

# Christian Ophthalmology Society Newsletter



The Christian Ophthalmology Society was founded in 1977 as an interdenominational group of eye physicians and surgeons who confess that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord.

www.cosm.org

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## 33rd Annual COS Meeting at Hilton Head, S.C.

The 33rd annual COS meeting was held July 29–August 2, 2009 at the Crown Plaza Beach Resort in beautiful Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

The lectures were outstanding and included topics in pediatric cataract surgery by Dr. Ed Wilson from the Storm Eye Institute in Charleston, SC, guidelines from WHO on cataract outcome monitoring by Dr. Stan Pletcher, and management of keratoconus including corneal collagen crosslinking by Dr. Brad Bowman. Dr. Brad Farris gave a very entertaining and informative discussion of optical “illusions and allusions”, and William Feuer from Bascom Palmer talked on “basic biostatistics”.

Medical ethics presentations included “The Physician as Servant” by Dr. Tricia



Beach at Hilton Head

McCoy and “The Ethics of Health Care Reform” by Dr. Jim Rowsey.

In lieu of a wet lab this year, a 3D demonstration of

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## Please Join Us in San Francisco at the AAO

Bring a friend or colleague. No advance registration necessary.

We will be meeting on Monday, Oct. 26 for breakfast

Time: 6:30 A.M. – 8:00 A.M.

Place: Westin on Market Street

Room: Olympic Room, 2nd Floor

Speaker: Dr. Robert Rosa on “Adult Stem Cells- A gift from the Great Physician”

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## In Memory



The COS will miss our Brother in Christ, Dr. David Sloan, who died in an automobile accident May 16, 2009, in Wilkes County, GA. .

David was an avid reader of anything, but was partial to the works of C.S. Lewis, Watchman Nee, Elisabeth Elliott, Charles Spurgeon and Corrie ten Boom. He had a passion for music and particularly enjoyed playing the organ, as he was the substitute organist at Mt. Hermon Baptist Church. He enjoyed playing golf with close friends and his sons, and loved working on his farm in Providence, N.C.

We keep Cathy, his wife of almost 32 years, and his three children in our prayers.



## Letter from the President

by Sterling Cannon, M.D.

Fall 2009

Dear Friends,

It was wonderful to see many old friends at this year's meeting in Hilton Head, as well as make many new friends. I would like to thank the Tsai family and all who contributed to the meeting for all of the hard work that goes into making the time together so special. I would also like to thank Mike Siatkowski, for being our fearless leader for 9 years, and for creating this environment, which every year, never fails to realign my priorities, and refresh my world-view to be one centered on serving, rather than being served. In short, this organization constantly reminds me why I became an ophthalmologist in the first place.

This lesson has been driven even deeper into my soul by the witness of the house staff and medical students. It has been a great privilege to coordinate the grant program, as I have been able to get to know individuals who God has raised

up to serve and to spread the Good News of salvation through Christ. Individuals who come to the meeting for the first time, seeking guidance and inspiration, and get it! Just as I did at my first meeting 8 years ago.

But our roles eventually change. I have been blessed with the opportunity to become the president of the COS, and while I am certainly inadequate in my own strength and wisdom, God's power is made perfect in our weakness. If we are not careful, however, as I am often not, this prompts an identity crisis, because the things we make our identity, we eventually deify.

**Philippians 3:7-8** But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

Reflecting on Paul's "list of priorities" always makes me hesitate, because I am all too aware of the "things" I fail to consider loss; things that I repeatedly put in

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*"I have been blessed with the opportunity to become the president of the COS, and while I am certainly inadequate in my own strength and wisdom, God's power is made perfect in our weakness"*

## Missions in Kenya

### **New Eye clinic now a reality at Kenya orphanage**

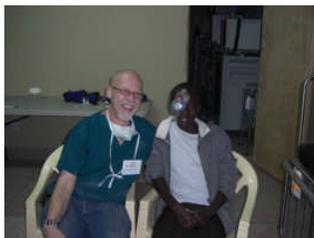
Web Site: [www.kenyarelieff.org](http://www.kenyarelieff.org)

A hungry 3-year-old girl was left at the gate of the Marindi Children's Home of Grace Orphanage, which has become a rare bright spot in one of the world's poorest places. Even though the 103-bed orphanage was full, Steve James, founder of the orphanage took the little girl in. Saving kids from starvation, disease and other sad endings is why the Cullman CRNA opened the orphanage - and why he spends every waking moment thinking of ways to make it bigger, better, and more meaningful. It would be a sin for me to turn away," says James. "I'd like America to realize the reason that we have so much is to give back."

The 53-year-old cancer survivor flung open the doors to the orphanage on Easter weekend 2003 as a memorial to his late daughter, Brittney. Ever since, people have been jumping on board to help: eye doctors; dentists; missionaries; surgeons.

James, who met many of his supporters while working as a nurse anesthetist in Huntsville, AL, has already scheduled ten trips to Kenya next year because so many people want to volunteer. And there's plenty to be done, including making sure a new medical clinic beside the orphanage is ready for patients.

