

Life Portions



"The Lord is my portion..." Lamentations 3:24

Life Portions is a publication of First Baptist Church. It is an expression of gratitude and celebration for God's generous portions given to His people.

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LIBERIA 2011



Marilyn Hall and children at the Comfort K. Toe orphanage.

by MARILYN HALL

In front of our temporary residence on the campus of Ricks Institute were some bleeding heart plants. In fact, they were scattered about the whole area. They seemed to me to be a token of the bleeding of this country's people during their brutal war of the recent past.

Our diverse group of eight members of FBC, ranging in age from 16 to 75 years old, arrived in Monrovia safe and sound a day later than planned, on June 18, 2011. Our flight from Brussels to Monrovia was diverted to Toulouse, France, because of engine trouble. There we spent the night in a Radisson Hotel compliments of the airlines while a new engine was installed. We were able to resume

our trip the next afternoon. Actually, that contributed to us arriving in Monrovia much more rested than we would have been the evening before when we were scheduled to arrive.

While spending eleven days in that area we visited the three churches of the church planters where the pastors of their district's churches assembled to welcome us, to receive training from Pastor Wade along with recognition for their accomplishments. During the training times, the rest of our group provided puppet shows, mime numbers, learning songs/motions, and crafts that were enjoyed by the adults as well as the children. There have been a total of 162 churches started in the past three years in partnership with OMS (One Mission Society). That organization's work is finished now, but FBC is still ministering there. Chelsea Fullerton, Evan Stewart, along with puppeteers, Josh Wertenberger, Sharon Stewart, and Peggy Graber were marvelous! Terry Stewart was our official photographer. Squash seeds were given in each location in hopes that they will grow it to get more vitamin A in their diets along with vitamin C. Enough cannot be said to pay proper tribute to

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Peggy for all her planning that started long before we left El Dorado.

Our day in Bomi County was the one I had been preparing for in advance. We visited the church at Klay Town and the Klay Clinic that had been re-opened only a few months ago was nearby. What a privilege it was to deliver a large quantity of meds and medical supplies to that clinic; to see the joy on the faces of Cora, RN. and the other clinic workers was such a blessing! These supplies had been donated through Kingsway Charities and Hospitals of Hope. Our church provided funds to purchase drugs in a wholesale pharmacy in Monrovia for malaria, typhoid, maternity kits, and other needs that had been requested. That clinic has a PA. in charge. They transfer serious cases to the JFK Hospital in Monrovia. That is probably approximately 75 miles away. We also passed out health booklets to a large crowd of people there and went over the contents with the help of an interpreter. Thanks to Liz McNown, who had composed these booklets before another trip, they contained instructions for home cleanliness and care that was tailor-made for these people.

Our visits to Comfort K. Toe Orphanage were very special for us all, but especially for the Grabers, who have ministered there over the last several years. They have fifty-five children ranging from 3 to 21 yrs. of age. The first high school graduate, Joseph, did very well at Ricks Institute, and will go to Cuttington College for college work in the fall. He will enter a scholarship competition next year because of his considerable potential. He could win a 4 year scholarship to Mercer College in the United States. The orphanage has a school on its compound that takes them through the 6th grade. Some other neighborhood children attend also. The directress, Mary, has health problems that will now be addressed more appropriately because this trip was made.

The Grabers planned a reception to honor Joseph at the orphanage as the first high school graduate in its existence. What an afternoon! The amount of cookies and cool aid consumed was momentous! Gifts had been brought for the children: dresses made by church members, soccer uniforms for both boys and girls teams, along with other things were delivered. It was noted by Peggy that the atmosphere there is much more positive than it was a few years ago. These children lost one or both parents in the war.

Graduation day at Ricks Institute was quite an occasion! In fact, a three-hour oc-



Joseph Kollie from Comfory K. Toe orphanage with his fellow orphans. Joseph and Christopher were the two boys who originally met Pastor Wade and Evan Graber. They invited them to their orphanage. Six years later, the team celebrated Joseph's graduation from Ricks Institute.

casation. Thirty-seven students graduated this year. Gifts of a tee shirt/devotion booklet/pen were given to each graduate from our church. Their standards are high and prepare the students well for college work. They have an exchange program with Mercer Univ. in Georgia, and we met two Americans who had volunteered a year there just out of college to teach. Another arrived just before we left who had just graduated with her masters degree and would teach five weeks of summer school on a volunteer basis.

This article does not begin to do justice to all the relationship-building and God-directed events that happened during our stay. God is doing mighty things in Liberia. They are a people who work very hard to maintain their dignity. Christianity is on the move there not unlike it was in the early days of Christianity; like it was then, there is opposition -now from the Muslims. There is a new boarding school going up in Cape Mount County, the need being that lots of young people have accepted Christ and have been disowned by their Muslim families.

Each time a mission team goes to that area it can be seen that Liberia's bleeding heart is healing, but they still have a tough road ahead to travel. How marvelous that God calls some to help Him there. The Christian people trust God to sustain them and cling to Him in a way that is very humbling to us self-satisfied Americans. It seems that our visits are giving them more hope.

The primary mission of the FBC team to Liberia was to celebrate the 162 churches planted there during the past 3 1/2 years. Plans for the future were also put in place.

The team also ministered at Ricks Institute, Comfort K. Toe orphanage, and Graber Ministries academy. The following is a brief pictorial synopsis. The team will be sharing at the lake supper this Sunday evening at 6:30pm at the amphitheatre.

