



LIVING is GIVING

Tim Burchill, Editor



A Long and Winding Road to Graduation

by Bill M. Woyah

As the saying goes there is no success without a story. In life there are always road blocks along the way that one must face and overcome, and that has certainly been true for me. Overcoming obstacles has especially been part of my journey to get an education.

Here is my story.

As a child, I started my primary education in Ivory Coast where my parents had migrated during the first Liberian civil war. While living in Ivory Coast my family struggled. When we were at school my parents went into the bush to gather firewood to sell so they could buy food for us to eat. Many days we had no food and went to bed hungry. At times my mother would tell us we shouldn't go to school because of our not having food in our stomach. My parents then started to go into the Ivorian bush to burn wood for charcoal because it sold for more than plain firewood and they could then have enough to pay our school fees. During this time (1999) my mother and two sisters were admitted to a resettlement program and left to emigrate to the United States.

My father and the rest of my siblings then moved back from Ivory Coast to Liberia, to see whether things had or would become better. As soon as we moved back I went to live with my grandfather. I lived with him for three years, but was forced to leave when I entered fourth grade and the second Liberian civil war started. The government was attacked by rebels, and once

again Liberia was a dangerous place to live. I stopped going to school and everyone went into survival mode. Hunger was everywhere and, even as children, we started following people into the bush to look for cassava to feed ourselves.

In 2004, after all the tragedies of the war, I was able to go to school again. I was now twelve years old and in the fourth grade. I started attending the Seventh Day Adventist school at ELWA Junction, Paynesville. I was so grateful to be back in school, but it still wasn't easy to study or concentrate because of hunger. Many times I went to school without lunch because my father never had money and my mother was in America, working, but still struggling to support all of us. By the grace of God and the hard work and support of my family, I was finally able to graduate from high school in 2012.

Upon graduation my dream was to become an information technology (IT) specialist. I had developed a passion for it during my late high school years. Only 10th-12th graders were allowed to use the computers and anyone younger was not allowed to even enter the computer lab. Finally, once I was promoted to 10th grade, I was allowed to sit behind a computer. It was amazing to me! From then on I always wanted to spend time in the computer lab. The technology instructors became my favorite teachers. Having gone through school with so little computer knowledge I decided I must take learning computer skills very seriously.

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Bible talk Children Receive a Meal every Month

At the beginning of 2024, LIG Board of Directors budgeted funds to enable all children at all four branches of the Bible Talk Organization to be given a full meal at least on a monthly basis, when they come together to study God's Word, praise, worship, sing, and fellowship. For many, this is the only substantial meal they will receive that week. Besides helping to stave off starvation, it gives dozens of children a reason to attend BTO gatherings, so they can learn about Jesus, his teachings, and his plan of salvation for all believers. It is our goal to feed these children at least once per week.



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LIG Farming Update

by Bill M. Woyah

It is indeed an exciting moment to share with you some of the recent happenings in regards to Living is Giving's mission work in Liberia.

This year LIG engaged in planting a variety of new crops in addition to cassava. The new crops include, corn, cucumber, plantain, pineapple and red palm trees. There is a common saying that "an empty bag cannot stand". Food is very important for humans, and as such, we have been working harder every day to improve LIG's farm to put more food on peoples' tables.

Over the past two planting seasons (2022 and 2023) we used the traditional Liberian method of planting cassava. We planted cassava in large quantities because we acknowledged that cassava is used many different ways for food in Liberia. Therefore we made cassava our first top targeted crop. This year we again planted cassava but approached planting using a different method. In 2023 we were given the opportunity to be trained in Farming God's Way, a method of sustainable farming practices that has been proven to increase yields. We are fortunate that Farming God's way has an establish presence along with trainers, located in Ganta, Nimba county, Liberia

By God's leading, in 2023, the trainers, Pastor Bill and Michael, accepted our request to offer a training workshop in the Farming God's way philosophy and methods, for LIG's volunteers. In 2024, the cassava planting was done using Farming God's Way methods. Now, because of the new approach the harvest this year will be greater than the past two planting seasons.

On May 10, 2024 the first corn harvest was completed and distributed among the volunteers and other beneficiaries. We are looking to do a second harvest soon.

Fighting food insecurity, through the farm, providing quality education, starting and building a school, along with providing medical attention, building a clinic are the major points of LIG's mission in Liberia. Since April 21, 2022 the first major focus has been farming. Putting sufficient food on people's tables is a top priority. It is at the root of everything we attempt to accomplish.

Thank you for your support and prayers towards our mission work.

From page one . . . A Long and Winding Road

In 2012 I told my mom about wanting to become an IT specialist. Sadly, my mother was the only source of support for my siblings and me both in Liberia and the United States. Her income wasn't enough to get me enrolled in post-secondary training.

I waited and prayed. At that time there was no avenue for me to become an IT specialist so I enrolled in the Licosess Mobile Teacher Training College (LMTTC) where I pursued an associate degree in education- school administration. I started school in 2013 and was able to complete two semesters.

In 2014, when I was preparing for my third semester an obstacle once again reared its ugly head: the deadly disease, Ebola. During this epidemic many lives were lost. After this sorrowful time, by the merciful hand of God, my family and I were fortunate to still be alive.

In 2015 my return to school was a bittersweet moment. Some of my friends were no longer anywhere to be seen. I learned Ebola had killed them and their families. I mourned their painful departure from this earth but became determined to finish this journey we had started together.

