

Morning Star

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TARRYTOWN, NY

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TGFA (Thank God for Africa)

By Pastor Torrey Robinson



It is hard to believe that two months have passed since our team of seven left for Sierra Leone. So much of 2010 was spent preparing for the trip. As I reflect upon the trip this week before Thanksgiving, I realize that our trip has given me more for which to be thankful this year.

Going to Africa made me more thankful for things I used to take for granted like hot showers, electricity and running water. The home where we stayed had a generator, so we had four hours of electricity each day. And we had running water, but no hot water. Most of the houses in Freetown had neither hot water nor running water. And most people there live in tiny shacks. Many of the homes were not much bigger than our living room.

Reflecting back on our trip to Africa, I realize how God blessed us with an experience of koinonia. That's the Greek word for fellowship. It means to share something in common. About this time last year as God started to move on the hearts of those who would eventually make the trip to Sierra Leone, I was impressed with the group that God was bringing together. Frankly, that was one of the primary reasons I decided to go to Africa. These were all people that as Pastor I wanted to get close to and spend time with.

We began to prepare for our trip as seven committed individuals. But over the months of preparation and the varied experiences of our trip, we shared a lot of common experience. We became a strong team. More than that, one night as we were laughing and eating together around Michael's table, I sensed that we had become a family. And I was blessed, not only by the group I traveled with from FBC, I was also blessed to work with the team from Michael's church.

I honestly don't believe that any of us made the trip to Sierra Leone feeling that Michael and his church were fortunate to have us come. But after working alongside Michael and his team for a week, I realize how fortunate we were to work alongside them. Their commitment to ministry and their boldness in sharing their faith was an example and an inspiration to all of us on the A-Team.

As I count my blessings this Thanksgiving, I'm thankful for what I learned from the spirit of the people in Sierra Leone. As we prepared to travel to a country that had been ripped apart by a

bloody civil war less than ten years ago, I expected to find people who were bitter, angry and unfriendly. I found the opposite. The people of that impoverished country showed themselves to be gracious and most hospitable. On one occasion, Aaron Morton was carrying a heavy case of soda a hundred yards or so down a steep path from Michael Turay's car to his home. Given Aaron's strong arms, it would never occur to me to carry anything heavy for Aaron.

But Michael's neighbors insisted that they relieve Aaron's burden. They wanted to carry the heavy case. Michael told us later that they would consider themselves rude if they had not helped a stranger.

I was blessed to meet people who did not let their tragic history define their future. Finally, as I count my blessings this Thanksgiving, I am thankful for you. Most of you who are reading this were a great support to our team. Friends, family and church family gave generously to make our trip possible. When we first looked at the



Pastor Torrey spoke live on national radio in Sierra Leone.

costs for our trip to Africa, I wondered how we would raise enough money to go. The outpouring of support was amazing.

Like Jesus' miracle using a little boy's lunch to feed 5,000 people, we not only had enough money for the trip, after we returned from Africa we discovered that we had \$2,000 left over. So we are sending this money to Michael Turay to use for rent for much-needed office space. And the support we received was more than financial. Our team was humbled by the ways our FBC family came alongside to help us with our preparations for the trip. You bought tee shirts. You encouraged us with cards and e-mail. And on top of everything else, many of you prayed for us around the clock during our trip.

We sensed God's hand on us throughout our trip. Your prayers were a huge part of that. So for all of this I say, "TGfA - Thank God for Africa." In so many ways, the richness of that experience has given me even more to thank God for this Thanksgiving.★

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Ahoy Mateys!

By Barnacle Becky McGovern

VBS 2010, The High Seas Expedition, may have come and gone, but I know the voyage into God's word definitely made an impact on not only our campers, but the counselors and volunteer staff as well.

Beginning on Aug. 13th and lasting the whole week, over 230 people (125 kids, 75 teen counselors and 25 + adult volunteers) gathered at First Baptist to experience a "swashbuckling" adventure aboard our sailing vessel the SS FBC. While on board kids experienced amazing Bible adventures, learned Bible songs, made crazy craft creations, played outdoor games, tasted goodies from the galley and, of course, caught up with our good friend Chadder the Chipmunk.

During the week, the campers and counselors also visited the Sierra Leone A-Team Tent where each day they learned a fact about the country of Sierra Leone and what our FBC African Mission team planned to do while ministering there during the

trip in early September. Each day, campers brought in their spare coins from home and placed them in our A-Team fish bowls. By the end of the week, we had collected \$213.00 and handed a check for that amount to A-Team leader Jacques Cowart during our VBS Friday Finale.

