

# Grassroots Ministry

L i b e r i a

*"Sowing Seeds of Hope through Education and  
Leadership Development"*

M a r c h 2 0 0 9

**Dear friends and family,**

*This year is almost one quarter of the way through. March is here, taxes will be due soon and where are we going?*

*I am sure that many of you are busy keeping your own things going yet I hope you have time to sit and read a few thoughts on the year 2009.*

*Every year I find a word on which I focus my thoughts and prayers. This year I have only recently discovered my word for 2009. I have had words like divide, community, hide but this year the word is FAITH.*

**Faith is a very simple thing, it seems, yet so impalpable.**

My faith is modeled after those around me who have lived and demonstrated lives of faith. People like my Parents, my Grandmothers and some of my childhood heroes, like the bus driver to school. I always took my faith for granted, it was part of how I lived. I did not let circumstances dictate my actions but rather prayer and God's guidance. At least that is how I think it was.

Until I came to Liberia. Here everything is a test of faith and everything is a fight. I find myself more and more settling for what has to be rather than the God-given vision of how it should be.

I have lost ground in the small things. Like, you can't talk to that person, or you can't expect things to work out better than this, or we can't do a better job than that because we don't have the ability...I have started settling for second rate and "reality" living rather than keeping the faith and hoping for something better.

To be fair there were factors in my life other than coming to Liberia that influenced these small changes. Some of them happened a long time ago when I felt betrayed by those whom I had sought to serve. Other factors such as living in the reality of this very different world and feeling an overwhelming sense of "nothing can work here." It is easy to say "Things are too far gone." or "no one else has any desire to see them different," or "my model of faith is N. American Christianity and it doesn't work in Africa."

Somehow, deep in my heart, I know that this is not an excuse for losing my faith, it does not relieve me from the responsibility of doing what God has laid on my heart to do. It only means that I must pray and seek God to change my understanding of how things should be done and carry on with the vision He has given us.

The rest of this letter I would like to dedicate to some people of faith living in Liberia.

The first is my husband.

Yes, my husband is a man of faith. Especially when it comes to planting his tomatoes. He has just put into the ground what I think is about his twentieth attempt at growing tomatoes from seeds. We have been here about eight years, and he keeps trying to beat the nematodes and root rot and white flies and grow that perfect tomato. This is faith, this is tenacity, this is looking forward to the good things to come and not letting the past dictate your hopes for the future. There are many daily acts of faith that he makes but there are also many disappointments. One thing that he battles against is that critical spirit that looks at the wrong side of things instead of through eyes of faith. Please continue to pray that God will give him insight into the circumstances and situations that he encounters and he will know God's purposes for the work he is doing here.

The second person of faith is one of our pastors.

Well, it could be any of a number of pastors we work with. We have been working with many different pastors since we came to Liberia. Many are associated with small denominations or have their own church. Our work with them is not to decide their affiliation but rather to give them some ideas on how they can be lights and leaders in their various communities.

One of our pastors has looked for many different ways to serve his community, including starting a school, helping do night patrol, using his own property for the church and school. He recently came over to visit and was very excited because an international organization that comes to Liberia has ordained him as a minister.

He didn't have the proper tie to wear so took his purple tie and dyed it black. Then still needing a jacket for the ceremony, he asked someone if they could help him with one to wear and they gave him three. It is hard to understand how little some of these pastors have, many are having a hard time just sending their children to school, never mind having a proper suit and tie.

The third is our friend Dr. Zarway. Last weekend I was privileged to attend the dedication of her hospital/clinic. She and her husband, Bishop Nathaniel Zarway, have built a private hospital and are offering "excellent" medical care. Starting a hospital is not a small job, it requires planning and coordinating many different aspects of medical care. The hospital is equipped to do surgery, pre and post natal care, as well as has a lab and ultrasound.

The attendance at the dedication program was lively and people were asked to give to help offset the costs of the project. Donations of \$500. USD and \$1000. US dollars were made or pledged. Knowing Dr. Zarway's story, of how despite a war, and many oppositions she was able to get her Medical degree and now open a hospital made this a culmination of faith.

The fourth person of faith is one who will remain anonymous but is an inspiration to me.

