



Gather The Fragments Bible Mission

Stephen & Laura Holt

Sierra Leone, West Africa

FIELD REPORT: APRIL 2018

Dear Praying Family and Friends

As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country

Proverbs 25:25

Greetings to you all in the name of our precious Savior. We truly have much good news from Sierra Leone which we rejoice to share with all of you.

I have daily contact with our son John as well as some of our other church men and all is going better than I could have hoped. We have consistently received good reports regarding the management and security of our compound property. Prior to my departure from Sierra Leone, as part of his preparation to oversee the compound, I had put John through driver training. He's been able to make regular runs into Bo to purchase fuel for our generator enabling him to keep the water tank full and the well pump in use. He also assists church members with transporting of goods and supplies. But most notably is that he's used our truck to make three "ambulance" runs to Lion Heart Hospital in Yele. This type of service to the community has inestimable effects on keeping the GTF mission in good standing with town leadership.

THE BIBLE MISSION CHURCH: Church attendance remains steady and we continue to have visitors. Pastor Alfred is handling church affairs quite admirably considering he's not had as much training as I would have liked him to receive before going on his own. The church meetings are well managed; from adult Sunday school to worship services and children's church all is going smoothly. Alfred is managing our in-town evangelism and has made several new member visits. He's also had the privilege of making special visits for prayer and encouragement to three of our ladies at the town clinic following their safe deliveries of healthy babies. In Sierra Leone, considered the most dangerous place to give birth, this is indeed a tremendous blessing.

Sierra Leone recently held their presidential election and, by West African standards, it went remarkably well. The party which had been in power for the past ten years has been unseated as people are hoping to see sweeping changes to the economy and other facets of life, all of which are seriously failing in Sierra Leone which is ranked among the poorest countries in the world. There are, however, some political elements which are contesting the election results. Thus far things are remaining peaceful for which all are thankful.

With the election past and society remaining peaceful, it's anticipated that two local mining companies will begin operations; the larger in our town and another in a nearby smaller village. With this, the local population will swell and it is expected that church membership will also grow.

EVANGELISM: In my absence the circuit of training and evangelism has been put on hold as the transportation requirements are well beyond the ability of the church men to afford. However, they are doing what they can as far as out-of-town evangelism is concerned.

Michael Sillah has taken charge of organizing evangelism excursions outside of Baomahun. He and other church men regularly visit smaller villages within a five-mile walking radius. Some of these villages, such as Karvoma, are cut off from easy access as the rivers swell during the rainy season so they've been making a point to visit such villages now before the rains become too heavy in the coming months. And Karvoma had fruit ready for harvest. On April 13, I received the exciting report that in their second visit to Karvoma a young Muslim man had the eyes of his understanding enlightened during the public preaching of the gospel. Michael used a series of large-scale illustrations Laura developed to show Jesus Christ as our Advocate with the Father. This theme is especially affective with Muslims and Michael, being former Muslim himself, knows exactly what our Muslim majority population needs to hear. Following the public preaching, personal time was spent with this young man, Michael Musa, and he, with clear understanding, publicly prayed for his soul's salvation! Our men left Michael Musa with a bible and the Essence of Christianity booklet; it's truly a blessing that he can read and is eager to grow in his new faith.

These reports are the best any foreign missionary could hope for. Our men and families are keeping things going. Church is running smoothly and our people are growing in their faith. They've taken the responsibility to be out on visitation and evangelism — *it's real to them!* I tear up when I think about how far they've come in such a short time. All Glory to God.

HEALTH UPDATE: We are awaiting yet another appointment to gain insight into Laura's health issues. We've had several consultations with a very skilled neurosurgeon in Tampa, a three hour ride from our home. He's been quite honest with us that Laura's is a complex case and we appreciate his cautious approach. He may chose to move forward with corrective brain and spinal surgery but wants to exhaust all other avenues first. Consequently, I can't yet say when I'll be able to return to Sierra Leone as I need to be certain that Laura is well settled first. We'll send out a special update when we have specific news. In the mean time your prayers for Laura's health are especially coveted. She needs to recover to the point where she can do the artwork which has had such an effect on people's understanding. We have several new projects and plans for new implementations but she's completely unable to do any studio work at this point. I need her to recover so I can put her back to work! If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me (text or call) at my temporary US number, (386) 624-8370.

All of these good reports are fruit to your account. We are grateful for each of you who take time to pray and sacrificially give so generously thus enabling us to be your voice to the needy people of Sierra Leone.