VBS at FBC is such an impactful, all encompassing Church family mission and outreach. The week cannot happen without the help of many people, both young and old. A big thank you to everyone who contributed. I know the VBS team appreciated all your prayers throughout the summer.

Please continue to lift this ministry up. We have planted many seeds this summer; let's continue to "water" them until next summer.(Sneak peak- VBS at FBC 2011 will take place Aug. 8th-12th. Our theme will be "Panda Mania"- Where God is Wild About You! See you there!)★



Entranceway to the church/VBS decor done by Barnacle Becky!



Debbie Ocheltree's class in the sanctuary.



Pastor Torrey's class in the Fellowship Hall



VBS photos by Brian Rush

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The Bright and Morning Star is seeking contributions for the next issue on any topics of interest which glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. Please send articles to: The Bright and Morning Star Newsletter at the address above. ©Copyright 2010 *The Bright and Morning Star*.

Community Service Day A Great Success

By Art Baulch

Under the leadership of Steve Armstrong, First Baptist Church, Tarrytown held a Community Service Day on Saturday, October 23.

Volunteers participated in a number of activities including:

- A visit to the Tarry Hall Nursing Home. Several people sang songs and sat down to talk with residents.
- A visit to the Miller Ave. Group Home.



- Yard work at Dan Rizzi's house. People raked leaves and cleared off Dr. Dan's lawn.
- Kitchen reorganization at a Senior residence. People helped a senior clear out her pantry and get things reorganized.
- Trash removal at a Senior Residence. A team worked at a different senior residence to help get some trash and old stuff cleared out of her house.
- House cleaning at a senior residence. A group of people helped a senior with a disability do some basic house cleaning tasks.
- Dinner was prepared at the church for workers and YMCA residents.

Also, under the leadership of Jenna Velez and the FBC Women's Group, a large group of women prepared and delivered gift baskets and cards. Several tables were set up in the Fellowship Hall and the ladies stamped, used cut outs, ribbons and other embellishments to create encouragement cards for the gift baskets which contained cookies and hot cocoa mixes.★



Some of the many volunteers who participated in the activities of Community Service Day.

SOLDIER'S & SENIOR'S CORNER

By Rosanne Rush

Someone once said a soldier writes his countrymen a blank check: It is for up to and including his life. For those who give so much, we can give a little back by letting them know they are in our thoughts and prayers. Won't you write a short letter or note to our soldiers? There are stationary and addressed envelopes to Patrick Regan Zaccaria for your convenience on the back table in church. Sometime in the future we will let you know when Patrick is able to accept packages.

Be on the lookout at our Soldier's Corner for announcements and in the *Bright & Morning Star!* If you have a friend or loved one in the service please feel free to place envelopes addressed to him/her here and join us in helping others to mail a note to them. Let us show our men and women how grateful we are for their sacrifices, sending them our love and a bit of home! Photos are a welcome treat for them!

We also have envelopes addressed to seniors from our church who live alone or are in nursing homes, and stationery is also available.

So, take a moment to write a note to a soldier or senior. You may post and mail it yourself or Lauren Zaccaria or Rosanne Rush will do so for you. Thank you. ★

CLASSIFIEDS

GIVE AWAY!

Terani Couture champagne colored "mother of the bride" (or groom) evening gown. Beautiful gown! Size 16

Anyone who would like to have it please email Rosanne Rush @ Cakeladee52@aol.com or phone her at home: 914-449-6719.

Assorted girl's clothes all seasons size 12-14 and shoes size 4-5. Would like to see them go to good use.

Please contact terbaul@aol.com or call us at 914-591-5569.

The Front is the Back and the Back is the Front

By Dan Rizzi, Ed.D.

As you look towards the front of the sanctuary did you know that you are actually looking towards the rear? That's right, the front is the back and the back is the front. Got it?

Now that you are confused, may I attempt an explanation that may clarify. The main problem with this attempt is that there are only a few who remember what I am about to undertake.

After the "FBC Tarrytown fire" in 1989, Pastor Bruce Boria and the Deacons (there were no Elders at that time) long debated on how to rebuild the interior of our once beautiful sanctuary with our limited resources. Should it be the original traditional style along with pews and organ, or a more modern flexible style with movable chairs and electronic keyboard? After many hours, days and weeks of debate and discussions, it was thought that, if we turned the sanctuary, around we not only would have more room, but we would be able to make better use of the sanctuary with portable, movable chairs. Also, a new kind of platform would be more adaptable at allowing for multiple uses.

