



LIVING is GIVING

Tim Burchill, Editor



Bill M. Woyah: An Extraordinary Servant of God

Bill Mongrue Woyah is the Director of Living is Giving Inc. in Liberia. Christine and I became acquainted with Bill through his mother, Mary, and two sisters who formerly lived in Jamestown and worked as CNAs at several health care facilities there.

Bill had been working as a teacher and minister in Liberia and producing education and music videos on the side. He also had a dream: to come to the United States to receive an education in the information technology field, and then return to Liberia to put this new knowledge to work for the benefit of his people. The Lord closed the door on that dream in 2021 when Bill was unable to obtain a student visa to study in America. He was given no reason at the time, but later found out that the policy of the U. S. government was to limit visas to people from impoverished countries, lest they try to stay in the country and become a “burden on society”.

By this time, we had recognized that Bill, now 31, was a man of great intelligence, talent, vision, and commitment, with a passion for improving the lives of his people in Liberia. We began talking with Bill about what we could do as Americans for his poverty-stricken nation, one of the poorest on earth. That is how Living is Giving was born.

Bill oversees LIG’s operations in Liberia, which consist of a rapidly expanding subsistence farm which is producing food for people in the local area, and the Bible Talk Organization which operates in four different communities in west central Liberia. He is also a senior student at Carver Christian University in Monrovia, Liberia, and will earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in education administration later this year.

Bill hasn’t had an easy life, Having been born during the first of two devastating civil wars which nearly destroyed the country, decimated the Liberian economy, and resulted in the deaths of thousands and thousands of innocent men, women, and children. Even now, more than 20 years after the war ended, the country has not recovered.

Here is Bill’s story, written in his own words:

***“I started my primary education in neighboring Ivory Coast [Cote d’Ivoire], where my parents migrated during the Liberian civil war. To support us, they went out into the bush to gather firewood to burn for charcoal, which they would sell to pay our school fees and buy food. Still, many days we had no food and went to school hungry. At times we were told not to go to school because we were so hungry.*”**

cont. page 3

New Website Launched, Logo Adopted

www.livingisgivingliberia.org

Living is Giving's new website went live in late December, 2023

The home page tells about LIG's mission and our agricultural project. There are also two "buttons" which can be used to donate directly to our organization, a form to send us messages, and a link to sign up for our newsletter. All past newsletters are also linked at the bottom in downloadable PDF format. In addition, there is a link to the LIG Facebook page.

Subsequent pages feature information about Liberia and the plight its people, the LIG Board of Directors, LIG's Bible Talk Organization, the different ways to give to LIG, and photo and video galleries.

We hope you enjoy the website and will tell anyone you know who may be interested to check it out. If you have any suggestions, we are always looking for ways to improve as well.



LIG Inc. Board of Directors

Christine Burchill: President
Tim Burchill: Secretary/Treasurer
Debora Denny: Recording Secretary
Bill Woyah
Ryan Kingsriter
Emmanuel Adams



Board Member Spotlight

Deb Denny

To discover that friends of mine, Tim and Christine Burchill, were involved in a budding food sustainability effort in rural Monrovia, Liberia was enriching for me. I have always liked to lend any assistance I can to encourage grassroots groups of people to improve their livelihood with basic human needs. With my background in business and law, as well as a personal love for gardening and admiration for regenerative agriculture, Living is Giving was a perfect organization to become involved with. I was even more convinced of the worthiness of LIG when I met our Liberian colleague and farming director Bill Woyah. Bill is a young man, finishing up his undergraduate degree as well as managing all aspects of the farm and its business transactions. Bill is not only intelligent and hard-working, he is a leader and a deeply faithful man. His combination of practical and people gifts are what this struggling rural area in Liberia needs. We are now on the third round of planting and many have been blessed by the food already harvested.

Among other career endeavors, I built a rural nonprofit mediation/conflict resolution center from the ground up, serving 24 rural counties in northeast Nebraska. Over the 14 years there, it grew from a \$30K budget to nearly a half a million dollar budget. This was done through mediation services income, grants, contracts, and training revenues. We worked with over 100 volunteers over that period of time. Clients and colleagues included farmers, ranchers, community businesses, families and four Native American tribes.

My husband Jeff Burling and I married in 2019 in Lincoln, Nebraska in the Nebraska Supreme Court's courtroom. Our officiants were an appellate judge and a Presbyterian minister, both of whom are dear friends and colleagues. Jeff and I went house hunting and were delighted to find our lovely 1935 English Tudor home in Jamestown where we moved in December 2020. I met Christine and Tim through church. Christine invited me to join P.E.O. where I've met many lovely women. We regularly visit Nebraska where Jeff's 95 year old mother lives and my two grown children and three grandchildren live. We are very blessed.



New President Brings Hope

General elections were held in Liberia on October 10, 2023, to elect a President, Members of the House of Representatives, and half of the Senate. Incumbent president George Weah was eligible for re-election. Liberia has numerous political parties, and to be elected outright, one must win a majority of the total votes in the first round. Otherwise, a runoff election is held several weeks after, in which the top two candidates "square off" against one another. That is what happened this year.

