

# On Land and Sea

Claudia Juarez with Mercy Ships

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*Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Ps. 37:4*

How do you determine what God's will is for your life? It would be wonderful if He sent an angel to speak to us, wouldn't it? Most of us don't get such a direct communication, though, do we?

When I was considering going to Saudi Arabia a few years ago the verse above became one of my favorites, a sort of "theme" verse for my life. And I don't think it means that I'll get whatever I want, but rather that when I focus on God He will place desires in my heart which are consistent with His will. And so, for me, God's call presents itself as a desire which persists over time and through prayer and is confirmed by the open doors of opportunity.

And now He has called me to serve Him through Mercy Ships!

## *What is Mercy Ships?*



This statement from the Mercy Ships website ([www.mercyships.org](http://www.mercyships.org)) summarizes the mission: "Mercy Ships is a global charity that has operated hospital ships in developing nations since 1978. Mercy Ships brings hope and healing to the forgotten poor by mobilizing people and resources worldwide, and serving all people without regard for race, gender, or religion. Our Crew of both professional medical and

non-medical volunteers have chosen a very powerful way to share their blessings. Mercy Ships has chosen to follow the 2,000 year-old model of Jesus: the blind see, the lame walk, the mute speak, and the Good News (the nature and character of a loving God) is proclaimed and demonstrated among the poor."

The hospital ship currently being operated by Mercy Ships is the *Africa Mercy*. Each year she is docked for approximately 10 months in a country of West Africa, serving the medical needs of that country. The countries being served are among the poorest in the world, and for many in those countries there is little healthcare available, and even if available the cost is often out of the reach of those who need it.

Mercy Ships visits a country at the invitation of that country's government and coordinates with the country's healthcare establishment, the local churches, and other Christian ministries in the area.

On board the *Africa Mercy* there are 6 operating rooms, intensive care and ward space for 78 patients, and living space for over 300 crew members (including 30-40 children) who come from 30 or more countries.

Surgeries, including those for cleft lip & palate, cataracts, childbirth injuries, and many more are performed in *Africa Mercy's* operating theaters. In addition, services are being offered on shore, including dental clinics, community health educa-

tion, clean water and sanitation projects, and training national physicians, nurses, and other healthcare workers.

### ***What will I be doing?***

I am a Medical Laboratory Technologist, and so I will be working in the lab on the *Africa Mercy*. It will be exciting to renew my knowledge in laboratory specialties that I haven't worked in for many years. It will also be interesting to see how my specialty, Blood Banking, is done onboard the ship, since the crew serves as the blood source for any needed transfusions.

When not performing my duties in the laboratory, I will have opportunities to visit with patients in the wards and help out with the onshore projects.

### ***When will I be going?***

In September I had the opportunity to attend the Introduction to Mercy Ships course at the Mercy Ships International Operations Center in east Texas. During this week I learned a lot about the organization and met many of the leaders. We also set up my schedule — so here's the plan!

- **June-July 2010** - Spend 2 months on board the *Africa Mercy* which at that time will be serving in Lome, Togo. This will not only fill a need on the ship during that time, but also allow me to get to know my duties and the ins and outs of shipboard life so that I'll be better prepared for my long-term service.
- **January 2011** - Begin long-term ser-

vice by attending the Gateway training course at the International Operations Center, followed by a training field service, then joining the *Africa Mercy* in West Africa. Long-term means a minimum commitment of two years.

### ***What kind of support will I need?***

In another session during the Introduction to Mercy Ships program, we worked on our personal budgets. My projected budget for my long-term service is \$2450/month. The cost of the 2 month service in June and July will be approximately \$4500, of which almost 2/3 is the cost of airfare.

All Mercy Ships volunteers, referred to as "crew," are responsible for raising their own needed support. As a long-term crew member, my supporters will be able to make tax-deductible contributions through Mercy Ships beginning in January next year. I will have an ID number assigned to me in January for use in processing donations, so I'll pass that along when I receive it.

But, support for a missionary is not limited to finances. Really, even more important are the prayer support and encouragement of the family of God! So, I ask that you keep me in your prayers as I prepare for this time of service.

***Help me keep in contact with you!*** Please return the enclosed form so that I can make sure my contact list is up to date. Especially, include your email address, since much of my future communication will be by that mode.

### **Contact Information:**

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