Pastor Bruce's vision was that we could do many more things with a more contemporary kind of setting and with a more open platform there would be flexibility for our worshipping groups and the pastor would be able to move about as he wishes. The loft (now at the rear) would be used for lighting, audio-visual equip-

ment and storage. It wasn't a tough decision to replace the Philipian mahogany pews with chairs because of the prohibitive expense and chairs would allow movement and various set ups. Also, chairs could be stacked to open up the entire sanctuary for other affairs, (i.e., our Christmas Dinner.)

Since those major decisions, we have from now and then raised the question to return the sanctuary to its original traditional shape, but again, it is so extremely costly, that it has been continually placed on the back burner and shelved indefinitely.

When discussing the current arrangement with Pastor Bruce those many years ago, I suggested to him that the building was designed architecturally and constructed as a Christian structure in the shape of the cross. I questioned that, if we turned the church around, the Pastor would then be preaching from the foot of the cross instead of the customary way. His memorable reply will remain with me forever, "You know Dan, it's not a bad place to be, at the foot of the Cross."

Whatever we decide in the future, it will always be God's house and His people will praise and honor Him regardless of the shape of the building. The Church is the people, not the building in which they worship and regardless if the front is back or the back is the front. Got it?★

According to His Word

By Frank Pastore

Let's face it, living in the 21st century is pretty wild. We have so many incredibly neat gadgets at our disposal, instant access to an enormous amount of information, and the ability to communicate like never before. The dictionary bulges with words that were unknown less than a decade ago. We have become so dependant on technology that it seems to compete with air, food and water in the essential-for-physical-existence category.

How did anyone live back in the early 80's (1980's, that is!) or even the 70's without these essentials? "Back in the day" (in the 1970's) we typed term papers and essays and used carbon paper (what's that?) to make an instant copy. We didn't process words on the fly-- moving sentences and paragraphs, or major blocks of words as new ideas replaced what had already been committed to paper, I mean computer screen! Bloggers and tweeters, IM, and the too-many-to name "talking heads" have taken over as the sources of information. Words on a printed page are becoming more and more scarce.

Our reliance, as a society, on all things digital is amazing. We can rightly ask if we have gotten to the place where we think we cannot live without so many of the devices we carry in our pockets and purses? Here's a banner headline: We Can Survive Without Much of What We Think Is So Essential to Our Day to Day Existence! And, dare I say it, we might even be healthier if we were disconnected for awhile. We need to be careful because sometimes the truly essential gets buried in the junk pile of technological

progress.

There actually are some things we dare not try to live without! We cannot live, truly live, without the Word of God. The Word of God is the most essential, most necessary, most reliable, most trustworthy, most faithful, most life-changing thing we have.

...And, dare I say it, we might even be healthier if we were disconnected for awhile.

Although the way we communicate has changed, the means of transportation has changed, the way we learn has changed – God's Word has not changed and will not change (Ps 119:89). Although the Bible, the very Word of God, is more available to us now than it has ever been: in book form, in digital form – in my iPhone, in my Kindle, via the internet, on Disc, etc., I wonder if we take it for granted. I wonder if we value God's Word or if we just see it as the Book we bring to church, the reference manual we turn to from time to time, the object of some learning, a condiment for the coffee table, or adornment for our bookcase. The Bible may just be that which we take for granted the most. It wasn't like that in the centuries before the Protestant Reformation when many were willing to die horrible deaths rather than deny its truths! "God's Word is His witness or testimony to grand and important truths which concern Himself and our relation to Him: this we should desire to know; knowing it, we should believe it; believing it we should love it; and loving it, we should hold it fast against all comers." *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

This past summer, my wife and I, along with about one-hundred people from our church in Florida, read the Bible

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According to His Word *continued from page 4*

(Genesis through Revelation) in 90 days. A few things became apparent. One was the number of people, who were Christians for quite some time, who had never read through the Bible, and the other was that it was truly exhilarating to spend an hour every day for 90 days (it actually worked out to be 88 days!) in God's Word—reading the whole story as one would read a good book (in this case in the Good Book!).

