Sharing the love of Christ and healing the sick: Dr. Karim

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Dr. Karim Hagbe is a consultation doctor at CURE Niger. He sees dozens of patients every day, but one patient's story remains at the forefront of his mind. "I remember a patient that had a tumor removed years ago, but it had grown back – there was nothing we could do for him," recalls Dr. Karim. "He was so sad, and I just felt like it was an opportunity to tell him that there's a source that can offer you hope that's real and won't run out – it's Jesus." The man seemed touched, and before leaving Karim's office, he accepted Christ. "When I went home that night," remembers Dr. Karim, "I felt like 'wow, my work that day, it really mattered.'"

Dr. Karim's primary job at CURE Niger is diagnosing the physical ailments of new patients while assessing the physical progress of post-surgery cases, but his heart is focused on the greater mission – to share the love of Jesus. "**When I came to CURE Niger, and I saw our spiritual team openly praying for patients, even in this majority Muslim country,**" he says. "**That's when I thought – wow, this is the real thing.**"

Dr. Karim connecting with a patient during a check-up.

Dr. Karim never planned to work in Niger, though. His father worked for the World Food Program, and he grew up hopping from one African country to another. By the time he was 18, he'd lived in 12 countries, mostly without his mother. His parents divorced when he was young, and Dr. Karim remembers one time, as a child, going for a holiday with his mother to her village – throughout their time there, she grew very sick, so much so that she tried to send Karim away so he wouldn't witness her death. "That really was a decisive moment in my faith," he said. "I remember thinking 'my mom's gonna die,' and so I asked her if I could pray for her. I prayed

in the name of Jesus, and she was healed! The people from her village couldn't believe that when all their traditional methods didn't work, a young child's prayer did. Karim's relatives had been trying to get him to embrace Islam. "After that experience, when they came to me again with their prayer mats, I said 'enough – **I know who really heals – I've seen it.**'" Still, witnessing his mom's suffering made him want to find a way to help. "That's why I decided to become a doctor," he says.

Unfortunately, right as Karim was graduating from medical school, his father fell gravely ill. "I remember my ceremony," he says, "No one came." Even though Dr. Karim's father was a Muslim, he'd always been an open man, and Karim had been his closest son. He'd had plans to help Karim pursue his studies and build a clinic. When he died soon after Karim's graduation, everything fell apart. "My family started fighting over the inheritance, and all my career plans went out the door," he recalls. "No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't gather my family back together."

Karim was at an impasse, and it caused him to cry out urgently to God. "That was a dark time," he remembers. But that's also the time when he found out about CURE Niger. With his old plans lost, he was open to a new path. It's been several years since that day, and now, he's managing the outpatient department at CURE Niger. Despite the demands of his job, his focus remains fixed on sharing the love of Jesus. "I feel, almost every day, that I did something of eternal worth," he says. **"It's about more than healing the sick and helping the poor. When I get to share the love of Christ with patients, I just go home feeling like my heavenly father is proud of me."**