



2107 North Decatur Road, Box 308  
Decatur, GA | 30033  
404-354-4432 | [info@SustainableLiberia.org](mailto:info@SustainableLiberia.org)



# End of Year Ministry Update

*Countering Hopelessness in Liberia*



## **God's command is to love your neighbor, whether Stateside or in country... an update on global ministry**

**G**lobal Missions in the U.S. has evolved from primarily giving abroad to an expanding emphasis to include service-driven components, both domestic and international. People involved with non-profit organizations, like Sustainable Liberia, want to build relationships with the staff and the communities served by visiting, engaging, and participating in the work. For Christians, this adds the hands and feet to their personal faith in Christ both in and out of the pew. For many Global Executive Directors of faith-based nonprofits, this means striking a more balanced approach in working directly with staff on the ground in the country being served along with regular visits with the global mission partners who reside stateside.



Cross-culture ministry leaders who have annual assignments to the States recognize how vital these assignments are in order to maintain strong and personal relationships with their global mission partners. It also brings to

life the impact and progress being made in the local communities served, since many partners may not be able to join mission teams. Dr. Jessy Togba-Doya, Founder and Executive Director of Sustainable Liberia, knows this is key to meeting budget, resourcing and growth goals for the programs, and services within Sustainable Liberia.

Jessy, born in Liberia and also a recent naturalized U.S. citizen, has job responsibilities which include planning, organizing, leading, and providing oversight for Sustainable Liberia's programs. In addition, he shares responsibilities for partner relations and mobilizing resources for ongoing support of the ministry. This requires that he reside nine to ten months in Liberia and two to three months in the States.



Serving on both home and field assignments enables Jessy to lead the staff and ministry team in Liberia, as well as engage and build relationships with partner churches and supporters Stateside.

In mid-summer, Jessy was in the States for three months and returned to Liberia at the beginning of fall. While in the States, he reconnected with friends and family, provided a status report to Sustainable Liberia's Board of Directors, and gave ministry updates to partner churches and supporters. He also worked with churches to identify specific skills and tasks needed to organize short-term mission teams.



Jessy received professional development training and important instruction on improved gardening techniques and tractor operation, mobilized resources for special projects and ongoing ministry support, while tending to his spiritual growth by attending a men's retreat and men's Bible studies to deepen his personal faith. Jessy feels confident the time in the States equipped him well to feel refreshed and renewed to hit the ground running back in Liberia.

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*"It's not so much that God has a mission for the church in the world, but that God has a church for mission in the world... mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission — God's mission."*  
— Christopher J. Wright, Theologian

## Why we don't buy one way tickets - True global ministry and partnership is ROUND trip.

Many of us have seen and heard them speak during Bible study or Sunday morning worship service. We see their names in our church's bulletin as a partner ministry that our congregation supports. But who are they? What inspires churches and other partners to support these individuals and their ministries anyway? And, most importantly, why do they visit their congregation and what is the significance of the visits? Our partner churches' responses to these questions make a compelling case for the need of international cross-culture ministry leaders to take periodic visits stateside.



## From Dunwoody to the Ends of the Earth

Reverend Jeff Reams, Missions Pastor for Dunwoody Baptist Church (DBC) in Dunwoody, Georgia believes that reports from partner ministries broaden the missional horizon of a local congregation. *"Having a ministry partner or missionary visit your church can be an exciting opportunity to educate the congregation about what God is doing in the world, especially through the ministry or organization that your church supports. You get to learn about the country where the organization serves and about issues facing the people of that country. You also get to hear fresh stories about how lives and communities are being transformed because of your partnership and support"*, Jeff explained. Jeff and several members of the DBC congregation continue to provide short-term mission teams to Liberia. Sustainable Liberia is so thankful for Jeff and church partners like DBC because when they see God at work, they join Him.



*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* Acts 1:8

## Heritage seeks Jesus' way to loving God and serving others

Pastor Michael Tutterrow of Heritage Baptist Church (HBC), located in Cartersville, Georgia explains how stateside visits strengthen partnerships. *"It personalizes the mission line item in the budget by putting a name and face to the money we send to support Sustainable Liberia. A visit treats our congregation to human interest stories and cultural views that are very different from ours. It is always fun and a treat to hear about God's work in Liberia. And we are happy to be a partner with Sustainable Liberia."* Michael worked with Jessy to develop this ministry to several thousand residents in a cluster of villages around Balama.



