

RON PELLEY

Some thoughts during the Sierra Leone Mission Trip  
March 29th – April 11, 2008

I was fortunate to be able to go to Sierra Leone on a small group mission trip. Our group took off from different points in America on Saturday, March 29th to host a no-cost eyeglass clinic the following Thursday. We'd be giving people exams and fitting with them glasses – many people for the first time in their lives! In the 5 days of travel before our first meeting, we got to know our host missionaries, Del and Linda Meyers. They are from the Minnesota and have been serving countries in western Africa since 1994. I knew that I wanted to serve the Lord and spread the good news of the gospel, but I thought my options were serving at Our Savior Lutheran Church in South Windsor, CT and an occasional, yearly maybe, short term mission trip to serve others. I didn't realize that serving overseas on a longer-term basis was an option for me. However, Del stayed up with me talking about the work he does sharing agricultural knowledge and working with church leaders to spread the word of God. In teaching me about his agricultural work to promote long-term results, he planted a seed in my heart that has moved me to pray about serving God in a long-term commitment with my wife in an area of the world in need. Pretty amazing!



*I knew immediately that when I returned from Kenya in August 2007 that I wanted to go back to the continent of Africa.*



Driving in Sierra Leone proved to be both interesting and nerve wracking. This part of my journey began at the Enfield, Ct AAA office obtaining my international driver's license. I had a fleeting thought about the side of the road I would be driving on. There

were 2 of us who were going to be driving the Defender. Unfortunately, team member Steve didn't feel well when we picked up the vehicle so I immediately volunteered to take on the driving responsibility. The road rules were different in Sierra Leone from the rules we know in the United States! Some intersections don't have stop signs, and the bigger vehicle has the right of way. I was concerned with the motorbikes and scooters and didn't want to have an accident. After a while, I realized that I had to take a more aggressive attitude towards driving if I was going to be successful in making our time schedule. People there have learned to do whatever it takes to survive – even in driving. I saw first hand that they are missing the peace that can only come from knowing God.

City driving was very treacherous. There were many smaller cars, scooters and even people walking in the road that caused me to hold my breath. I wasn't sure if people knew they were being unsafe or if this is just how they operate. I was following our host missionaries, Delano and Linda Meyer, when suddenly their vehicle was out of sight. Here we were in a large congested "city" where people were in the road, scooters were zooming in and out of traffic, vehicles at intersections didn't follow rules and I was separated from the lead. I had no idea where Del and Linda were. I couldn't see them ahead of us because of the road dust, which occurs when roads aren't paved but just dried mud paths, and we were suddenly feeling very small in a large foreign land far far away from home. A short prayer, some guidance from God, a few wrong turns and finally we were able to see Del coming after us. What a relief! Reflecting on my experience driving in Africa made me realize how much we depend on earthly sight. We needed to see Del to find our way. Many of the people in Sierra Leone needed glasses to see. That's why we were there – but we got to share so much more! Jesus came to give us faith that makes it possible to see with the eyes of our heart! Jesus is the way the truth and the light that whoever believes in him will have everlasting life.

## TUESDAY, APRIL 8TH

During the eyeglass clinic in Jembe we met a refugee woman with her youngest son who fled Liberia six years ago when rebels killed her husband and destroyed her home. She has five other children who were dispersed and may be in refugee camps in Guinea. The son who is with her that day was just a young baby. She's had opportunities to return home, but still remains questioning their where-about. She is afraid to go back to her home because it has been destroyed. It was difficult to understand why she was still in Sierra Leone when her children may be in another country, but it was not difficult to understand her fear of going home because of the past unrest and her home being destroyed. She continues to live in a refugee camp where most people have returned to their countries and homes. She has not lost faith in God; she has been through much and was helping the local pastor at the witness station. My prayers are for her to find peace and her family members and return to her homeland, which is what she wants to do.



*Hetty Wilson (mother) is in the yellow tee-shirt.  
Her son, Francis Beloved Adusei, is seated.*



**DELANO AND LINDA MEYER**, farmers from Minnesota on a long-term agricultural mission trip, hosted our small team of 7. Debby Suchyta, an employee of MOST (Mission Opportunity Short Term) was our leader. Their expert leadership helped us to travel safely for five days, air, sea, and, land to get us to our first clinic in Kailahun, deep in the eastern portion of Sierra Leone on the boundary of Liberia and Guinea. Delano and Linda's love and joy serving the Lord in Africa is an inspiration for me to give my life to serve the Lord.