



Remarkable Gift of Sight Continues Young Man's Transformation

The October 2000 issue of the Visionary featured the life transforming surgery of a young man from Papua, New Guinea. Christian Dominic's remarkable journey from a sightless world in a remote village on the Karawari River to Indianapolis, where he received a cornea transplant, was the result of extreme generosity from many wonderful people.

In a recent update, Nancy Sullivan, his adoptive mother, benefactor, and New York University-trained anthropologist, shared some of Christian's remarkable accomplishments with us. She particularly wanted to thank Dr. Francis Price, his staff, and the many donors who made Christian's surgery possible. Christian is doing extremely well and making his life's work to aid and help educate the aborigine people of the bushlands.

Chris is doing great. He lives with me in the town of Mandang, on the north coast of Papua New Guinea, with his wife Sandra and baby Nancy, where I run a small anthropology consulting company. He's been able to help a lot this year on some long-term fieldwork projects for conservation NGOs (non-government organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and World Wildlife) in the bush here. He uses a recorder and works like any experienced ethnographer, collecting old clan stories about kinship, gardening, hunting, sorcery, fishing and other such information, which other work-

ers then transcribe. His life has absolutely been reinvented since the surgery.

I think back upon the time Chris came to live with me in the highlands town of Goroka, so many years ago. I had informally adopted him when I was working in the Sepik. Freezing cold and totally blind, he stepped out of the twin engine plane and said, in



Chris and Baby Nancy

Pidgin, "Mums, please take my hand. I've never been in a town before. He was extremely anemic, malarial, and shy. After visiting our local doctor and being told that Chris's chances of receiving a cornea transplant were virtually nil we went right on the Internet and canvassed every charity we could find. The very first positive response we had was from the Cornea Research Founda-

tion of America and we both hollered. I was thrilled to have my new child realize the generosity of an institution in the US. After that, everything snowballed: hundreds of friends chipped in \$5 and \$10, the airlines donated our fares, and we were on our way. Once in Indianapolis and after the surgery was completed we were told simply, "You owe us nothing. We have a Foundation now and many benefactors have contributed."

In the last four years, Chris has been a part of three National Geographic TV productions and helped produce two book-length ethnographies....I am, of course, very proud of him. I hope you are, too. (As a note: As funds allow, the Cornea Research Foundation of America, would like to help individuals in need of financial assistance. *Donations towards this endeavor can be made to CRFA, 9002 N. Meridian Street; Suite 212; Indianapolis, IN 46260. It is through your generosity that we can help others receive the gift of sight.*)

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"ask THE doctor"

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**Two New Fellow Doctors Will Soon
Join the Staffs of CRFA and PVG**

In 2004 two doctors will be welcomed at the Cornea Research Foundation and Price Vision Group to begin a corneal fellowship program.

Dr. Yoon Mo Myung, a medical graduate from Yale with an ophthalmology residency from Brown University, began his term on July 6th. Dr. Myung comes from



Dr. Myung

a family of physicians including an older brother who is a Gastroenterologist working in Columbus, Ohio and an older sister who is an Ob/Gyn working in Sao Paulo Brazil. His hobbies are playing tennis, soccer and fishing and he loves to travel. His main goal during his fellowship is to get specialized training in diseases of the cornea and refractive surgery by seeing patients in clinic and participating in surgery and research.

Dr. Abdulfatah Ali, who has been employed in private practice since 2001, is a medical graduate from the Medical College of Wisconsin, with an

ophthalmology residency from the University of Minnesota. He and his wife are expecting their second child. He will begin in September.



Dr. Ali

This fellowship opportunity is unique, combining complicated cornea transplantation, anterior segment cases and refractive surgery utilizing the most recent techniques. In addition, each fellow will have an opportunity to be a part of a variety of research studies related to corneal transplantation

Upon completion of the program, the fellow should be a well-rounded, confident and resourceful ophthalmologist who is able to manage the most challenging anterior segment cases. We believe that no other program offers the opportunities and expertise that can be gained in this fellowship. We welcome both doctors and look forward to what their combined experiences can bring to our organizations.

**New Study For 2004 May Help Protect
Against Macular Degeneration**

The Cornea Research Foundation is evaluating a new intraocular lens that may help protect cataract surgery patients against macular degeneration. If you are considering cataract surgery, you may be eligible to participate in this clinical research study to evaluate an investigational UV-absorbing and blue-light filtering intraocular lens. The Cornea Research Foundation, in

collaboration with Price Vision Group, is one of 10 sites participating in this nationwide study.

Eligible subjects must be at least 21 years of age and have a cataract in at least one eye, with no history of other significant diseases of the eye.

To learn more about this study, please call (317) 814-2990.





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Your contributions were what made it so successful.

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Visiting Surgeons From Around the Country Learn Revolutionary Corneal Transplant Technique

For the last year and a half the Cornea Research Foundation and Dr. Francis Price have been hosting training courses on a new surgical technique for corneal transplantation. Doctors from some of the most prominent eye centers around the country have come to Indianapolis to take part in this two-day advanced training course which includes live surgery and wetlab.

This new surgical technique offers more rapid visual recovery and elimination of sutures for corneal transplant patients. It is especially beneficial for those with Fuchs' Corneal Dystrophy and cloudy corneas after cataract surgery. This new surgery is called by a variety of names including Posterior Lamellar Grafts (PLK) or Deep Lamellar Endothelial Keraotoplasty (DLEK). Dr. Price has performed more of these than any other surgeon in the US, and more recently has used a modified technique since the first of the year which is allowing more significant visual recovery. Dr. Price feels this technique provides a dramatic improvement for patients over past techniques and will become the preferred surgical technique for at least a third of all corneal transplants. He was recently asked to speak on this at the Annual Meeting of the Eye Bank Associations of America in Tucson, Arizona.

The next Advanced Cornea Course will be offered September 28-29, 2004. For anyone interested, please contact Sherry Levy at 317-814-2823. Class size is limited.

CRFA Open House

Please Join Us
Sunday, September 12th
1:00 pm-3:00 pm

Learn About the Latest Advances in
Cornea Transplant Techniques
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*

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“ask THE doctor”

Q. My 12 yr. old son has been diagnosed with the early stages of Terrien’s Marginal Degeneration. Will this cause him pain as time goes on? Will it require surgery? What options do we have to treat it?

A. Terrien’s is a very interesting disease. Currently there is no clear understanding of what causes it. I have seen a number of patients with it, and the disease can either progress rapidly or stay unchanged for years. I have done work with the National Eye Institute on trying to determine the cause of this condition, and we have published the results of some of my treatments. (Lopez, *et al*; *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 1991. Jul;109(7):988-92). Some people do get pain with Terrien’s, and if they do, usually that is a sign that the condition is progressing. In cases where the eye is very inflamed, the vision may deteriorate to the extent that the patient can no longer function visually. If the area of ulceration actually perforates (a hole in the eye), then surgery is needed. Usually a complicated form of corneal transplantation is needed in cases requiring surgery. The good news is that when this surgery is done, I have had very excellent results with it.



Q. What is degenerative cornea erosion? How can it be prevented?

A. Recurrent corneal erosion typically occurs when an eye has been scratched in the past. The eyelid sticks to the corneal surface while sleeping and can pull off some cells when the eye is opened. It can be very painful when this happens. If erosions are frequent, there is an in-office procedure I do for patients which removes the damaged cells and lets new healthy cells heal in. This prevents future erosion in over 90% of the patients. An evaluation should be done to assess your situation.