

Following are two excerpts from Dr. Geelhoed's Journals from his time in Nigeria, January 2014, when Zach and Paul DePaulis were with him as our designated short term mission persons. We are still to hear from Zach and Paul, but perhaps what you read below will offer you greater understanding.

EXCERPT 1: Dr. Geelhoed is recording what he said to all in one evening's tutorial.

"...If each goes home saying, : "I learned how to suture," you could do that at home on pigskin; if you say "I learned to recognize malaria," you might have done that more cheaply on a video; if you say you learned how to examine patients, you could have done that with far less risk on pre-programmed volunteers at home; if you came for adventure travel, I have already led you into the Igwu River, and you might try a more professional adventure travel agent. Even if you came to treat patients in an extension of authority you might never be allowed to extend this far again, I would not risk my exposure to such liability for so little gain. If you want bragging rights on what amazing operations you have done and what you were allowed to do under my immediate supervision, no one will believe you.

If you came here to pick up information and turn it into knowledge, if you are hoping that experience might turn knowledge into wisdom; if you are willing to continue learning to improve on that which you have already thought you knew, but now realize was woefully incomplete, and if you hope that this experience might make you a more insightful and caring human participant in the burdens, potentials and glories of other human beings in hope of expanding understanding of yourself and the {so called} "others" with whom you share this planet and experience the triumph and tragedies of the human condition, then I am happy to have given as much as I can to help you in this as I am myself working my way toward that higher level of understanding with you and with them. Never quit—you still don't know enough or appreciate it fully.

What do you need to know to practice medicine, particularly in this vastly expanded consciousness of the human condition? Always more than you do.

EXCERPT 2: Dr. Geelhoed's private thoughts on the participants

I am sure that they have already realized that they should take off their shoes during the course of this experience since the ground upon which they stand is "holy." They have already realized that this is beyond an entry-level medical experience or even surgical technique class, and larger than an anthropologic contextualization, but is really a deeply spiritual experience. The patients realize this as they had reflected in their response to the "warm-up" outside the clinic in Pastor Peter's registering them in a service of prayer and singing. Now, even the more skeptical ones among them realize that is a profoundly moving spiritual experience for the care-givers as well. Each acknowledge that this "+outward looking retreat to serve in the developing world' is a very meaningful exploration of self. This is the watershed event around which they will describe a before and after, what they would be doing with the rest of their lives and what and how they learn from others, including each other and more specifically, the patients treated who are our instructors even if they do not share the language. This is transformation.