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*Orphanage founder  
Steve James with post-op  
patient*

## Letter from the President

*(Continued from page 2)*

front of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And not just “things”, but status, reputation, and hobbies as well. Things, not inherently evil, but certainly made so by the place I give them in my life, by the God they displace. Our hunger for identity is so strong sometimes that whatever we identify with, becomes our god. The crisis comes when the god we created judges us. Our profession is not a merciful god. Our status in our community is not a merciful god.



*Dr. Cannon & Family*

Joy comes through the realization that our true identity is in Christ. We have been bought and paid for! We are no longer ours, but are instead on a journey of obedience. The journey is decorated with great demonstrations of God’s love, mercy, and power, as well as opportunities to be a part of God’s work on Earth. I see this every day in the eyes of my two boys. I see it every year in the lives of high school students at Young Life. I also get to see it in the hearts of the COS members that have made this such a great organization.

I am extremely grateful to all of you for welcoming me and my family, and I am excited to see what God will do in the COS in the future. I am humbled by the wisdom and strength of the COS board members, and of the people who sacrifice every year to share with us their time, and experiences in Christ.

Next year’s meeting is going to be a great one, with a strong emphasis on mission technology thanks to our all-star missions team; Stan Pletcher, Brad Farris, Van Joffrion, and Nick Patel. I also urge you to make it to the AAO breakfast. Robert Rosa will be speaking on cutting edge research with adult stem cells. Be at the Westin Market Street, Olympic Room 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Monday October 26, and bring a friend!

Heather and I wish you a blessed Christmas season, and look forward to seeing you all again at next year’s meeting in Cincinnati, OH.

Love in Christ,  
Sterling Cannon

## Spouses Program for the Annual Meeting

*Jan Paschall opened up the meeting with a warm greeting. After introductions, she had long standing members of COS share how this meeting and organization had influenced their lives. It was a beautiful time of sharing memories and building new ones.*

*A couple from Dublin, GA, Bill and Susan Otten, led our program. The Ottens, founders of Lifeline International, shared about times of forgiveness.*



*Prayer group at the Spouse program*

*Using scripture, experience, and prayer every heart was touched. They helped us understand how forgiveness can free us to be who God desires. A highlight of their sessions was the way we were shown to use God’s word for our situations. The power of the actual Word spoken into our individual needs was life changing. With a new strength in our lives, we all went away knowing a new measure of forgiveness for ourselves and others.*



*Jan Paschall, organized the spouses program*

## Missions in Kenya

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The 6,000-square-foot clinic in Marindi is far nicer than the town's three existing hospitals. It will be stocked with more than \$500,000 worth of equipment donated by local hospitals and Mission Outreach.

James envisions the clinic repairing hernias, club feet and other health problems that typically go untreated in Kenya, contributing to the country's low life expectancy - 52 years for a man, 55 years for a woman. "I think this will be the most modern medical center within 150 miles," said James. "I can see us by 2010 being able to treat children with cancers and lymphomas."

The clinic plans to charge 90 cents per visit, equivalent to about a day's pay in western Kenya. Dr. Heather Estopinal, a Huntsville ophthalmologist, traveled to Africa with James this summer to help restore eyesight to villagers with severe cataracts. Most had never seen an eye doctor, she said. "It's almost like you're the answer to their prayers," Dr. Estopinal said. "It's a wonderful mission." Like James, Dr. Estopinal thinks big when it comes to the clinic: She wants to send American eye specialists to Kenya every three months to fix cataracts and other vision problems before they cause blindness.

Because of the shaky economy, James said he expects 2009 to be a lean year for his nonprofit agency, KenyaRelief.org. Each child at the orphanage has an American sponsor who pays \$75 a month to cover their food, shelter, schooling and medical care. Dr. Estopinal and her husband, anesthesiologist Dr. Temple Estopinal, sponsor a 13-year-old boy named George who was living on the streets. "These children are so grateful for the opportunity to have clothing, three meals a day and a safe place to stay," she said. "They're regarded as the luckiest kids in the region."



From humble beginnings in a refurbished church, the orphanage has blossomed into a 63-acre compound with dormitories, homes for visiting relief workers, the clinic and a dining hall that James calls "the prettiest building in town."

James employs 30 townspeople and two American missionaries from Rome, Ga., who manage the orphanage in his absence. More orphanage-related projects are on the horizon: a veterinary hospital to care for the farm animals that rural Kenyans depend on for survival; and a vocational school to prepare teenagers for life after the orphanage. Twenty kids will graduate from the home next year, but there are 80,000 more homeless youngsters in the region who need

help.

"I'm proud of what we've done so far," James said. "God's amazing, and I think you become part of that amazement when you give yourself to His plan. To reach the fatherless is the very thing he would be doing if he was here." Kenyarelieff is recruiting Ophthalmologist, Optometrists and Nurses for its 2010 Cataract Camps. Contact Steve James at 1-256-507-0217 or sjames@kenyarelieff.org if you are interested in joining the Cataract Surgery Camps in 2010.

## COS Annual Meeting

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manual small incision cataract extraction techniques was arranged by Dr. Stan Pletcher and Dr. Glenn Strauss, Director of Mercy Ships. There were many other excellent lectures that space does not allow to mention.



*3D Demo of MSICS*

As usual, the children all seemed to have a great time with crafts, learning, and games organized by Joy Crumpton. It is a meeting children put on their "must do" list for annual family activities.



*Children activities*



**"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."  
John 3:17**