Because He is Worthy

Stephen & Laura Holt

See Photo Pages Below

KARVOMA EVANGELISM

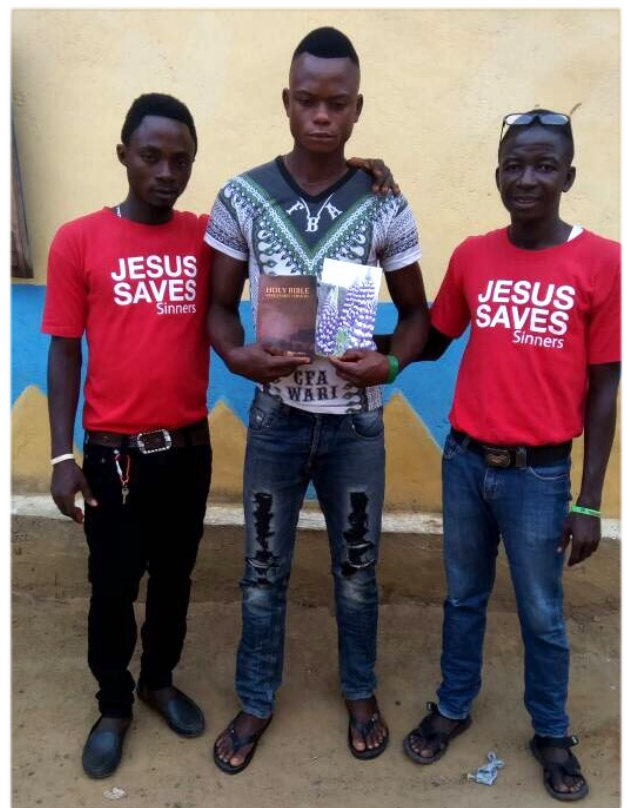


Michael Sillah preaching using large-scale pastel illustration series showing Jesus as our Advocate with the Father. This theme has great impact on Muslims especially when they can hear and see. Sierra Leone is 80% Muslim.



KARVOMA FRUIT!

Following two visits to Karvoma with open-air preaching and personal work, Michael (right) led this young man, Michael Musa, to the Lord. He is now a member of the "Former Muslim Band" and is eager to grow in his new found faith.

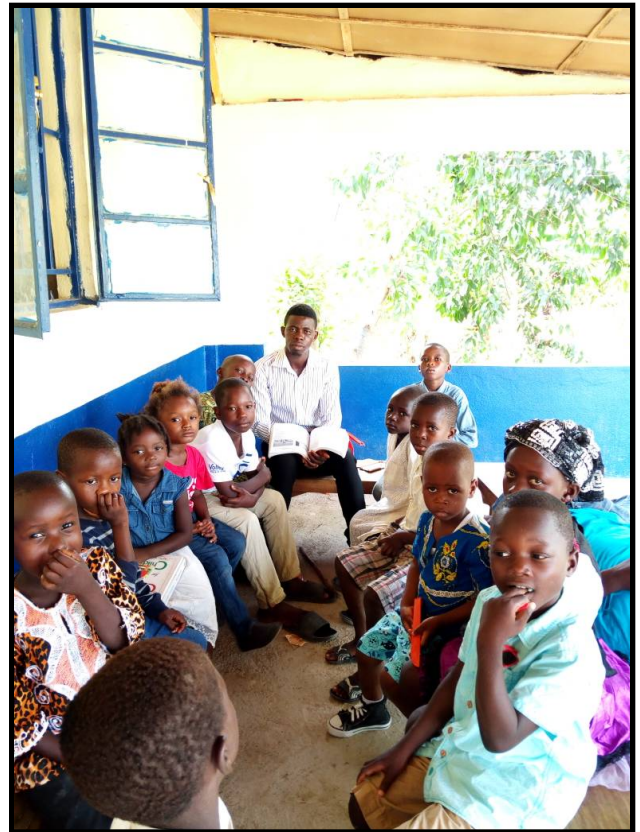


Church Activities ~ Sierra Leone & Stateside



Left: Pastor Alfred, holding the baby, prays with the mother and father in one of several recent baby dedication ceremonies.

Below: John conducting children's church on the veranda. His natural story telling ability and love for children make him an effective teacher.



Below left: Nursing home ministry with our daughter at the keyboard. Three generations of dedicated nursing home work!

Below right: The family headed out for public ministry at the Daytona 500 race. Such a joy to serve as a family.

