

## Ship Report

4 November 2005 | Monrovia, Liberia



### Liberia welcomes back the *Anastasis*

Rain threatened all morning as the *Anastasis* docked at the LMC Pier in Monrovia. A crowd of about 200 people assembled to welcome the Mercy Ship back to Liberia. When light showers started to fall, the spectators looked for cover using newspapers and under umbrellas bearing the design of the Liberian flag.

Crew members watched from the ship's decks as local church choirs and dance troupes performed; a diverse crowd including top government representatives, missionaries, and United Nations (UN) soldiers watched from their seats on the dock. Liberian crew member Morris Howard led members of the Ship's Council down the gangway, his country's flag perched on his shoulder.

The sun lit up the grey sky as the first speaker came to the microphone. Y. Wloti Se, emceeding the program, greeted the crew: "We want to welcome our brothers and sisters from all over the world, in a single and united front on the *M/V Anastasis*, the *Mercy Ship*. Liberians are saying welcome, Liberians are saying thank you, Liberians are saying you are

*heroes — you are heroes for performing marvelous work. Liberians appreciate your effort."*

Ambassador Alan Doss, the UN Special Representative to Liberia, also came to welcome the Mercy Ship. "Your presence is a presence of hope and a message of peace," noted Doss. "What you are doing, and what you did on your last visit truly is in my view an investment in peace . . . I know the services you rendered to people not just here in Monrovia but throughout this country were greatly appreciated and indeed everybody is looking forward to this return visit."

In the upcoming seven-month field service in Liberia, Mercy Ships hopes to provide approximately 1,700 surgeries and 10,000 dental procedures, as well as training for more than 100 local health care workers. In addition to medical services, Mercy Ships also operates community development and education projects. All of the work contributes to the stated goal of the ten-month deployment: assisting the people of Liberia in rebuilding hope in the nation.

"I would just like to say that since your last visit here, much has indeed improved in Liberia," declared Donald Booth, the United States Ambassador to Liberia, addressing the crew of the Mercy Ship. "But some things haven't changed too much — one is that the lights have not come on in Monrovia. But you know, I think that's about to change. The first President Bush, when he spoke of the *Thousand Points of Light*, he was referring to people who go out and do selfless acts to help others. Well, with the Mercy Ship here, I see so many points of light onboard, that I think that Monrovia and all of Liberia will soon be well illuminated."



## Welcome, welcome, welcome in Bomi County

Bomi County is a rural area some 25 miles from the capital Monrovia. Many people fled from their homes in the region's 12 small towns during Liberia's 14-year civil war. Now that peace is in place, communities are returning to rebuild their lives.

During the first visit of the Mercy Ship to Liberia, ship teams worked with local people to provide training in health education, freshwater well and latrine construction, and business skills. When the same crewmembers recently visited the people of Bomi County days after the ship docked for the second time, they shared delighted smiles, hugs and handshakes.

The lasting friendships point to the lasting impact of the ship's services. Boakai Jaleiba, speaking on behalf of the district elders, explained there had been less illness than usual in the past few months. *"You have done something for us that is really a help to us – that is health care."*

*"I want to thank the Mercy Ships family . . . and I ask God to continue with that good work,"* added Assistant District Commissioner Momodu Zogbo. *"We want to give you people the assurance that my people will work along with you people . . . I'm here to say welcome, welcome, welcome."*

In the coming weeks, Mercy Ships will bring hope and healing to Bomi County. And if the broad smiles of the crewmembers are any indication, the blessings will continue to flow both ways too.