There are consequences to neglecting the Word of God. It happened to ancient Israel and it has happened throughout the history of the Christian Church. The very first Psalm says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seats of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night" (Ps 1:1); in Psalm 119:1 we read: "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!"

We disregard God's Word to our peril. Second Kings 22 (and 2 Chronicles 34:3-7) tells the story of Josiah's accession to the throne of Judah and the events that followed. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had fallen into apostasy and Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was not much better. Momentous events were erupting around the biblical world in 638 B.C. when Josiah came to the throne in Jerusalem. As the powerful influence of Assyria was waning, the savage invasion of the Scythians emerged on the horizon and lasted until 624 B.C. Finally, in 612 B.C. the capital of Assyria fell before a combined army of Scythians, Medes, and Babylonians. That paved the way for the ominous rise to world power of Babylon, whose "innocent" envoys had visited the court of Josiah's great-grandfather (2 Kings 20:12).

In 627 B.C. the voice of Jeremiah, reinforced by the preaching of Zephaniah and Nahum, began to be heard in Judah. While not one of these events is mentioned in this historical account of Josiah's reign, they must have had an enormous impact on the king, both during his formative years and during the active years of his national reforms. The kings of Israel were all bad – none of them followed after God; the kings of Judah were, for the most part, as wayward as the kings of Israel. Even kings of Judah like Joash and Amaziah, who started their reigns well, ultimately succumbed to idolatry and received the recompense for their actions. Thus, under the reign of Amaziah, the Temple was raided and the objects of worship were stolen. Through all these years, the Word of God was diminished in the sight of the people. If you read the stories of the Kings of Israel and Judah in the Books of Chronicles and Kings you see the tragic results of disobeying God and not taking God at His Word.

Through His Word, God had given the people all that they need-

ed to live lives that were pleasing to Him and He pronounced blessings and curses that would fall on the people (Deuteronomy 28-30) according to His Word. The Bible is filled with the truth that God wants us to know. I repeat, we neglect it to our peril! If you read the story of Josiah (the last righteous king of Judah) you see that the Book of the Law was discovered and that when it was read to Josiah he tore his clothes (2 Kings 22:11). Josiah was genuinely convicted and it caused him to act. It was apparent that the nation was steeped in sin.

Just as Josiah trembled at God's Word (Isaiah 66:2b), God wants us to tremble too! By the power of the Holy Spirit, God's Word brings conviction, conversion and oftentimes, condemnation. Our reliance on Oprah, Dr. Phil, the self-help shelves in Barnes and Noble, etc. has to be crushed under the weight of God's Word. Jesus prayed that God would sanctify us with His Truth (Jn. 17:17) and we are told that the way to avoid sin is to hide God's Word in our hearts (Ps 119:11). How is it possible to live a life that pleases God without heeding His Word? How is it possible to know how to live the Christian life without an intimate knowledge of God's Word? It is not possible!

God wants us to live according to His Word so that we can experience His care and provision. Jesus tells us that He came that we might live life abundantly (Jn. 10:10b). God's Word is a lamp and light (Ps. 119:105). In King Josiah's time the written Word of God had been "lost" for seventy-years. How could that happen? Quite simply, it happened due to neglect.

Whenever we disregard spiritual values, they gradually slip out of sight. I'm afraid that if the preservation of the Scriptures for future generations depended on the value that some people in our day place on it, the Bible would have been lost long ago. Do we treasure God's Word? Do we see it as the very Words of the living God to us? God's Word is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Lest we forget, the next verse says, "And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account" (v.13).

It's good to be reminded from God's Word what it does for us: Psalm 119:1-176 tells us that the Word of God blesses, cleanses, reveals wondrous things, revives us, teaches us, saves us, gives us hope, reveals mercy, is with us in affliction, in comfort, in persecution, is eternal, gives us wisdom, is light, brings us godly fear, is vindicated, gives us light, is righteous, is to be obeyed, brings awe, is our delight. Wow! It is perilous to neglect God's Word! ★

Kidz Book Review

From the well known Christian book publisher Zonder Kidz, comes a positive book series for kids. *Here's Lily* by Nancy Rue is book number one of the *Lily* series, a series with over 1 million copies sold!

In *Here's Lily*, main character Lily Robbins learns what true beauty is. While in the sixth grade, a woman from the fashion industry comes to visit the students to teach them about beauty. When the woman visits, Lily goes from being the average student to being a fashion model. Her parents definitely do not like the idea of their daughter being a model, and ask her to find God in some way in her modeling classes. Lily teaches readers what it means to have "God-Confidence" and how to be yourself. She proves that, while society disagrees, you don't have to

be a model to have confidence. Kids ages 8-12 will love this book, and the rest of the books in the series.

