



News from Gary & Stephanie Schulte - serving the Lord in Africa

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FUN WITH NUMBERS

SL, the Country!

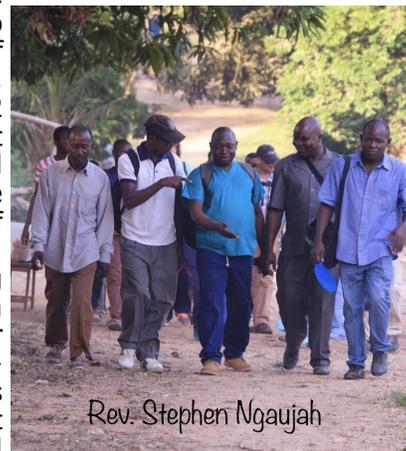
- Surface area: 27,925 sq. miles
- ◇ 197 miles East-West
- ◇ 199 miles North-South
- Number of Ethnic Groups: 16
- % Christian: 20.9
- % Animist: 1.1
- % Muslim: 78, up from 35 in 1960, 60 in 2000

SL, the Church:

- First LCMS Work: 1982
- 140 congregations
- 16 ordained pastors
- 28 catechists
- 7,500+ baptized

Mercy For Those Who Know No Mercy!

Greetings, dear friends and supports in Christ! I want to tell you a bit about the third ever Mercy Medical Team (MMT) visit to West Africa. It took place in Yardu, which is a village in the northeastern part of Sierra Leone, and was by far our most blessed and successful. Yardu is in the Kono region and that's where our dear friends, Rev. Ricky and Kim Jacob, established their work the very same year we first deployed to Africa - 1988. In fact, all five days of clinics took place in their former home, which they had to abandon in 1992 because of the outbreak of civil war. That home spent a number of years in rebel hands. But, last week, it became once again the site of the outpouring of Christ's mercy! All told, over the 5 days, the team served 1,450 people, including some men and women who had both arms cut off by the rebels during the war so that they could not use their fingerprints to vote in elections. All of this transpired in the context of a country that also recently lost thousands of people and 90% of its doctors during 3 years of the worst Ebola outbreak in human history. What an incredible example of the redemptive and healing power of Christ - truly mercy for those who know no mercy!



Rev. Stephen Ngaujah

As great as that is to talk about, what I really want to bring to your attention even more this time is the local Leonean church and its leaders who hosted this amazing event and served right alongside our team. The Church in Sierra Leone is certainly not our largest one in English speaking Africa, but it is arguably our strongest in spiritual terms. Why is this? It is simply the theology of the cross. Those who bear the heaviest cross for the longest time are those best prepared to proclaim the cross and the empty tomb faithfully.

Let me introduce to you the Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sierra Leone by introducing three of its principal leaders, who labored side by side with us for those 5 glorious days in Yardu:

Rev. Stephen Ngaujah This MMT absolutely would not have happened without Pastor Stephen, a local pastor and trained nurse. He worked tirelessly traveling up and down the country in the year leading up to the event. He is a Kono from the area, but works in the capital city down on the coast. Then he took on the incredibly difficult job of crowd control at the registration desk. He did not want to do this. He





- Praise God for 1,450 served during the 5 days—mostly Muslim!
- Thank God for the strong church leadership in Sierra Leone!
- Pray that the follow-up evangelism will reverse the rapid advance of Islam!
- Pray for our missionaries in Sierra Leone—Rev. Doug and Angie Thompson.
- Pray that our God of the Harvest would raise up more LCMS missionaries for West and Central Africa!

was afraid of doing this, but he saw that he had to do it and stepped up. As a native son of the area, he withstood barrage after barrage of insults and accusations for five days because he refused to show favoritism to anyone in line - Muslim or Christian - unless it was because of the severity of the medical condition. He was an absolute tower of grace and strength! Because of him, we largely avoided the chaos that plagued the MMT in Togo. And watching Rev. Stephen and Steph work together was an absolute joy! Stephen is truly a brother from another mother to her now. They have a bond forged in blood and sweat that will never be broken.

Rev. James Yasseh James is an absolute spark plug for the gospel and a gifted preacher. He has directed the CCTS, the theological training center in



Rev. James Yasseh

Jembé outside the city of Bo, for years. During our first encounter with him, Steph saw an old missionary copy of *Where There Is No Doctor* laying in his classroom. He humbly said, "Rev. Londenberg left that behind. After the Ebola crisis killed off all our doctors, I figured I'd better start teaching this to our people." It's actually rather appropriate that the only MMT picture I have of him shows him with his head down, humbly serving. He very patiently and lovingly did crowd control at the pharmacy all five days. At one point in the midday sun, he actually used his own body to shield the pharmacist from its brutal rays! James is not Kono, nor is he from anywhere near the area. He never asked us for money for travel or lodging. I had no idea where he was staying. As I said, He just quietly and tirelessly served.

Rev. John Bundor John is the newly elected president of the Church and the first non-Kono to hold the position. John is Mendé. That might not seem like such big news, but it is a huge sign of the humility of the leaders and the rank and file of this humble church body. In other African countries, it is quite common for the tribe first evangelized to never let go of the presidency.

At the MMT, John circulated among the people and preached the gospel at one of the morning devotions. In the midst of profusely thanking everyone multiple times verbally and in writing, he expressed his commitment to seeing his church follow up this amazing display of Christ's mercy to those who know no mercy with a renewed emphasis on Kono area evangelism, especially to the majority Muslim population in the area, many of whom now know for the first time that the God of Heaven is a God of Mercy!



Rev. John Bundor

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