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# Year-End Ministry Update

*Countering Hopelessness in Liberia*



Only a few weeks ago on November 7th, Liberia was set to experience its first democratic transfer of power since 1980. Even in a country where the majority of the population is below the voting age, the desire and demand for change has been intense. Hopes were high for a new government with a new emphasis on the needs of its people. Unfortunately, allegations of voting irregularities have derailed the election for now. **Please pray with us for a quick and peaceful resolution and for the election of a government who will care for the needs of the common Liberian.**

Sustainable Liberia, formerly Balama Development Alliance (BDA), is continuing to devote financial and human resources to evangelism/discipleship, education, economic empowerment, infrastructure, and leadership development in rural Liberia. **Our name is changing, but our commitment to our mission of excellent and effective ministry remains the same.**

God worked mightily through the ministry of BDA (now Sustainable Liberia) in 2017, and in the following pages we put together our contributions to developing sustainable communities in Liberia. We launched two businesses this fall: the Brendi Cocoa Company and the Coal Pot Queens Training Restaurant. Please share our excitement in how God has richly blessed the work of our hands.



The Coal Pot Queens Training Restaurant has opened!



Thomas and his helper work at the cocoa drying facility as part of the Brendi Cocoa Company now open in Gbansue.



Site for job training, discipleship groups, and community outreach.

[www.SustainableLiberia.org](http://www.SustainableLiberia.org)



*"The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked."  
Psalm 146:9 (NIV)*

## Three Widows of War Become the Coal Pot Queens

When their husbands fell victim to the civil war that ravaged Liberia for over thirteen years, Sarah, Evelyn, and Esther entered a season of fighting for existence. Desperate, they leaned more and more into their faith in Jesus, praying for help and deliverance every day. Jesus answered in creative ways as only He can. He introduced them to an American woman who taught them to cook American dishes so that they could feed the Americans who ventured into Liberia for business, mission work, or government work.

Through that process, God birthed a dream in their hearts: create a restaurant where they could train young women (just like they had been trained) so that these young women could stop supporting their families through the sex trade. And, now, following seven years of prayer and fasting, the Coal Pot Queens Training Restaurant opened a few weeks ago. Guests are being served, and girls are being trained. The faith and perseverance of these women have already begun to impact the next generation.

Monica Moneh, daughter of Sarah, completed college and currently works for the Brendi Cocoa Company (see page 3); and Grace Quaqua, daughter of Evelyn, graduated from high school and joined her mother in the restaurant. This year has laid a foundation for many years of sustainable development to come, and hopefully many young women will hone their cooking skills and abandon the sex trade.



Sister Sarah cooking in the new Coal Pot Queens kitchen



Sisters Evelyn, Esther, and Sarah prepare an evening meal.



Bill the baker, his helper, and the oven they use to bake.



Bill the baker in the kitchen preparing to bake.



The kitchen area within the Coal Pot Queens Training Restaurant.



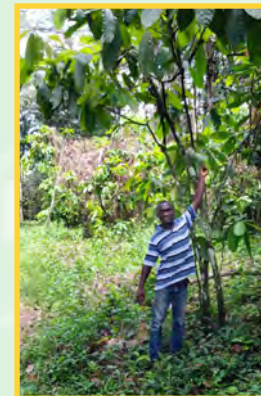
Bill Ginn, Dr. Willis Lanier, and Jessie eat a delicious meal in the restaurant, prepared by the Coal Pot Queens.

*"You make your saving help my shield, and your right hand sustains me;  
your help has made me great."  
Psalm 18:35 (NIV)*

## Economic Empowerment: Cocoa

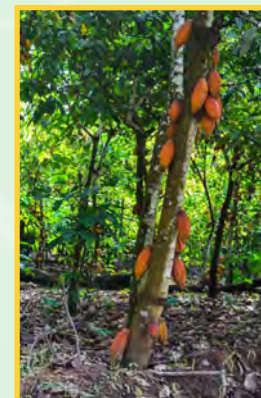
In less than one year, the Brendi Cocoa Company (BCC) moved from idea to operational business for ministry. But first, a quick introduction:

In 2016, a team from Dunwoody Baptist Church, along with members of the Board of Directors of Sustainable Liberia, conducted a feasibility study in rural Liberia focused on identifying the God-given, natural strengths of the country. The study confirmed what we had suspected all along: Liberia's



climate is perfect for the production of cocoa. In fact, the West African region where Liberia sits produces over 70% of the world's cocoa for chocolate every year.

So why did it take a group of Americans to figure this out? Really, it didn't. Before the two civil wars that destroyed its population and infrastructure, Liberia joined its West African neighbors Ivory Coast and Ghana as a top cocoa producer. Liberia's soils, rainy season, and humidity still produce cocoa, but because the devastation of war prevents it from being reliably harvested and transported, much of Liberia's cocoa crop drops to the ground and rots.



