



GTFBM

Gather The Fragments Bible Mission

Stephen & Laura Holt
Sierra Leone, West Africa

FIELD REPORT: DECEMBER 2018

Dear Praying Family and Friends

My first week back in Sierra Leone has been a blur. We've already got one fire behind us which we successfully kept from crossing onto our property. We've brushed and burned (intentionally) the building site for construction prep. I've connected with new site manager at the British gold mining company to prayerfully arrange for a dozer. I've made two 5-hour trips (one way) to retrieve supplies from Makanji which were sent in another missionary's container. I've reworked the solar wiring to accommodate our new DC refrigerator. I've repaired the well pump, again. I've met the local chiefs to keep them abreast of our building project. And — I've made two trips to Bo for truck repairs (3 hours one way). Life is an adventure!

Along with this, our chiefdom is in a terrible turmoil over a child abduction and an old man who is also missing. The strong circumstantial evidence is pointing to a specific "all generations" sacrifice and an arrest was made. But now our paramount chief, who is a very self-serving and wicked woman, is being investigated for paying the bail for the one holding the "smoking gun" so to speak. This man, the suspect, is now openly bragging about his power in the chiefdom. The ongoing investigation is causing much agitation and disturbance of our daily life in Baomahun. Witchcraft, "ju-ju", and other devilment are very open, very real, and very palpable in Sierra Leone.

IT'S REAL TO THEM! Just before my departure for Sierra Leone, I received some exciting text messages from one of the institute graduates. Moses Gbla is a very successful businessman in town and helps support a large portion of his family who live in Waterloo, just outside of Freetown on the peninsula. While spending time in Waterloo, Moses began attending a small local church and upon learning of his Bible institute training, the pastor asked Moses to conduct the Wednesday night Bible study. However, being a Pentecostal church, the pastor quickly detected major differences in doctrine and informed Moses, "You don't need to teach again." Moses has a calm spirit and took the rejection very graciously. He then continued in his regular routine of evangelism in the area. Unbeknownst to him, the Pentecostal pastor was watching Moses and his gentle manner in dealing with people. This pastor began to see the difference of Bible truth as compared with the errors of Pentecostal doctrine. Rethinking his position, he has now asked Moses to teach adult Sunday school at this little church. Additionally, Moses is teaching the mid-week Bible study at another church in the area. He has continued in active evangelism and is an encouragement to these two pastors. Testimony counts! Moses didn't know he was being watched; he was just doing what he was trained to do at GTF Bible Institute! He took it out and put it into practice on his own. Glory! It's real!

BUILDING PROJECT: On January 14 Brother Stephen Mustard will be departing from the States for a three-week visit to oversee the site prep for our building project. We ask you to please pray for his family during his absence; his wife Rebekah is expecting their second child and is due in mid April.

UPDATE ON LAURA'S HEALTH: Laura has just returned home from her five-day in hospital testing in the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, which, by her account, is an amazing high tech facility. It's been determined that Laura is indeed having seizures but they are not epileptic in nature and in the words of her doctor, she has "beautiful brain waves!" What she's experiencing are so-called pseudo-seizures and are her brain's response to what's been happening in her body. Basically her brain is just maxed out and shutting down. The doctor is not able to say conclusively how the cerebral malaria fits in but is confident that it does play a part in the on going problems. Compounding things are her poor sleep and chronic pain (which feed each other). The doctor doesn't think the lumbar puncture is necessary (thankfully). At this point Laura needs to address better pain management, work on better sleep, and just give herself time; she can't rush the process of healing. Too many illnesses and the rigors of life in Sierra Leone have caught up with her and are taking their toll. Maybe age is a factor too! We are so thankful for your prayers. This is a very good outcome as it is the elimination of something potentially more serious. For the time being, we've decided against her returning to Sierra Leone as both we and her doctor feel that the risk of contracting any type of malaria or other tropical fever is not wise.

TWO FRONTS: With Laura remaining in the States, our Field Reports will now focus on two fronts: the Homeland and our adopted country. She will remain actively involved with the evangelism circuit by providing the illustrated evangelism booklets as well as the large scale banners for public ministry. She is also planning to pursue some writing projects as health and clarity of thought allow. With better communications, thanks to the cell tower in our village, we are able to text almost daily and talk once or twice a week if the signal is strong. We're both very grateful for this advancement into modern technology.

We sincerely appreciate your understanding for my not being available to visit churches during my 11 months in the States. Laura's health needed to be my focus and I'm grateful for the liberty and understanding you all afforded me in that regard. I am planning an official furlough at the conclusion of the up coming building project. We both are looking forward to visiting with you, our friends, and giving you an up-to-date report of the work in Sierra Leone. Thank you for your continued prayers and support which allow us to remain your voice in this dark and spiritually needy country.

Because He is Worthy

Stephen & Laura Holt

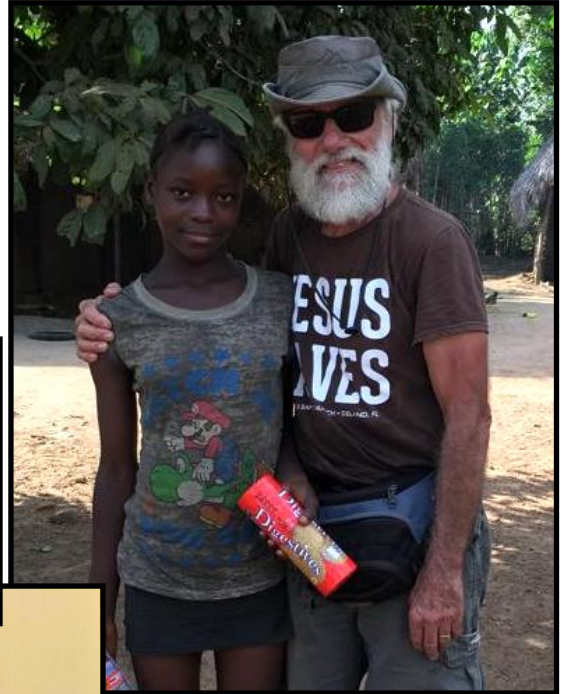
See photo pages below

Welcome Home Brother Stevie!

Left: Met at Lungi Airport by my right-hand man, Moses Menjor

Right: Such a joy to be driving through the villages, met by friends along the way

Bottom: My first Sunday back in church was a grand reunion!



Moses Gbla



Moses' faithful evangelism presence and encouragement to area pastors as he uses the training gained at GTF Bible Institute



Building Project

The church property is right on the main road at the entrance to our village - great location!

The charred ground is now ready for a machine to come in and clear it. Please pray we can make this arrangement as it will save us a lot of time in site prep.

