



Gather The Fragments Bible Mission

Stephen & Laura Holt

Sierra Leone, West Africa

FIELD REPORT: JANUARY 2014

Dear Praying Family and Friends

Joyful New Year greetings to you all! The busiest time of our year is upon us. This season we've been able to add to our network of partnering churches thereby expanding our dry season evangelism circuit. While this may be tiring to the flesh, it's certainly exhilarating to the spirit. Because it's so common for people to simply pass tracts and keep moving, my goal is to train church members in evangelism techniques encouraging them to engage in conversations and not just rush past people who have legitimate questions. Leading by example, we aim to equip our partnering churches so they can gain confidence and experience in productive public ministry.

★ DRY SEASON EVANGELISM BLITZ REPORT ★

URBAN EVANGELISM ASSAULTS: We kicked off our evangelism circuit on November 29 with a return visit to Emanuel Star Baptist Church in Kenema. It was good to be with this group again. After our training session to reacquaint them with the use of the illustrated evangelism books we hit the streets engaging in many profitable conversations and distributing literature. Friday and Saturday afternoons afforded Aimee and Holly a good opportunity to conduct Bible classes for the church children which were well attended. Aimee and Holly were also an encouragement to the youth of the church who eagerly accompanied us during our public work. We concluded this three-day campaign with Sunday morning church service.

Thursday, December 5 we all packed into the truck and headed to Freetown for a few days of playing "tourist" on the lovely beaches. We all enjoyed a little R&R before bidding Holly farewell as she left for the States on December 9. Having so completely fallen in love with Sierra Leone and its people, Holly had planned to extend her three month stay. Unfortunately she was having difficulty controlling her diabetes and it was recommended by her doctor that she go to the States and make the transition to insulin. With insulin being readily available here, Holly plans to return once her health has stabilized. Please keep her in your prayers; she's quickly become a valuable member of the mission team and we're eager to have her back.

On the morning of December 20, while still dark, Aimee wearing long sleeves for the "cold" 62 degrees, we headed out to a new partnering church; Ebenezer Baptist in Lunsar, four hours to our north-west. Due to the difficulty of phone communications here, first time engagements at new churches can be a bit awkward as neither side is certain of what to expect from the other. Over all, though, we had a very productive time with the members of this church and we plan to schedule a second visit to Ebenezer this dry season. On Sunday

morning Aimee, toting all her felt board accessories, accompanied Ezekiel, our contact at the church, for an exhilarating motorcycle ride to a village where she taught a children's class. Our girls are really getting around and we've greatly appreciated having them as they expand the scope of what we're able to accomplish. Laura isn't able to accompany me on the evangelism circuit so it's been nice to have a "woman's touch" through these dedicated young ladies.

We welcomed the new year at Support Mission Baptist Church in Freetown; another of our new partnering churches. We arrived at their mission house on December 30 accompanied by three of our Bible institute students. Whenever possible I like to engage our students in the urban evangelism campaigns as it gives them a different experience from the village settings with which they are familiar. Moses Menjor and Mohamed Sillah of the Baomahun class, and David Johnny of the Gumahun class eagerly assisted Aimee and me as we spent morning and early afternoon hours among thousands of people gathered in Freetown for the holidays. We covered all the major pedestrian areas distributing literature and engaging in great conversations. In the evenings, members of the church joined us for a concentrated evangelism effort in the neighborhoods directly around the church. This church was started by a group of Nigerian businessmen who have come out of the radical Nigerian Pentecostal movement and are now engaged in combating this nefarious cult and reaching other West African countries with the truth. It's truly a blessing to work with these brothers and sisters in Christ.