Jessy and his ministry team have worked for the past eleven years in some of these devastated regions, developing deep relationships with tribal chiefs, elders, farmers, and

villagers. We know the people and have steadfastly earned their trust over time. And, we've developed an intimate knowledge of how to empower rural communities with the hope that Liberian cocoa can be a significant export once again.

### 5 Full-Time Employees & 180 Cocoa Farmers

Brendi Cocoa Company, a medium-sized, sustainable enterprise launched by Sustainable Liberia, commenced operations in October 2017 and was supported by many generous donors who saw the connection between business and evangelism.



It works like this: BCC buys raw cocoa from local farmers, ferments and dries the beans at custom-built facilities, and aggregates the processed cocoa in 50 kilogram bags to sell to port buyers. In order to do this, BCC currently employs five full-time employees and projects that when it reaches full scale in a few years, it could support as many as fifteen full-time employees.



You can add to that dozens more workers who were paid daily wages to build the facilities. And, right now, BCC works with nearly 180 farmers who will double their cocoa income because of BCC's presence. In a nation where the current unemployment rate sits near 90%, those are significant contributions to the community.

### 2,420 Pounds of Cocoa

Prior to BCC, cocoa pods would literally rot on the ground because there was no way for the rural farmers to get it to the port city of Monrovia. In October alone, BCC processed 2,420 pounds of cocoa and delivered it to the port. That's over 10,000 Hershey's Kisses!



### One Mission

With the successes of Brendi Cocoa Company this year, we can't forget that its mission is greater than shipping cocoa beans and empowering farmers. We serve one God who has one mission: to reconcile peoples from all tribes, tongues, and nations back to Himself. Our entire staff follows Jesus, and their goal is to leverage the platform of cocoa for the spreading of the Gospel in Liberia. When a local farmer asks someone at BCC why the company exists, they are ready with the clear answer of Jesus Christ, who desires that not only their physical needs be taken care of but, more importantly, their spiritual needs.





*There is a West African Proverb that says, "It takes a village to raise a child..."*

## Education

Even from the first trip to the villages of Balama and Gbansue, Sustainable Liberia mission team teachers realized the great need to train local teachers in teaching strategies. These teachers are at a distinct disadvantage: most only have a sixth-grade education; they are forced to use the primitive methods of rote memorization and note copying that they learned in school because they lack solid teacher training; and, most work with no pay from the government. It is only because of their passion for helping the children of the village rise above poverty that keeps them coming to class day in and day out.

Over the last four years, several teachers from the United States have transported teaching supplies and more modern teaching strategies to the rural villages of Liberia. We strive to show the teachers how to incorporate new vocabulary and writing into their lessons everyday. We demonstrate ways to teach reading more effectively. And, when we can, Sustainable Liberia provides a stipend to teachers as an encouragement for them to implement these

new teaching methods. Thankfully, Jessy recently identified an experienced teacher and discipler from a nearby town (Jerome) who will travel to the Gbansue school to supervise and encourage the teachers.

God is at work in these schools and we pray that the years of faithful partners pouring into these children with generous donations of supplies and their time will make a lasting impact on the literacy and educational futures of the rural Liberian children.



Bill and Jessy with Gbansue teachers holding their Torches, phones, watches and shoes.



Jessy with Gbansue teachers and the rice harvest from the school garden.



Jessy, Bill, Jerome and Willis discuss the new Torches being handed out to teachers at the Gbansue School.



Teachers trying on shoes from the USA.



Bill and Jessy meet with the Gbansue School Principal.



Bill and Jessy tour the Gou school facilities and visit with the Principal.



Bill, Jessy, Teachers, Principal, and school children at the school in Gou.

*...In Liberia, we need to add, "It takes a child to raise a village." – Jessy Togba-Doya*



The school in Wainsue Town is located at the Church of Christ.



Entrance to the school in Wainsue Town.



Wainsue Town Class.



Bill and Willis visit with the students.



Students of the Wainsue Town School.



Willis, Jessy, Junior, and Bill at the presentation of Junior's book.

## Junior by Linda Flagler

I met Junior Flomo last summer during our visit to the tiny village of Gbansue, Liberia. He was nineteen years old and he was attending the fourth grade at the local elementary school. Yes, a nineteen-year-old in fourth grade. After visiting his class one day, he gave me a note that asked two things: could I please teach his class about reading and the Bible and could I help his teachers? He finished his letter by asking God to bless us for being there to help them. Then he showed me his composition book filled with amazing illustrations to go along with stories he had written.

Impressed by his motivation and talent, I asked if I could take his notebook back to the United States and make a real book from his stories. I promised to send it to him on our next trip to Liberia. During the most recent visit back to Liberia, Bill Ginn and Jessy presented the book to Junior at his school. Wanting to show him as an example of excellence and honor him, the principal invited the entire school to look on as Junior received his new book.

The needs in rural Liberia are great, but it's the diligence and desire of people like Junior to work hard, ask for help, and rely on God that will keep me returning to the villages of Liberia. God has allowed us to play a role in supporting and guiding teachers and students into a better education and, ultimately, a better way of life.



