

Get well Dr. Craig Spencer. By Yilma Bekele

What kind of place would the world be without people like Dr. Craig Spencer? Dr. Spencer is the medical doctor that is currently in New York Hospital with symptoms of the Ebola virus. Before his privacy was breached and his name associated with the dreaded virus Dr. Spencer was an International Emergency Medical (IEM) fellow at Columbia University in New York.

According to his Profile in Emergency Physicians International, Dr. Spencer is a tireless advocate of introducing modern medical practices in Africa and is dedicated to helping local health providers get knowledge so they can help their people better. In May he was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi helping Doctors and sharing his knowledge. Dr. Spencer is quoted to have said 'sometimes even aspirin just weren't available'

A University of Columbia educated medical doctor is someone we would refer to as a high achiever. It is a result of dedication, drive and plenty of sweat. It opens the door for whatever the individual feels is important in his/her life. Dr. Spencer choose to help those that are less fortunate and make his mark in life in a quiet way.



That is the reason he travelled to Guinea as part of Doctors without Borders team to treat Ebola patients and was back in New York October 17. Today our friend is in isolation getting the best treatment possible to overcome this virus that is killing Africans in the thousands. There is no question he would come out of this a better and stronger person for the prayer of all Africans is with this angel of a human being that showed up when we needed him most.

As an Ethiopian I feel kinship with the good doctor. I am more energized when I see such a human being that cares for those that are unable to help themselves due to different circumstances we all face in life. I envy his dedication and I promise myself to double my efforts to help the less fortunate.

My people face the same enemy like the Ebola virus. I am not trying to belittle the human catastrophe that is being faced by our African brothers and sisters. There is a saying in my country and it goes for a child whose mother has died or went to the market would cry the same, since the immediate absence is what matters. Our brethren in West Africa are dying in droves and the family is being decimated.

In our case for the last twenty years we have been dying a slow death in so many ways. Some are faced with lack of basic nutrition to sustain life and it is called famine. A lot are faced with the absence of hope and the constant dread of not knowing what tomorrow would bring. That results in untold mental anguish. Families fret because their children are left to roam the streets for lack of anything worthwhile to do. The little girls are forced to sell their body using

the cover of darkness. The boys are left to poison their mind and body with drugs to numb the spirit caused by boredom and lack of drive.

Families are forced to sell their valuable cattle, personal belongings to send their children to the Middle East hoping they will be able to make something for themselves. A very minuscule achieve that goal while the vast majority suffer in silence unable to return due to shame and but forced to stay by unscrupulous Arab slave owners.

Yes it is true Ebola is fast and merciless. Watching the human toll in West Africa is a lesson in how fragile the human existence is. The whole world is in shock but a few dedicated individuals like Dr. Spencer rush to where danger awaits and offer their services. There was no financial gain, no fame and no recognition awaiting but he did what he thought has to be done because it was in his power to do.

The starvation for freedom and human dignity is an important cause in our country that should be put on an emergency footing. Physical death is not the only form of dying. Denying a human being to experience life to its fullest, muzzling his freedom not to dream and achieve and condemning his family to live a wretched life is a form administering a slow death. We need human beings like Dr. Spencer that feel the pain of others and dedicate themselves to offer relief.

We Africans wish Dr. Craig Spencer a fast recovery and a happy reunion with the ones he love.

<http://www.epijournal.com/articles/133/in-rwanda-craig-spencers-data-collection-project-fuels-innovation-at-the-point-of-care>