

Reflection Report for CMDF (LAMB Hospital, Bangladesh)

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I read a missionary book at LAMB named “With Dr. Bob in Bangladesh” which inspired me to write like him. For more information about LAMB, I highly recommend this book, LAMB’s website and other CMDF reflection reports-but of course, nothing would compare with experiencing LAMB itself directly.

This was my first time flying solo. I worried about flight delays, luggage lost, being asked for tips...but none happened. Turns out I wasn’t solo because God is with me.

So, LAMB is not just a hospital, it’s a compound-or community-which includes the hospital, nursing and midwifery training schools, rehabilitation center, an English children school, church and the homes of staff and long-term missionaries (and the cozy guesthouse I stayed). There’s so much work going on here and everyone plays a role. Most importantly, Jesus is the head here, and all work is to glorify His name and spread His love.

God does not give up anyone including the poor and disabled, neither does LAMB. The hospital has a poor fund to subsidize needy patients. All outpatients are seen on the same day and would not be turned away even if over time. The rehab center trains disabled children with assistive devices and has clubfoot services (more on this later). The compound also provides job opportunities for disabled adults.

In Obstetrics and Gynecology, there’s a mother who had a complicated delivery before, but she still tried to deliver at home-result was stillbirth, very sad. This time she came for her third pregnancy with unsure date. The doctor said there are many cases like this, women do not realize how serious their conditions are. Need more health education for awareness, and this is one of the important work LAMB is doing.

I also followed a pre-eclampsia mother from admission, fetal distress (they don’t have cardiotocography, the midwives are very well trained with doptone monitoring), emergency Caesarean section and post-op monitoring. Thank God that both mother and baby survived! The junior doctors told me they could all take turns to practice Caesarean section or ultrasound with senior supervision. I really like the idea that LAMB is not just delivering patient care, but also actively training local workers to participate in this mission together.

Then I went to Surgery. Can you believe there're only 3 surgeons in the team? Amazing. And they, together with Chaplaincy (more on this later) and other OT staff pray for patients before they start operation. Even more amazing! I'm grateful to assist in a few such as hernia repair and ureteric reimplantation.

Most striking for me though, were two amputations. One was an ex-leprosy case with his hand already dangling from his wrist, the other was diabetic foot with severe ulcer and gangrene. Patients often come late to the point nothing else could be done. It's very nice the team considered preserving as much function as possible, such as below-elbow amputation for the leprosy arm and skin graft the rest. But still, it's a very painful thing to see. The lady with diabetic foot was on spinal anesthesia only so she's awake the whole time when they were sawing off her foot. Wonder how she felt and wonder how things could be different if she got treated earlier...

Clubfoot, common here. "5 tendons to cut today, exciting!" said the junior surgeon. And that's percutaneous Achilles tenotomy, apply plaster then it would heal, clubfoot corrected, and child could walk in the future. The babies were crying the whole time, but indeed it's exciting because it's going to be life-changing for them!

One more interesting thing about Surgery (or the hospital) is that they try to reuse things. For example, they would sterilize the PPE again instead of one-time use. So, much less waste is disposed-very eco-friendly.

I also spent a little time in Medicine and Pediatrics and saw cases that are less common in Hong Kong such as typhoid fever and tinea infections. There's an adult with chickenpox flare up due to inappropriate homeopathy. (Again, awareness!)

All doctors were very friendly! They treated me with tasty local food, and I also enjoyed cultural chats with them. In fact, hospitality is a big thing in Bangladesh, we were often invited to others' houses as guests. Unfortunately, I reflect that I or people in Hong Kong may not be treating foreigners or ethnic minority with the same welcome-something we should learn from them. We also celebrated Bengali New Year and had shopping trips outside the compound, happy experiences of local culture.

In addition to the 4 departments, I visited the Chaplaincy and Palliative Care Team. The Chaplaincy Team have Christianity broadcasts so that all patients could hear

about the Gospel. They also counsel and pray for patients. Three encouraging cases: a Christian patient said she came because there's power of healing through prayers here; after counselling and praying for a Muslim, she cried, I believe Jesus is working in her heart; an ex-Hindu patient was ready for baptism! Of course, these could only happen with team effort, with doctors and other healthcare workers providing care and referring patients to the Chaplaincy Team-and a touch of Jesus Christ!

The Palliative Care Team is relatively new but equally meaningful. Aiming for holistic care, the team visits or phone-calls terminally ill inpatients or those at home, and provides pain control, mental and spiritual support. Both teams face challenges such as manpower and resource limitations, people's unrealistic expectations or closed hearts. Keep praying for their work.

Now more on Christianity faith. In addition to Sunday worships and Easter celebration, I joined the daily morning prayers at church and the weekly prayer meetings and Bible studies with missionaries. Wonderful platforms to pray for LAMB and Bangladesh, support one another, and to share and grow in faith. I learned about missionaries' work including outreach to Muslim and Hindu communities. I also learned about the challenges they faced, including visa and health issues. Nevertheless, even in difficult times, even with unanswered prayers, they looked up to God-such faithful witnesses.

I'm also very grateful to the other Christian short termers. We had fun, as well as sharing testimonies and discussing spiritual issues together. One of the best events was that we organized a cross-cultural worship night inviting both missionaries and some local Christians, singing songs in different languages, praying, scripture reading and sharing food. One of the locals thanked us in the end, saying that this was the first time she joined a worship party like this. Although not perfect, I think this has been a meaningful event to break the boundaries between missionaries and locals and to all come before Jesus Christ.

Before this elective, I've been praying to see how faith and medicine could come together-and God really shows me. May He continue to bless LAMB. The experience inspired me to think about working in a mission hospital or better living out my faith in my career. Of course, it's not going to be easy, but I pray for God to lead my way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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