What makes the series truly unique is that each fiction book is a companion to a non-fiction version. For example, *Here's Lily* is a companion to *The Beauty Book*. *The Beauty Book* offers lots of information about beauty, but most importantly – God-Confidence. Don't know what God-Confidence is? Your child will have to read to find out!

Also, be sure to check out Nancy Rue's other series' of books. She has created other books with messages like "God loves you" and that God has a calling for you. These series include, for ages 8-12, "*Faithgirlz! Sophie*" and for ages 9-12, "*Faithgirlz Lucy*". All of these books and more are available at christianbook.com. ★

Where We Lay Our Heads. Part II *By Jacques Cowart II*

("I hope it's going to be as good as the first one.")

Praise God! We have all made it back from Africa. What an experience! If our Greatest example of a missionary (Jesus Christ) could give up His comforts of being next to the Holy Father to die on the cross for us, the least we could do was give up our comforts, for a short time, to spread the Gospel. And because of your prayers, your support, and an extremely focused team we were with in Sierra Leone, that is exactly what we did.

If you didn't already know, we were delayed in Germany for 3 days prior to arriving in Sierra Leone. After having some time to reflect on the experience, I think it's safe to say that the A-Team feels like God gave us that time to help ourselves get a little used to another culture, and to bond even more as a team. (We were also able to spend a day with Daniel Hoster and his family. So that was great too.)

One of the hardest things to express to people in the states about Sierra Leone is the culture. Sierra Leone is nothing like the U.S., except the fact that, just like here, there are people that are in desperate need of the Gospel.

One of the major benefits of going on a short term mission trip is that you get to see and personally experience scripture that once



The Into Africa Team with the Freetown team (from left to right) Michael Turay, Howard, Aaron, Jacques, Pastor Torrey, Gideon, Solomon, David, Kenneth, Deborah, Ramatu, Elino, Lisa, Katie, Amy, Julie)

seemed kind of 'foreign', TRULY come to life! In Acts 1:8 Jesus says, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and to the ends of the earth." (NIV) We really got to experience these Words in

Sierra Leone. All the team can give testimony of times when we had to step out of our comfort zone, at times not knowing what we might say, do, or how people would even react to us, but had to put 100% Faith that the Holy Spirit would guide us. And EVERY time the Spirit was there!

In one instance He used Katie as she was not feeling well as a way to witness to a man at a car shop. In another moment He turned a simple walk on a mountainside into a blessing for a family because Amy gave them a flashlight so they could have a light in their home. Every team member has a story like that. What a blessing to be able to be used by the Spirit!

Unfortunately the Holy Spirit did not give us the gift of tongues while we were in Sierra Leone. So there was a slight language barrier. But most of the time, because English is the language that is taught in schools, people could understand us fine. And when there was a major issue, like speaking to the smaller kids, or elderly (who may not have had formal education) we had a member of the Freetown team with us to translate. Funny thing, Krio is the type of language that's not too hard to pick up. Michael told us

this when we arrived, and sure enough by the end of the week we could all start to understand more and more what people were saying. (Imagine how much we could have picked up if we had stayed the whole 10 days!)

As you can probably surmise I can go on and on about this mission trip. And I urge you if you want hear more stories or experiences to talk to other members of the A-Team. (They have a lot to share!) But for now I want to end this article speaking about Michael Turay, the Aletheia Ministries, and the larger vision for Sierra Leone. Michael knows the people of Sierra Leone. He has an amazing gift from God to look at a person and see what God can do with them. And he is applying that gift with every muscle of his being! God has given him an amazing team that is extremely hungry for the true Biblical Gospel.

One of the major problems in Sierra Leone is the proclamation and worship of false teaching and teachers. This is one of the bigger battles Michael and the Aletheia Ministry face. This is why it was so important for Pastor Torrey, who taught three days, to do a Pastoral Training seminar. Some pastors came from 30 miles away to learn. (30 miles in Sierra Leone can easily equal about 110 miles for us) Because of the lack of true Biblical Gospel teaching it is so important for Michael to get back on the radio, which he is praying to do in the next year.

