



BALAMA DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Summer/Fall 2017

Liberian Ministry Update

Countering Hopelessness in Rural Liberia



From Ashes to Hope: Building a Sustainable Liberia

As we move into our 12th year of ministry, we are overwhelmed at how God has blessed, used and positioned Balama Development Alliance (BDA) and our partners.

Looking back to the early beginnings of BDA, we remember the opening of Balama School with 25 children, no trained teachers, a few micro loans, an afternoon good news club for children, and the Jesus Film shown on a sheet using a rented generator.



Fast forward to 2017 and we see two schools with about 800 students. Two of the guys from that humble start at Balama School have graduated from college and now are helping to start and run the cocoa processing business BDA has formed. This business will eventually employ 10-12 workers and help more than 100 small farmers make more money from their cocoa farms.



Our first female college graduate is working with the cocoa business and helping five widows of the Liberian civil war launch a restaurant that will help young vulnerable women stay out of the sex trade by teaching them to cook and serve in the hospitality industry. The Coal Pot Queens, as they are called, were taught how to cook for Americans, Europeans, and Africans by BDA back in 2007.



We now visit many small group Bible studies that use solar audio players provided through BDA to hear God's word in their heart language. Many of these villagers are coming into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as they journey through the New Testament with their clan.

Our association with Bong County Technical College and the Gbarnga community has given us the opportunity to engage hundreds of high school and college students. They come to our student ministry center

to learn basic computer skills that will help them later to get jobs. Many stay afterwards and participate in small group Bible studies.

As we lean into all the opportunities God is providing for BDA, we see a sustainable Liberia emerging from the ashes of the long civil war and the ravages of the Ebola plague. We are encouraged by the impact that discipleship, education, and economic empowerment are having on the communities where we work.

The lessons we have learned over the last 11 years point to the need to continue to encourage, equip, empower, and evangelize these and other communities so the grace and peace of Jesus Christ will drive out the darkness that has had a hold on Liberia.

Jesus tells us in the tenth chapter of John that He came so we (all of us) might have abundant lives. God is helping us see that by helping to develop sustainable communities, He can lead His people in Liberia to thrive.



In Him,
Bill Ginn, Board Chair

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"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."
James 1:27 (NIV)

Coming Soon - Coal Pot Queens Restaurant/B&B



The Coal Pot Queens prepare a delicious meal for the mission team and will soon be able to do so in the new restaurant compound, currently under construction!



Young women, who have recently been in exploitive or vulnerable situations, will be given a fresh start in life as the Coal Pot Queens (Sarah, Esther, Evelyn pictured above) train them to cook, along with other job and life skills.



The restaurant compound also has buildings to host workshops, lodging for visitors, and meeting/training spaces for the community and the young women working with the Coal Pot Queens.



Landscaping begins to take shape in the courtyard, near the gazebo. Multiple buildings will house the restaurant, bed and breakfast, and meeting rooms.



The courtyard of the compound has a large area, in front of the gazebo, to gather, host events, and allow visitors to enjoy the beautiful outdoor space.



Sarah and Evelyn stand in the new gazebo area that will be available to host events, workshops, and large groups in the covered outdoor space.



One of the mission teams tours the inside of the restaurant building with Jessie and the Coal Pot Queens.



The ladies tour the kitchen area where the Coal Pot Queens hope to exchange their outdoor cooking fire for an indoor stove. The pass-through window leads into the restaurant for food service.

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me."
Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)*

My Reflections on a Mission Trip *by Linda Flagler*



This being my third trip to Liberia, I had a lot of expectations about what we could accomplish in the tiny village of Gbansue. With a team

of 11 people, each qualified in different areas, I felt we were prepared to do God's work in a mighty way. I was not disappointed!



Our nurses worked alongside the newly appointed nurse and midwife to check blood pressure, do malaria testing, examine babies and expectant mothers for prenatal health, prepare for polio vaccinations, and learn from the native Liberians about their challenges with malaria, poor nutritional health, and the toll of hard physical labor on their bodies.



Our pastor was able to do discipleship training with a small group of young men and women as well as teach them basic computer skills. Our missionaries, between trips to Jordan, taught us all the principles of Discovery Bible

Study and conducted several group studies with people in the village, using the new Torch audio players which read the Gospel passages in Kpelle, the native language in Gbansue.



Our photographers captured the innocence of the children, the joyous spirit of the ladies, and the difficult circumstances under which these precious people survive.



Our construction expert selected some of the young men who were skilled at carpentry and enlisted them in the building of a new cocoa drying facility that will allow a new business to begin in Bong County.



Lastly, three teachers on our team worked alongside the five teachers of the elementary school in the village to model good teaching strategies, introduced them to the use of the new Hannah Library, and helped them utilize the teaching materials and curriculum guides provided by the Ministry

of Education. We were able to distribute new NIV Bibles, eagerly sought by the villagers, as well as reading glasses. Some of our team taught the skill of making glasses using equipment developed by Glasses for Missions.



As is always the case, we all were blessed in far greater measure than what we brought to the people there. Their friendly and generous spirit, in spite of such poverty, poor education, and lack of resources, was contagious. Many of us left, ready to go back and serve again.



*"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do."
Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)*



Nurses from the mission team provided prenatal care for the mother of this baby. Just a few short days later, this precious little girl was safely delivered! Praise God!



Above: Nurse Leigh examines Baby Isaac and finds he is very healthy.