She is someone who suffered greatly because of the civil war. She lost loved ones and saw many injustices. She has a family that she supports as her husband is gone. She struggled with bitterness and anger against those who caused her so many difficulties but was able through her faith in God to forgive her enemies. Today she continues to move by faith in caring for her family and working full-time. Her vision goes beyond this though, to reach out to other single parents

What is faith? You can have faith in things, or people or circumstances. But ultimately if your faith is not in Christ Jesus and his mediation for you before God's throne you will not make it.

Even as James plants his tomatoes he is asking for Christ for wisdom and understanding so he can find a better way to grow his crop. Even as our pastor friend is looking for a new tie to wear and staying up all night to keep rogues from his neighbourhood, he is trusting God to provide for his daily needs and looking for ways to better help those in his community.

Even as the Dr. is building her hospital she is praying and asking God for financial provision to make the place 'excellent' and trusting God to give her wisdom as she does diagnosis. Her back-up is her husband, the Bishop who can pray and bring spiritual healing to the patients. And even as my friend is struggling with loneliness and grief she is asking God for how she can help others around her.

**Acts of faith are those steps we take that say we are not held by our circumstances but that God is able to do abundantly more than we imagine. Acts of faith help to take our eyes off our own self and put it onto someone whose vision is greater and clearer than ours and whose plans never fail.**

I pray that in 2009 I will be able to live by FAITH and not give into my human weaknesses. I pray for each of you that you too will be able to make steps of faith, not in your self but in Christ, who has made heaven and earth, and cares infinitely more about his creation than we can understand.

#### **Our Truck at work**

*Beginning February 5th, on James birthday, and taking about three weeks, the Red Truck moved over 80 loads of red dirt from a friends dirt pit to our own sandy road. With a crew of volunteers, lots of shovels and an expert driver we got our road improvement done so now even our friends can drive in to visit. We had a couple flat tires, ran out of fuel once but overall the truck did well for its age. Not bad for a vehicle all the way from Zeballos.*

#### **Pelilewe & Demeta Villages have new wells.**

##### **Pelilewe Village, Bong County**

Digging a well is not a simple operation. Finding water under ground is not always guaranteed. But we praise God that both wells that were put into the ground in Pelilewe and Demeta met with water. The pictures here are only four of the many families who will benefit from the clean water.

We saw many health problems, and know that having clean water will make a difference, especially for children. Thank-you Aldergrove Vineyard for taking a step of faith to put money aside for these two wells. Many thanks from everyone in both villages

Reports from Ngenda Academy:

Ngenda Academy has four students. We have school from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm everyday. Sound familiar?

The most interesting part of class is the interruptions that we have everyday. They are always welcomed by the students. Today's interruptions were, a leaking water line in the kid's bathroom, Daddy checking on his attire for his meetings, the water tank overflowing, Grandma making palm oil, and Noah's glasses falling apart. Also two boys arrived in the middle of PE class with greens for our rabbits and we couldn't find any Liberian money to pay them.

We studied the dark ages and just finished the middle ages for history. We are working on weather patterns for science and social studies.

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## Would you like to exercise your faith:

*We need to raise another \$20,000. USD to finish our community center.*

*Also, we need to have a monthly income of \$3000. USD to be able to meet our operating budget. Presently we are receiving an income of about 50% of our budget.*

### Planting for tomorrow...

## T h e N e w G a t e C o m m u n i t y C e n t e r

---had its first official event. The meeting of Alumni from our Grassroots Pastors training in Monrovia. This was on March 15.

We are working hard to get the insides of the container in order so as to be able to offer classes next month. During the last year and a half we have had several robberies, the last one being when they broke the locks and entered the container, taking a computer, a fax machine, and several bundles of roofing material.

### Canadian Team Members

- Jim & Maggie Hober — Chair
- Danise Breederland —
- Randy & Jennifer Bergen
- Bill & Amy Vanderpol — Secretary
- Hannah Neudorf
- James & Kathleen Ngenda

### Liberian Board Members

James Ngenda  
John Bleah  
Hilary Paul  
Cecelia Pratt  
Kathleen Ngenda

### Partner Organizations:

Oikodome  
Hearts for Africa  
LifeWinds Int'l

# Communication

For more pictures you can go to: <http://picasaweb.google.com/KathleenNgenda>

Contact us you by email:

[kathleen@grassrootsliberia.com](mailto:kathleen@grassrootsliberia.com)  
[james@grassrootsliberia.com](mailto:james@grassrootsliberia.com)

Or by Cell phone:

Kathleen 231.653.1169  
James 231.683.3092