It's a pretty easy guess that because Michael relies entirely on the support of churches that money would be one of the easiest ways to help him. For example, he could use this money to acquire permanent office space in downtown Freetown (which he has now been asked to vacate in the next couple of months). The Aletheia ministry members are all full time missionaries as well, holding no jobs. They put their faith in God that He will provide their every need. Our donations can also go to them, so they can continue to be effective in their mission.

Most importantly (you know it's coming) we HAVE TO continue and PRAY for Michael and the larger vision for Sierra Leone. The larger vision being that as they continue to develop and rebuild their government, that Christ not lose hold on their hearts. Because as of now, even though there is a large population of Muslims, Christ is still spoken in schools and on the streets freely. So pray that that does not change, but instead increases to where they may form their government with His will on their hearts.

One of the popular questions everyone ask, believers and non believers, is, "Will you go back?" "MMMMM....Will we go back to be part in spreading the Gospel, to a nation which the harvest is ripe, and the effect will echo for eternity?" I don't know FBC, will we??★



Us stuck in Munich Germany.



Us performing "This is War" at one of the 7 schools we went to.

Reflections on Africa By Lisa Baugh

The Lord has begun a good work in you and he will bring it to full completion. – Philippians 1:4

I am a failure. Why did God make me this way?. These are statements I often mumbled to myself as a child. I did not think my life would amount to anything. God must have been shaking his head and smiling as he reflected on the purpose-filled life he had in store for me and the trip of a lifetime that would change my world perspective forever.

God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. – 1 Corinthians 12:18

When I accepted the calling to go to Africa I had no idea what it would entail but I knew without a doubt this was God's plan. Throughout the planning stages, I was encouraged. As the team was formed, I recognized that each member of the A-Team was hand-picked by God to carry out a specific role in the planning process and in Sierra Leone. Our gifts were recognized, used and strengthened. In addition, Jacques' leadership and Training for Africa (TFI) was stellar; allowing me to focus on what needed to be done rather than worrying about what was going to happen in this foreign land. Michael's visit was the icing on the cake. His seal of approval, pure excitement about our coming and assurance that we would be taken care of completed the first stage of this journey.

In his heart a man plans his course but the Lord determines his steps. – Proverbs 16:9

In Germany I discovered that God is ultimately in control. The 3-day layover was confusing. At first, I felt guilty. My friends

and family did not agree to financially support a sight-seeing visit to Munich and tourist attraction like Oktoberfest. As we discussed our options and prayed about God's direction during this side-track, we came to several conclusions. This time in Germany allowed us to bond as a team, practice talking to people in another culture, refresh our spirit and fellowship with the Hosters. It was part of our TFA.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. – Philippians 4:11

In Africa I understood that God is faithful to the obedient. He provided the boldness to speak the Gospel to strangers and strength to go on when my body said "stop". When Michael told us to share the Good News and do this or that, I did not have time to worry about how I was going to do it or the outcome of my performance. I just did it and trusted God to work through me.

Be joyful always, pray continuously, give thanks in all circumstances. 5:16

The return to ordinary life was discouraging. My work seemed to have little meaning. Nothing compared to being in complete service to the Lord. As I prayed about this disappointment and discussed these feelings with others, it became clear that I can completely serve the Lord right here. In every situation, conflict or conversation, I have an opportunity to choose love and obedience over self and pride. With this epiphany and lasting experience, my walk is more joyful, more bold and more purposeful than ever imagined.★

Just Do It By Amy Dietrich Mark

If we're all honest with ourselves, we know that God wants us to be effective. We may not be sure what that exactly means or how it will be expressed, but we know that He has a purpose for us. He has things for us to do.

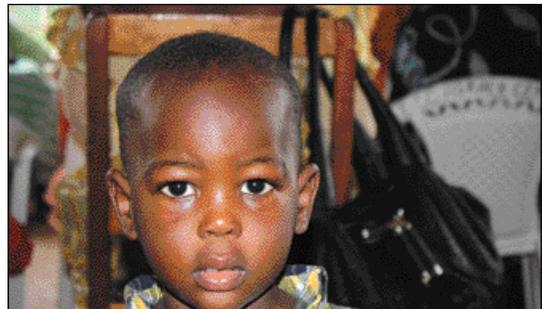
Our trip to Sierra Leone was one of these things. For the seven of us that went, God's call on our lives for this trip could not be ignored. We all individually stepped out in faith, but collectively we were a team hoping to be effective for Christ's Kingdom. Sure, we prepared ourselves for the trip. We spent many nights as a team outlining lessons and practicing the drama piece; we took a camping trip to grow closer on a personal level; we shopped for supplies; and then, we were ready. Ready for what, you may ask. I don't think we quite knew either, but at the very least we were willing.