In 2016, with help from my mother and other family members I was able to graduate with my associate degree in education.

At that time Monrovia Bible College (presently Carver Christian University) was offering a bachelor of science degree in Christian education. I wanted to enroll without delay but once again couldn't because of lack of funds. My mother, who had always been my main source of financial support, was now attending to my older brother's schooling as well. I needed to wait until he finished his associate degree in nursing from Grand Bassa Community College in Liberia. I still wanted to get started so I enrolled at Carver using what little funds I had been able to save. I could only carry nine credit hours and after that semester was forced to drop out.

My mother never gave up on my dream of becoming an IT specialist and was continually looking for opportunities to help me. In 2020 she conferred with my siblings, now grown and U.S. citizens, about my passion. They all agreed and were happy to pledge their support in every way possible once I was able to get accepted and enrolled in an American university. She also discussed it with extended family members living in the U.S. and they too promised to help. The search was then on for a university, ultimately leading to Montclair State University in New Jersey, which was accepting students into their IT program. Immediately upon receiving this information I started the application process.

It was at this time my mother contacted Tim and Christine Burchill. My family made a portion of the necessary

financial deposits but there were some other hurdles and help was needed. It is here that Tim and Christine played a very significant role, a role that is beyond description. Tim filled out and filed all the sponsorship forms not once, but twice! All that was left was to get the necessary visa from the U.S. Embassy in Liberia. However, the consulate officer at the embassy denied the visa without explanation. It was at this moment I saw my effort, my mother's efforts, Tim and Christine's efforts, and the efforts of my siblings and everyone else, go swirling down the drain. I was frustrated and cried for the loss of such a wonderful opportunity to study in an advanced and developed nation like America. Any documents acquired from the U.S. are very important in Liberia and allow for great opportunities to get jobs with the Liberian government, NGO's and other organizations.

I quickly regrouped and told myself this wasn't the end of life. Once again I starting thinking of how I could go back to Carver Christian University to get my bachelor of science in Christian Education. It was at this time Tim and Christine once again came to my aid, taking full responsibility for the cost of my schooling. All along my "American Parents", as I call them, paid my school fees. I studied like never before to prove myself worthy of such support. By God's grace I earned good reports and for three semesters was honored as a Dean's List student. I was also recognized by the head of the Education Department and was called upon to represent the department at different functions. On July 10, 2024, I graduated from Carver with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education Administration.

Life is all about determination. I believe it is important never to allow disappointment to keep one from pursuing one's goals. There are always better opportunities ahead. Thank you to my "American parents", my mother and everyone who never gave up on me. It is your constant support that brought me this far.

Dear readers I am grateful you took your precious time to read my story. I hope it inspires you to never give up when faced with a situation that seems insurmountable. If you are supporting someone's education please continue to do your best and let people testify to God's goodness through you.



Opportunities for Giving

200 Resin stacking chairs \$1500
 Bible talk meals \$500/month
 Electric generator \$400
 Simple school structure \$5000
 Teacher's salary \$175/month
 Regular monthly operating expenses \$2000/mo

Ways to Donate

By Check (no fees):

Payable to Living is Giving Inc.
 Send to: Tim Burchill
 1422 9th Avenue NE
 Jamestown, ND 58401

VENMO: @Livingisgivinginc

Zelle: Living is Giving Inc.

Website: livingisgivingliberia.org

Plea for Funds

LIG, like any humanitarian ministry, is in need of ongoing financial support. We understand not everyone is able to make a financial gift, and we appreciate your prayers. For those who are able to make a gift, please consider helping. LIG's budget for 2024 is around \$25,000. One time gifts of any size are much appreciated. We are also asking friends of LIG to consider a recurring monthly gift. LIG will soon have ACH capabilities, so that donations can be automatically deducted from a checking account each month. Other ways to give are listed above. Please prayerfully consider what you can do to help. Thank you so much.



Burchills Receive Recognition

Tim and Christine Burchill were presented an award honoring their work in Liberia at a ceremony held by Redemption in Christ Ministries (RICM) of Jamestown on Sunday July 7, 2024. RICM is a Christian congregation comprised of native Liberians in Jamestown and the surrounding area. The certificate presented reads: "Your dedication, selflessness and unwavering commitment to making a positive impact have not gone unnoticed, and it is with great honor that we recognize and celebrate your outstanding work in the Liberian community." Other award recipients that day included Rev. Bob Boyar of United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Erik Weber of St. John's Lutheran Church and Mindy Schmitz of the Jamestown Arts Center.

The pastor of Redemption in Christ Ministries is Rev. Robert Parsons. The congregation meets each Sunday at 11:00 A.M. on the second floor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown, ND. All are welcome!

Exciting Travel Plans!!!

Pending approval of a visa application by the U. S. embassy in Liberia, Bill M. Woyah, Living is Giving Executive Director will be traveling to the U.S. on September 22, 2024. He will be staying at the home of Tim and Christine Burchill in Jamestown. The main goals of Bill's visit will be to meet Living is Giving donors, speak to community, church, and civic organizations, and generally expand awareness of LIG's mission and ministry. Bill plans to be in the country until November 5. If you belong to, or know of, an organization or other group that would be interested in hearing more about Living is Giving, please contact Tim Burchill at (701) 659-0999 or tburchill@hotmail.com. We would love to come and make a presentation.