In the first vote, President Weah of the CDC party won 43.83% of the vote, while challenger Joseph Boakai of the Union Party, was right behind at 43.44%. The remaining 12% were split between eighteen other candidates. Weah, 57, is a formerly Liberian international football (soccer) star who later went into politics. Boakai, 79, an experienced politician, served as Vice-President under former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from 2006 to 2018. A runoff election between Weah and Boakai was held November 14, 2023. This time Boakai came out ahead with 50.64% and President Weah receiving 49.36%. It was the closest presidential runoff election in Liberian history.

Liberia has a history of corruption and even violence in electoral politics. Thankfully, this time the election run-up and first round were generally considered fair and free by both international and domestic watchdog groups, as were the runoff campaign and election. Nevertheless, many accusations of misconduct and dirty tricks flew back and forth between the parties, with no permanent effect. Early on November 18, President Weah conceded to Mr. Boakai and promised a smooth transition of power. It was a remarkable moment for Liberia.

Many of Liberia's past governments have been rife with political corruption and nepotism. Plum government jobs at high salaries were given to relatives and friends of whomever was in power. Foreign aid was often used for other purposes than for what it was intended. Bribery and graft have been major issues. With the election of President Boakai, there is new hope that there will be reforms which will result in improving the lives of Liberia's people, and that the level of corruption will be reduced.

We can only hope and pray!

From page one . . . Bill M Woyah

During this time (1999) my mother and two sisters were admitted to a resettlement program and left for the United States. The war ended, and my father and the rest of my siblings moved back to Liberia. I then went to live with my grandfather who worked hard to provide food, shelter, and education.

When I was in the fourth grade, the government was again attacked by rebels, and the second civil war started. Liberia was once again a very dangerous place to live. I stopped going to school and everyone started fighting for their lives. Hunger was everywhere. Even as children, we went into the bush to look for cassava to eat.

When we heard our village was going to be attacked by the rebels, my grandfather found transport for me to escape to Monrovia to join my father. The trip was very dangerous. There were many checkpoints along the road. All around me people were being killed, men, women and children. Mothers were raped in the presence of their children. So many horrible things occurred along the way.

I know it was God who protected me. This was most evident at one of the checkpoint gates where government soldiers tried to kidnap me and force me to be a child soldier at the war front. (I was ten years old.) I cried a lot in the hands of the soldiers. Other passengers in the car were also crying and pleading with the government soldiers to let me go. The commanding general finally told his boys to release me. At that time small soldiers were innocent boys, just children who knew nothing about war. They themselves were kidnapped by forces to fight on behalf of the government. So many people lost their lives and parents lost their children. At this point, hunger was so severe that even a small cup of rice couldn't be found. But by the grace of God, I made it safely to my father in Monrovia.

In 2004 I was able to go to school again. I was now 12 years old and in the fourth grade at a Seventh Day Adventist school in Monrovia. I was so grateful to be back in school, but still found it hard to concentrate because of hunger. Many times I went without lunch because my father had no money and my mother in America was working but still struggling to support all of us. I would depend on friends for food. On days they refused to share with me, I went hungry. I would then come home to no food in the house. It was during those times we would eat garri, a form of ground cassava. This was the food that rescued us from starvation. It is because of my personal story I am driven to be a catalyst for change in the lives of children who are facing daily hunger and unable to be in school."

After learning about Bill's life, I often wonder why I was so privileged to be born in North Dakota to a middle class farm family who never lacked for anything. Only God knows the answer to that, but with this privilege comes a strong obligation to give to those who were not, so fortunate.

Opportunities for Giving

200 Resin stacking chairs \$1500

Electric generator \$400

Utility vehicle for farm \$3000

Purchase of site for future school and clinic \$4000

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



Support LIG with your Prayers

Living is Giving has developed a mailing list which consists of family members, friends, and other individuals we know of who are interested in LIG's work, or whom we THINK may be interested. The response to our fund raising appeals has been gratifying, and our list of donors is slowly growing.

Fundraising can be a real chore, and we realize that there are a thousand other worthy causes which potential donors can support. Maybe you are receiving this newsletter and are not able to give money to yet another organization. We totally understand. However, giving money is not the only way to support LIG.

We need an army of PRAYER PARTNERS who will bring the needs of LIG and the Liberian people to God in prayer on a regular basis. This is a ministry of feeding hungry people and ultimately helping lift them out of poverty through education and other forms of assistance. It can only thrive by the grace and blessing of God. Jesus said that if we ask anything in his name, he will hear our prayers and answer them.

So whether or not you are able to support us financially, please consider praying for LIG on a regular basis. We will keep you informed of our needs through our newsletter, website, and Facebook page. We will keep you on our list unless you are not interested and ask us to take you off.

Plea for Funds

God has been incredibly faithful in providing funds to move LIG forward in its mission to relieve food insecurity and ultimately enable Liberian youth to receive the education they need to lift themselves out of poverty. Most all of these gifts were one-time donations in amounts from \$10.00 to several thousands. We always appreciate and welcome these one time donations. They will always be a crucial factor in the support of LIG.

In addition to this we need to build a base of regular donors; individuals, families and organizations who will commit to help us carry this ministry forward and realize the goals and objectives set forth by our Board of Directors. A regular monthly gift will help with ongoing operating expenses. The amount of this gift is entirely up to the donor

Will you consider a regular gift? Right now, through online banking options at any financial institution of choice, a donor may set up a recurring payment to be issued monthly to LIG, without having to write a check or physically send money each month. This can be set up entirely according to the wishes of the donor. For more information on giving options, contact us at (701) 659-0999, or visit our website, livingisgivingliberia.org