VILLAGE WARFARE: Most Friday mornings see some representation of the Bible institute in one of our surrounding villages. Often Alfred, Mohamed, and Moses set out on foot before dawn to reach their destination before people have left the village for their work sites whether it's a distant garden or a gold mining pit. When we're able, Aimee and I accompany them which means we get to use the truck and don't have to leave so early! A point which must be remembered is that these men are all personally known in these villages yet they preach the Gospel boldly and without shame even among family members who reside in these small remote pockets, some of which are not accessible by vehicle. I admire the dedication of this evangelism team and they're having a great impact in these small villages. Moses, Alfred's older brother, is growing by leaps and bounds and we've dedicated one full photo page to him. Moses suffers from sickle cell anemia and is often quite ill. He also has very crippled legs making it painful and difficult for him to walk. Yet at every opportunity he's engaged in public ministry whether it's in the local villages or the urban evangelism campaigns. He never complains and is always a cheerful witness. He's truly amazing and I appreciate having him as part of our team.

★ NEWS & NOTES ★

THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH: During our deputation travels, as we talked to pastors and churches about our ministry goals and vision, one thing I consistently stressed was that I was going to Sierra Leone as a Bible teacher not a "church planter". During our survey trip in 2005 we had seen an abundance of churches but very little Bible understanding. The need, as we saw it, was equipping churches with evangelism training and sound Bible doctrine to combat the plethora of cults. Even in 2005, my goal was to start a training circuit and work with established churches. In 2009 we were invited to move to Baomahun to establish a Bible training institute from which students could be sent out and would serve as our home base for the training circuit. Unfortunately, as you may recall from previous reports, the church which invited us here subsequently turned "Pente-carnal", rejected the Bible training, and severed their relationship with us. Several students already enrolled in the institute no longer wished to fellowship with that church because of the change in their doctrinal position. After a few months of not attending church, they approached me about starting our own church. At their request, I

preached our first meeting but I told them from the start that this is *their* church; I will guide, encourage, teach, and disciple but all from the background. They know my position is that of mentor not pastor and they know I am not going to fund it; this church has to make it on their efforts. I would be there for guidance and counsel but the teaching, preaching, and leadership of the church would fall on them.

Despite bumps and growing pains, the core of the church members, faithfully led by three institute students whom we call Peter James and John, have risen to the occasion. January 15, 2014 will be the second year anniversary of *The BIBLE Mission Church*. We are now beginning the process of making the church completely indigenous and anticipate the ordination of Alfred Menjor as pastor in June upon his completion of the associate level Bible training program. It must be noted that the name chosen by the church membership is intended to denote the purpose of the Church's mission: that of taking the Bible message *outside* the church building.

The church leadership recently approached us about having a Christmas program which would include a dramatization from the book of Job and a family-style meal following the preaching service. We said Go for it! They planned everything from start to finish and even cleaned up afterward; we just showed up and enjoyed it all. The food was served family style where there's several people eating out of one large bowl. They used their hands but we opted for spoons. The ladies did a fabulous job and the groundnut (peanut) soup over rice was delicious. Please see the Photo Pages for pictures from the Christmas program.

BIBLE TRAINING INSTITUTE: Classes in Baomahun and Gumahun will resume the first week in February. This semester will mark the completion of the associate's level training in Baomahun and with no new students enrolling in the institute I will be freed up for further expansion of the next dry season circuit of training and evangelism. My plan is to spend at least a week with each partnering church so we can add evening Bible classes to the current schedule. Following the military model of "exportable training" I will take the classroom to the students and train them in their own theater of operation. With our base camp being nearly the geographic center of this small country, we are well located to reach in all directions. Our next move will be the addition of the Kono area in the Eastern Province. Continuing education and discipleship at the home base will take place during the peak of the rains when travel is difficult.

The first week of February will also be when Aimee and Laura resume the CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship) classes at two area primary schools. With Holly's departure we've had to scale back the out of town children's classes but we're hopeful that Aimee will be able to teach Bible classes in the Community Primary school right here in our own town. This school is operated by the Pentecostal church in town and due to continued strains in that relationship, we've waited to approach them about having Aimee in to teach. Please pray that they'll be agreeable.

This is a very exciting time of growth and development. One recent visitor to the church commented that he liked what we are accomplishing; that the church was being led by locals, and that their teaching and preaching reflects that they are getting good training.