After a 2007 mission trip to Balama, a former HBC member developed a passion for a local orphanage in the community. He returned to Cartersville and founded a non-profit, which now provides food, shelter, education and medical care to more than 100 children orphaned during Liberia's 14-year civil war. Over the last decade, they have constructed a new orphanage building and developed a solar-powered system that now provides electricity for the orphanage. Sustainable Liberia is grateful for Heritage members who take seriously Jesus' call to *"go into all the world and make disciples..."* (Matthew 28:19).

*"I am refueled for the field and can now pour into the communities that we serve"*  
— Jessy Togba-Doya

## Hungry Hearts can grow with the Nourishment of Grace and Knowledge

There is a wise saying that *"a cultivated mind is the measure of a man."* The apostle Peter encourages us to constantly grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:17-18). A ministry leader's continuing education is not only for his/her own spiritual well-being, but it also enriches the spiritual well-being of the people he/she serves.



While in the States, Jessy participated in several men's Bible studies. Johnson Ferry Men, at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, in Marietta, Georgia, is a small group of men focused on a deep, verse-by-verse study of God's Word and how they can apply it to their everyday lives. Ironmen, which meets at Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia, encouraged and equipped Jessy to become a positive impact for Jesus - at home, at work, and in the community. He also attended Ken Boa's Bible study along with the Kenneth Boa Men's Retreat at Eagle Ranch in Braselton, Georgia. Ken Boa's ministries seek to encourage, teach, and equip people to know Christ, follow Him, become progressively conformed to His image, and reproduce His life in others. Many Friday mornings were spent in Men's Fellowship held at On-the-Border on Lenox Road in Atlanta, Georgia. What gifts Jessy received through these Bible studies which he found so beneficial for the ministries of Sustainable Liberia and his personal spiritual formation! Our sincere thanks go out to everyone that joined him in fellowship.

## Taste and See that the LORD is Good Psalm 34:8

In late September, a few friends of ours gathered at the home of Dara and David Smith and had a Cocoa Party. We joined them to share in a meal and talk about Sustainable Liberia. This was not just any meal. There were hors d'oeuvres, roasted pork, salad, and brownies, and every dish had one significant ingredient in common. I'm sure you can guess what that ingredient was: cocoa. This was not just any cocoa, either. This cocoa was grown and processed by the farmers we work with in Liberia. A decade ago this could not have been possible, but through the support of our donors and the hard work of the farmers, the cocoa is growing again.



Later in the evening, as we sat outside in the warm, late-summer sun, Jessy spoke to our friends, telling his story and how God has helped guide Sustainable Liberia's mission since the very beginning. It was not difficult to see God's hand at work. We could all share an entire meal cooked with cocoa grown in the villages where, not so long ago, cocoa was not growing. This success is due to the dedication and effort of the farmers, the support of our donors, and God's work.

Of course, the point of this party was not just to eat cocoa in its many forms in every dish served. It was to show just how far we have come, and just how far we can go. Everyone who came that night got to taste it for themselves. We hope those of you who couldn't be there can *"taste and see"* our LORD's goodness too, and might wish to join us in our journey.

If you would be interested in hosting a Cocoa Party, just contact Bill at [bill@SustainableLiberia.org](mailto:bill@SustainableLiberia.org). We have lots of delicious recipes.





## ***Service Opportunity: Seeds of Hope February 7-9, 2020 in Atlanta, Georgia***

**Save the Date!** It's our opportunity to make an impact Stateside by serving the people of Liberia. Since 2015, Sustainable Liberia has received vegetable seeds from this event, which directly benefit the communities of rural Liberia we serve.

Hosted by Peachtree Presbyterian Church, one of our Atlanta, Georgia church partners, Seeds of Hope is a great, high-energy, fun-filled community project! The sixth annual event, which spans seven two-hour shifts over three days, has opportunities for seated, standing and moving roles. Anyone age five and up can and should participate as this is a wonderful family event to allow people to serve side-by-side.



**Feel free to invite friends to come and serve and be a part of transforming a family from food scarcity to sustainability. Registration will begin early January 2020 by visiting <http://peachtreechurch.com/seeds>.**

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### **Mailing Address:**

2107 North Decatur Road, Box 308  
Decatur, GA 30033 USA

**Donate Online:** [www.SustainableLiberia.org](http://www.SustainableLiberia.org)

**Phone:** 404.354.4432

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

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