, HCDI Philippines

Barangay [the village of] Matangale, a small community located on the Philippine Island of Surigao, is home to 882 residents. Half of its population consists of the Mamanwa indigenous people, while the other half are ethnic Filipinos. Their primary sources of livelihood include coconut harvesting, hunting, gathering wild orchids, and gold panning. Despite the seemingly peaceful environment, the village has long been caught in the conflict between the New People's Army (NPA) rebel group and the Philippine Army. This ongoing struggle between the government and communist rebels continues despite efforts to bring lasting peace.

The residents of Barangay Matangale, particularly the mothers, have long lived in fear and trauma due to the persistent violence. This situation worsened in 2021 when Super Typhoon Odette struck, leaving devastation in its wake. The powerful storm ravaged their crops—coconut trees, banana plantations, rice fields, and fruit trees—and even destroyed many of their homes. The economic trauma that followed was deeply felt across the entire village, as their primary means of survival were wiped out in an instant.

However, amid these hardships, a beacon of hope persisted. In 2010, Community Health Evangelism (CHE) had been introduced to the village, bringing not only health education but also holistic community development. Wilma Avenida, the Barangay Captain at the time, took the initiative to form a women's group, which she named "*Inay Tindog Association*" (Mothers Stand Up Association). The group consisted of thirty women, most of whom had long suffered from poverty, social exclusion and economic dependence.

After the typhoon, with Wilma's leadership and mentorship, the women of Barangay Matangale began to regain their confidence and strength. "After the training team left, we were grateful to Wilma for her guidance. She taught us to be strong, capable, and confident. She was generous not only in times of emergency but also in leading us to Christ and helping us grow in our faith," said Leonila Dumale, one of the CHE members.



Wilma, as the local champion of the village, shared her testimony: "As we continue to put our faith and trust in God alone, many amazing things happen in our lives. We were once shy, insecure, and fearful, but now we have peace, God's direction, and a sense of security."

Through God's provision, the association partnered with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), securing an initial donation of \$872. Through a matching fund scheme (50% UNFPA and 50% local counterpart), the fund grew to \$5,234 within two years. With this financial boost, they established a small food processing business producing turmeric coffee, which has been well-received in the local market.

Recognizing their success and resilience, the local government awarded them an additional \$5,234 grant, enabling them to purchase eight sewing machines as well as fabric. They expanded their livelihood efforts by producing bedsheets, curtains, and pillows.

As they continue to experience God's goodness, the women of Barangay Matangale are not only rebuilding their economic stability but also healing emotionally and spiritually. Slowly but surely, they have embraced the belief that, with God nothing is impossible. Their journey from trauma to triumph stands as a testament to resilience, faith, and the power of community. To God be all the glory!



Physical well-being improves with a healthy diet, physical activity, financial stability, and a moderate environment. However, regardless of the availability of resources, many people in our world face a famine of the soul, evident in depression, addiction, conflict, and discontentment.

True “Shalom” comes when the needs of our soul are met. Jesus observed that there are two options available that promise shalom in the soul. Matthew 6:24— “You can either serve God or mammon (material objects).” There is danger, however, in pursuing shalom through mammon. It promises more than it can deliver. But there is fulfillment in seeking shalom through allegiance to God.

Our spiritual needs are fulfilled as we “seek God first” Matthew 6:33. As a result, “all other needs will be met as required.” Holding material things tightly with a closed fist hampers relationships and leaves emotional scars. Our soul suffocates under the weight of pursuing more.

The good news is that while money can be a taskmaster, it can also be a tutor that enriches the soul. Jesus taught that “where your treasure is...your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). In other words our hearts follow our money. Our soul is under the tutelage of our

resources. We are healthier when we live life with open hands. Our family has tested this and found it to be true. Here is one example of how our souls have been enriched through generosity.

Each November my wife and I distribute a sum of money to each of our 12 grandchildren. We ask them to select a ministry or cause to which they will donate by the end of the year. At Christmas, we share stories of the joy that we have discovered in giving. On our 50th wedding anniversary trip this year, we will be traveling together—enjoying good food, beautiful scenery, and lots of time to build memories. During this trip, each family will be distributing a gift to a ministry they have chosen in the areas we visit.

I have shared more of our journey in my book, **God's Special-Needs Children**. See page 31 for information to get a copy.



Ron Blomberg's career has spanned over 53 years, including 25 years as a pastor and 29 years in the ministry of stewardship development. He and his wife, Cyndi have been married for 50 years and have 4 children with families including 12 grandchildren. They reside in Lebanon, TN, where they retired 5 years ago after a 23-year career at Biola University.

# Further Reading

---

## **God's Special-Needs Children**

**by Ron Blomberg**

Find Hope, Guidance, and Strength in the Midst of Life's Most Challenging Journey. This transformative book offers the comfort and practical wisdom you've been searching for.



Ron Blomberg shares his family's deeply personal story of raising a granddaughter with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) while simultaneously navigating end-of-life care for a mother-in-law with progressive dementia. Perfect for anyone touched by the special needs community.

## **Rich Dad, Poor Dad**

**by Robert T. Kiyosaki**

Kiyosaki narrates his childhood experiences, highlighting the contrasting financial mindsets of his own "poor dad" (biological father) and his "rich dad" (his best friend's father).

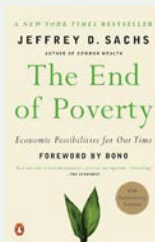


Change your mindset about money and wealth. View money as a tool for creating financial freedom and opportunities, rather than just a means of survival. Although published 25 years ago, *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* still ranks as the #1 personal finance book. While so much in our world is changing at high speed, the lessons and principles about money haven't changed.

## **The End of Poverty**

**by Jeffrey Sachs**

Jeffrey D. Sachs is renowned for his work around the globe advising economies in crisis. Now a classic of its genre, *The End of Poverty* distills more than thirty years of experience to offer a uniquely informed vision of the steps that can transform impoverished countries into prosperous ones.



Marrying vivid storytelling with rigorous analysis, Sachs lays out a clear conceptual map of the world economy. Explaining his own work in Bolivia, Russia, India, China, and Africa, he offers an integrated set of solutions to the interwoven economic, political, environmental, and social problems that challenge the world's poorest countries. *The End of Poverty* remains an indispensable and influential work.



Child at school in Brazilian favela (slum or ghetto).

medical ambassadors  
INTERNATIONAL®  
**HEALING LIVES**

PO BOX 1302 SALIDA, CA 95368-1302

## CULTIVATING GENERATIONAL GENEROSITY



**Psalm 145: 4-5 "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty and meditate on your wonderful works."**

Medical Ambassadors International offers, with no obligation, a resource that will serve you and your family and extend the footprint of your life values for future generations.

MLP (My Legacy Planner) will illustrate how the contour of generosity in your life can continue beyond your lifetime. It will give you options which you and your legal advisors can consider in achieving your goals. You will bless your family as well as your ministry interests by exploring this resource.

<https://medicalambassadors.mylegacyhq.com/>

*"God gives breath to his people and life to all. He takes hold of your hand and will keep you and make you to be a blessing for people" Isaiah 42:5-6.*