From Laura's Journal

Due to the popularity of this portion of our Field Report, we've decided to expand the length and send it as a separate edition in between regular reports. It is now titled "Letters to My Friends" and will ***only be distributed electronically***. If you receive our reports via the U.S. Postal Service but would like to be on the distribution list for this letter, please go to our web site at gatherthefragments.com and follow the prompts on the "Subscribe" page. If you already receive our reports via e-mail you will automatically receive this new report as well.



We have lots of photos to accompany this issue of the Field Report. Please be sure to stop by our web site at gatherthefragments.com and view them on the "Field Report" page. Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support of Gather The Fragments Bible Mission. A lot is happening as the work continues to develop. Thank you for partnering with us. You remain in our prayers as you labor on the home front.

Because He is Worthy

Stephen and Laura Holt

OPERATION: DRY SEASON EVANGELISM

Kenema: Emanuel Star Baptist Church



**Above: The team
receiving training
in evangelism
techniques**



**Above: Holly assists
a church member**



**Left: Aimee using
the "One Way" book**

Lunsar: Ebenezer Baptist Church

**The team of
church members
ready to roll out
for evangelism**



**Using the illustrated, wordless
book is very effective with
women and children**



**In urban settings men can
usually read making tracts
useful and effective**

OPERATION: DRY SEASON EVANGELISM

Freetown: Baptist Mission Church



**Left:
The early shift
which included
Aimee who took
the photo**



**Right:
The evening
shift**



This gathering started with three men sitting on the workbench and ended in “standing room only” as Mohamed held their attention with the illustrated book and delivered the Gospel.



Village Evangelism: Karvoma

Mohamed Sillah opening a conversation using the illustrated evangelism book. A crowd quickly gathered to see the pictures.



Aimee and her usual kid collection. She effectively uses the One Way book with village children.



Alfred providing breakfast “entertainment” (preaching and tract distribution) for men who have gathered to purchase “fast food” before heading into the mines.

MEET THE GOSPEL GODZILLA

A.K.A. MOSES MENJOR



**No one would suspect our quiet friend, Moses, of being
*The Gospel Godzilla!***



**Sickly, frail, and crippled, Moses isn't
your standard picture of a dynamic
preacher.**

**But his naturally winsome personality has
a way of drawing people into engaging
and productive conversations and from
there he doesn't let up!**

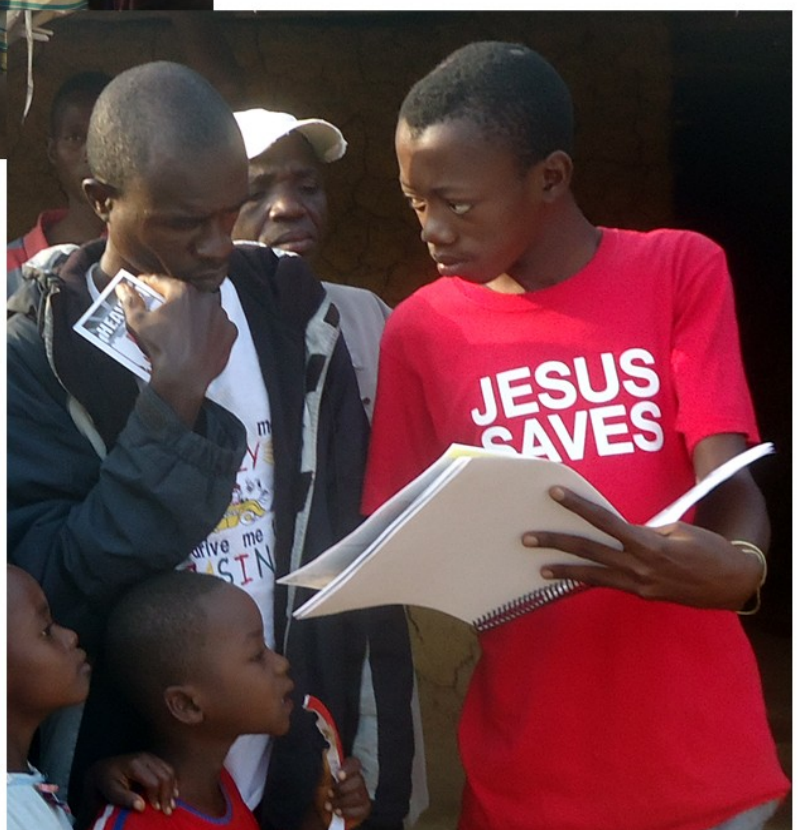


**Get him behind a pulpit or
witnessing to a group and
Moses is changed into another
man. He boldly and unashamedly
declares the the Gospel of Jesus
Christ to his countrymen.**