Nurse Roy at the Gbansue Clinic works with the nurses on the mission team.



Children being treated at the clinic.

Nurses from the mission team work with the Gbansue Clinic's staff sharing best practices, examining patients, and building relationships. The clinic serves over 1,500 people in the rural Gbansue area.



Above: Nurse Leigh, Nurse Roy and Nurse Susan in front of the Gbansue Clinic.

Below: The Mission Team brought encouragement to the medical team, refreshed the stock of several life-saving medications, including worm medicine for children and supplements for new and expectant mothers.



*"I was excited to pass a Seeds of Hope farm on the road between Careyburg and Gbarnga. Jessy and I walked around the cabbage patch and picked out a few heads to purchase for our dinner. It occurred to me that some generous folks in Atlanta had provided those seeds in order to create opportunities for that farmer. A few of those cabbages sustained us as we served the Kingdom."
- Pastor Allen Taliaferro, Dunwoody Baptist Church*



The team visits the Farmers' Demonstration Garden and purchases ingredients for their meals while traveling.



Jessy and Pastor Allen pick out cabbages for the mission team.



Jessy carrying cabbages grown locally with seeds from Seeds of Hope!



Jessy and a local farmer in a Demonstration Garden.



Local farmers receive training and nourishment from the gardens and Seeds of Hope.



The mission team and villagers work alongside each other in the fields to tend the crops.



Pastor Allen and the missions team teach computer and administration skills.



Jenna assists with training for Dagai, Christopher, and Monica, who will be working at the new cocoa company.



Michael and the team teach, read to, and encourage the many children learning at the school in Gbansue.



Children reading with the missions team and enjoying the books donated to the library.



Ann and Linda enjoy a fun time interacting with and reading to the children.



Children in the school visit with and learn from missions team members.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'"
Matthew 28:18-19



Pastor Allen preaches in local churches, encouraging the local congregations with the missions team.



Pastor Allen is visited by a cobra while preaching. A drummer from the worship team reacts quickly and everyone, other than the cobra, is unharmed.



Kulumi Lanterns and Torches are distributed by the team to provide light through solar power and audio scripture in the Kpelle language.



Ann teaching elementary and middle school age students.



Linda teaching middle school and high school age students.



Boys watching the construction team in fascination as they learn how to repair/construct boxes.



Scott and other members of the missions team teach computer and administration skills.



Lasting friendships and mentoring relationships are developed during workshops and Bible studies.



Computer and job skills training.



Members of the team visit local churches and share with the congregation.



Women's Bible Study, led by Jenna, using a new Torch so women could hear the scripture in their native Kpelle language.



Men's Bible Study session.

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but
Proverbs

Bringing Discipleship to Rural Liberia *by Scott Ginn*

On our final day in the early afternoon, we sat in front of our Liberian discipleship students and asked them if they had any questions. After almost three weeks of training, we had covered much of the Old Testament, some easy ways to start Bible studies with villagers, strategies to incorporate Jesus in any conversation, and some isolated studies in the Gospels and Hebrews.

So when we opened the floor to questions, we had no idea what to expect. The first questions mostly came back to the Trinity. What does it mean for God to be three in one? Why is that important? Could there ever be a fourth member? Those were followed up with more historical and cultural questions. Where did Satan come from? If Joseph wasn't Jesus' biological father, wouldn't society look down on him? If Jesus didn't have children, wouldn't that be shameful?

After taking the time to show our students how to look through the Bible to find the answers to their questions while adding our own commentary to fill in the gaps, there was a long pause.

Then, one of the men from the village (maybe 32 years old) spoke:

"You've come here and over the last weeks poured into us. You've come to teach us things we didn't know about the Bible and also new ways to share with the other



villagers. But, you will leave and we will pour out what you've given us into others. Then we will need more to be poured back into us."

"How best can we help you with that?" I asked. And, to be honest, I was expecting the group to ask for more resources: newer Bibles, laptops, money to go to college, etc.

"We want more access to you and others like you," he quickly responded.

That simple sentence began a rush of ideas from the other discipleship students about how that could be accomplished. We could start a Facebook group. We could have Skype Bible studies. We could call or email you when we have a question.

And, that's how you know when you have true disciples. Think

about Jesus and His twelve disciples. What did they want from Him? Access.

Multi-week trips into villages by Americans and long-term work on the ground by Liberians fundamentally work together to give rural Liberians access to Jesus.

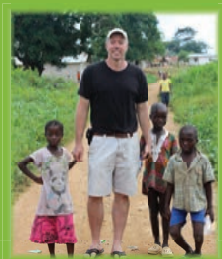
That access is fostered in a number of ways. Young adult discipleship students are trained in the Bible. Young leaders earn scholarships to attend university. Villagers are given opportunities in new business ventures. Local elementary school teachers study under seasoned teachers to increase their skills.

All of those ventures flow out of and for the purpose of giving rural Liberia access to Jesus and the hope that comes with Him.





Is The Lord Calling YOU To Serve In Liberia?



BDA invites you to join us on a mission trip, led by Bill Ginn, between November 3-14, 2017. Trips to rural Liberia are not easy; but this adventure will re-ignite your passion for Jesus and the work He is doing around the world, through His people.

If the Lord is speaking to your heart about joining or organizing a team to serve in the rural villages of Liberia, please contact: jessy@balamaproject.org



Contact and Donation Information:



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