Jessy presents the book to Junior at the Wainsue School.

**Join The Prayer Team**

Text Message "Pray4Liberia" to 22828 to Receive Occasional Prayer Updates Via Email



## Chiefs & Elders

Much of what Sustainable Liberia does is only possible because of the relationships and partnerships that we've developed over the past eleven years with local believers, village chiefs and elders, and, of course, with the very villagers that we are trying to empower. Trust doesn't come quickly, though, and relationship building is a constant process.



In Gbansue, our leaders met with chiefs and elders about the elementary school. The goals were simple: cast vision and get their support for continued development and accountability for the Gbansue teachers.



Also, Dagai and Jessy led Bill and Joseph on their first trip to Gou, a remote village 12 miles from Gbansue, accessible only by foot or on PhenPhens (motor bikes). Gou is home to many cocoa farmers in the area so it's an extremely important hub for the Brendi Cocoa Company. While there, they met with the village chiefs and elders, and as is the Liberian tradition, participated in the koala nut ceremony, which is a symbol of welcome, hospitality, and acceptance.



Bill, Nabah (Regional Chief) and Willis

It's also important for Sustainable Liberia to forge partnerships with other believers who are active in strategic areas. During our November trip, Dr. Willis Lanier and Bill were connected to Allen Zomonway, the Liberia Health Coordinator for Global Ministries of the United



Methodist Church, and his wife Yei, who is a Liberian nurse with a passion for working with vulnerable young women. Yei and Dr. Lanier (a retired OB/GYN) partnered together to serve young women at the Coal Pot Queens' facility in the Baptist Seminary Community.

By bringing healthcare services together with the job training and discipleship from the Coal Pot Queens, our goal is to empower these young women for long and fruitful lives.

Dr. Lanier also worked with the nurses and midwives in the Gbansue clinic to diagnose and treat patients. His observations and insights are invaluable to us as we determine the best way to empower our friends at the clinic.



The village of Gou

## Sight Seekers

In July, Sustainable Liberia sent a team to Gbansue who trained a handful of Liberian believers in Walk Thru the Bible, a method for learning and teaching the Old Testament using keywords, hand signs, and stories. That same team brought with it jigs, tools, and materials capable of making reading glasses for as little as 60 cents per pair and taught local believers how to bend, cut, and assemble reading glasses out of stainless steel wire. These skills are now being paired with Torches (flashlights that can play an audio Bible in six tribal languages as well as English) to further enhance Sustainable Liberia's evangelism and discipleship efforts in both urban and rural communities.



Derrick testing vision and making eyeglasses at Gbansue Clinic.

Derrick, a young Liberian leader, in particular grabbed hold of these new skills and is now leveraging them for the good of Liberia and the good of God's Kingdom. He recently made glasses for both staff and patients at the Gbansue clinic using a large print Bible as a way to test their eyesight. This way, he can introduce them to simple Bible stories while making sure he fits the glasses with the appropriate magnification.



Nurse Joyce reading the Bible with her new glasses.

Closer to the urban center of Monrovia, Derrick has connected with churches in New Kru Town, an area struggling with intense poverty. He is selling reading glasses to the poor in those communities for just the cost of materials (between 60 cents and a dollar) and using the engagement power of the Torches to play the Bible for these people in their own tribal language.



Derrick is also following up his glasses ministry by teaching Walk Thru the Bible Old Testament in the churches. He really has put all three tools together in his outreach strategy.



The Torches are being used in the school at Gbansue as well. Teachers are playing the Bible in English to expose their students to Biblical truth and training them in proper English pronunciation.



These tools assist our people on the ground in sharing the Gospel as well as training others to share the Gospel with their neighbors and families.



Bill, Jessy, and Derrick go over Torch functions and languages.



Jessy speaking to church in New Kru Town, a slum community in Monrovia where Derrick makes glasses for the poor.

## Thank You

As you have seen in these pages, God is richly blessing our partnership through the Holy Spirit with the people of Liberia. Regardless of the program or activities we support or engage in, our primary mission is clear: to share the Good News that Jesus Christ came into our world to save us all from our sins and bring us back into His Kingdom.



## Do You Feel Called To Join A Mission Team To Liberia In 2018?

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: [info@SustainableLiberia.org](mailto:info@SustainableLiberia.org)





## What Does “Sustainable Liberia” Mean?

As you might expect with the name change, we took this opportunity to refresh our logo. Each blade of the leaf represents one of our foundational ministry areas: **education, economic empowerment, leadership development, and infrastructure advancement.** You'll notice, however, that the sustainable village is built upon the foundation of the final blade. That final blade is evangelism and discipleship. The previous blades serve as a platform upon which this core mission of Sustainable Liberia stands. Without our four primary development areas, we wouldn't have the relationships, trust, and platform to share the hope of Christ. But without that final blade of evangelism and discipleship, the previous blades could never support the true hope, the true fruitfulness, and the true sustainability that the Gospel brings.



*Sustainable Liberia, Inc.*

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