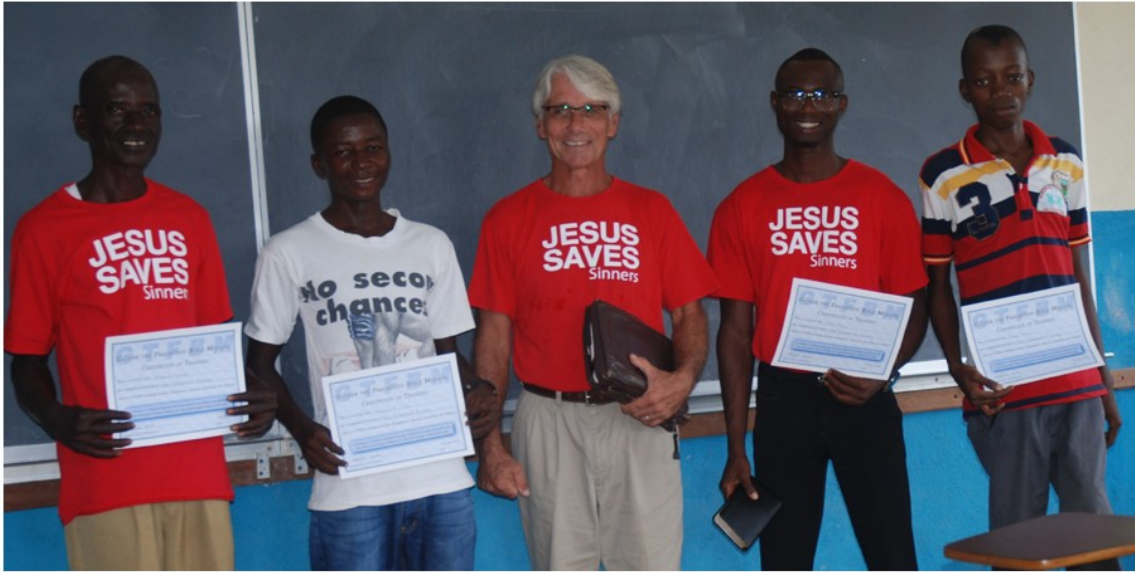
**Moses has a gift for keeping
the conversation directed and
making people think.**

**And when he's finished, it's
back to the mild mannered
Clark Kent.**

**These pictures were taken
in Karvoma where Moses is
among people who all know
him personally.**



Graduates



Certificates of Completion for New Testament Survey, Baomahun Class
L-R: Mohamed Senesie, Mohamed Sillah, the smiling teacher, Alfred Menjor, Moses Menjor
(Not present: Dennis Bambanga who also completed the course)

Completion of CEF Program, Tendabu



At left are students who correctly quoted one of the 14 memory verses learned.

Above Holly pins a student with the verse he quoted.



Lower Left: Aimee teaching the last lesson



Above: Exuberant singing



Left: The children about to enjoy the football (soccer) their teachers, Aimee and Holly gave them.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



Left: Drama cast
in prayer before
their production

Job's family was
played by church
children



Right: Satan
(Mohamed Sillah)
blowing a curse
(baby powder)
on Job
(our son, John)

These two stole
the show!



Above: Alfred's son
Julius always joins
"Pa" for the singing



When Alfred was long in preaching!



Aimee enjoying
her meal with a
sleeping Betty
in her arms



The ladies preparing bowls of rice
and groundnut soup which was cooked
early in the morning

Abraham, the
church cry-baby
is content for
a change



In the noble Baptist tradition -
food and fellowship
Fingers or spoons, your choice!