Our time in Sierra Leone flew by. There were times when we were uncomfortable both physically and emotionally, however, through it all, God's hands were so evident that it would have been impossible to slow down. When you can see people's lives being transformed you really don't want to stop what you're doing. Michael allowed us to come along on what his team does week after week, month after month. They serve. Wholeheartedly. They go out and speak to those society forgets. They share their resources to support the body of believers they are a part of. They work all day long to share the love of Christ. And they can go to sleep at night knowing that they were effective for God. Each day, every day.

And how did they exactly share Christ? They just did it. They just went up to the group of kids sitting at the corner and

asked if they knew Jesus. They walked up to the person doing work outside of their home and asked if they had a minute to talk. They called schools to find out if they could be part of an assembly. They put on their own classes and invited others to come. They were bold for Christ, and He used them. Yeah, some people were too busy and some organizations weren't interested, but it didn't hurt to ask and those unsuccessful ventures were unimportant in the whole spectrum of life. The Gospel is being shared unabashedly in Sierra Leone. What an amazing concept!

Honestly, there are many days that I'm pretty sure could just be skipped as far as my effectiveness go. But then, on those glorious days that I put forth the effort and God allows me to see Him at work, nothing can compare. Nothing can be better than being a part of God's plan of redemption. And most of the time, we simply need to do what we know we should be doing. Just talk to that person when you have the prompting. Just continue the conversation when religion is brought up. Just do that something.★



Michael's youngest son Nathan. He was always willing to 'voice' his opinion around the house.

Questions and Answers About the Africa Trip

By Aaron Morton



How effectively were you able to “serve and share God's word” in Sierra Leone?

We were pretty effective throughout the trip, every-day from 7am to 5:30 at night working. Meaning going to schools or evangelizing across the city. At

the end of the day you were so tired, you needed rest and food to reenergize for the next day.

What obstacles were you able to overcome?

As far as the obstacles, seeing the poverty and pollution was hard to grip with. And the kids having bad living conditions like no bathrooms or just washing your hands. And it was hard to leave them, but I trust that the Lord will take care of his people.

How were you able to overcome cultural differences?

Being accepting and understanding is the best way to overcome differences. But we were given African names; mine was Foday meaning speaker for the chief. This allowed us to go up to people and automatically they loved our African name and broke the cultural barrier.

Describe the living conditions in Sierra Leone.

The living conditions for us in Sierra Leone were nice; we had a house, 5 bedrooms, 3 baths, and running water (cold) if you wanted hot water you had to warm it up. And flushing toilets (sometimes) and that is living like a king over there. So they have housing but only the rich have houses and the poor live in aluminum sheds with no running water.

How did you overcome the language barrier?

The language barrier was easy to overcome, because it was half English and half Krio and even the Krio sometimes sounded like English. But we were also grouped with a Freetown member when we went out to evangelize which helped a lot.

Describe how you "trained" your brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone?

I believe I was more in training on the trip then training others. Yes, I talked about fitness and health to my brothers in Freetown. But God was training me to be a better worker for his kingdom.

Did you find any health clubs or fitness centers in Sierra Leone? Are the people in Sierra Leone into sports?

I did not see any health clubs, but I did see people exercising running up and down the mountain. Soccer was the favorite sport in the country. Education on nutrition seemed to be the real need to the people, not that they were to overweight but malnourished.

Describe some of the most memorable aspects of your visit to Sierra Leone? What will you always remember about this trip?

The whole trip was memorable, but I will have to say the people of Sierra Leone made a great impression on me. Especially, the Freetown team in the way they worked so hard every day.

Having worked with Michael Turay, what are his ministry's greatest needs? How can our church and community continue to help him?

Having worked with Michael Turay the ministries greatest need right now is to find an office to move into. I believe his lease is up and needs to relocate. Perhaps, if he had his own church and did not rent week to week that would also help. My list could go on and on but most importantly your prayers. Please pray for them.

Thank you for letting me represent First Baptist Church, it was an honor to serve God with your support and prayers. So the next time you go camping, electricity turns off, or your hot water turns cold, just think this is great training for Africa!★



Aaron leading one of the many groups of kids during our VBS. (250 kids, check. 4 A-Team members there to teach them, double check.)



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