CHURCH PLANTING



Clockwise L-R: Mary Herman made a portable puppet screen and she and Gene donated puppets to Liberia, too. The team shared puppets, VBS songs, mime, and medical missions while Pastor Wade led the pastor training sessions • Chelsea Fullerton and Evan Stewart show a mime song, "Who Am I," to honor the church planting pastors • The "kitchen" at the Glemmeh church planting celebration • Peggy Graber with church planting trainer, Richard Roberts and his wife Joyce at Glemmeh

RICKS INSTUTUTE



Clockwise L-R: Josh Wertenburger and Chelsea Fullerton hand out gifts from FBC to the Ricks Institute graduates. Seven K designed the t-shirts. Gifts, books and Sharpie pens were in the packet too • The team helped erect playground equipment at Ricks Institute • RISS students are children with monthly sponsors from FBC. They are receiving gifts and letters from their sponsors • Terry, Sharon and Evan Stewart at the rainy season bridge at Ricks Institute.

How to get to Heaven from Liberia

Imagine you want to walk from Monrovia to the deepest jungle of Liberia. You request some assistance for someone to show you the way. Two guides with their own maps offer to lead you on this journey. The guides and their maps show two different ways to the deepest jungle. You are not sure which one is true and the right way, so you hire both guides.

At first the maps seem similar and reliable, so you trust both guides. A few days into the journey, it becomes clear that the maps are very different and the guides are showing you a different way to get to your destination.

That night in the jungle, your camp is attacked and the two guides are both killed. You do not know where you are and you have no idea which way to travel. You just sit in the jungle wondering which guide's map is correct, so you know the right way. Three days after the attack, one of the guides comes back to life! He raises from the dead! You know immediately that he is the reliable guide and his map shows the true way. Jesus is the true Guide that shows you the way to heaven in His map, the Bible.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)." He is the way to heaven from Liberia. Follow these simple directions.

*First, understand that heaven/eternal life is a free gift. "But the free gift is not like the offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abundantly by many." Romans 5:15

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

*Second, realize that heaven/eternal life is free because Jesus paid a terrible price for it. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail King of the Jews!" Then

they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified." Matthew 27:27-31

"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered that Most Holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." Hebrews 9:12

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

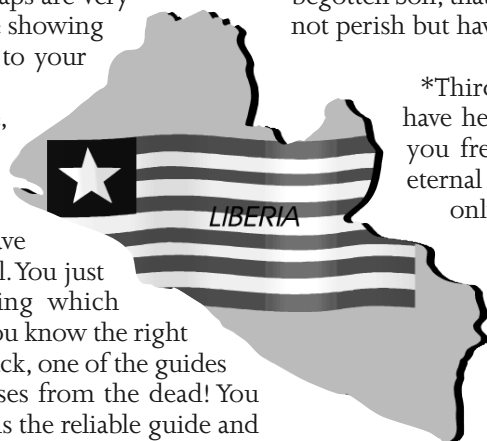
*Third, know that Jesus want you to have heaven/eternal life and offers it to you freely and personally. "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." John 17:3

"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." I John 5:11-13

*Fourth, receive Jesus and the gift of eternal life. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12, 13

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name, Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:24

Receive the gift of eternal life right now and make sure that you are going to heaven. If you have never received Jesus and the gift of eternal life, by a heart-felt prayer of invitation, receive Him by praying, "Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for loving me. Please forgive my sins and come into my life. I received You right now and the gift of eternal life that You paid for on the Cross. Come be in my heart by Your Holy Spirit. Please take control of my life, and help me to enjoy, responsibly, the gift of eternal life that You just gave to me. I will live with You forever according to Your promise. I have eternal life beginning right now because I have received You and trust in You only to save me by faith in You. I thank You and praise You for the gift of eternal life, I will live for You from this moment on as a way of saying thank You for giving me eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen."



The Value of a Good Name

In preparing for the mission trip to Liberia, I have been reading *Hoping Liberia* by John Michael Helms. The book has helped me get an idea of what Liberia has gone through as a nation and how Olu Menjay has been a part of repairing a war torn country. I have not finished the book yet, but the chapter I have thought about over and over is the one entitled "The Value of a Good Name." In this chapter, Helms tells of how Olu escaped from Liberia during the war. As he came near to crossing the border, soldiers detained him. Olu was carrying letters for some of his friends to family members who were already in the Ivory Coast. The guards who stopped him accused him of being a spy and ordered he be stripped and stated his penalty for such a crime was death. The soldiers had just shot a man and Olu knew that this too would be his fate. Just before his execution the commander stopped and asked Olu to identify himself. Olu told him his name, "Olu Menjay." He was then asked if his father was Harrison Menjay and Olu confirmed it to be true. The commander then told of how Harrison had given him a scholarship to attend school when he did not have enough money to afford schooling. Orders were given to the soldiers to give Olu his clothes back. He was also given \$10 and a Coke from the commander and was allowed to cross the border. Olu was reminded of Proverbs 22:1 that says, "A good name is more desirable than great riches. To be esteemed is better than silver or gold."

This story got me to thinking about the importance of my name and the impact I have on others. What do people think of when they think of your name? Do they think of compassion? Do they think of love? Do they think of Christ? As we start summer, I encourage us all to evaluate what our name tells others and think of ways that our name will reflect the name of Christ.



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"Justus O'Reilly"

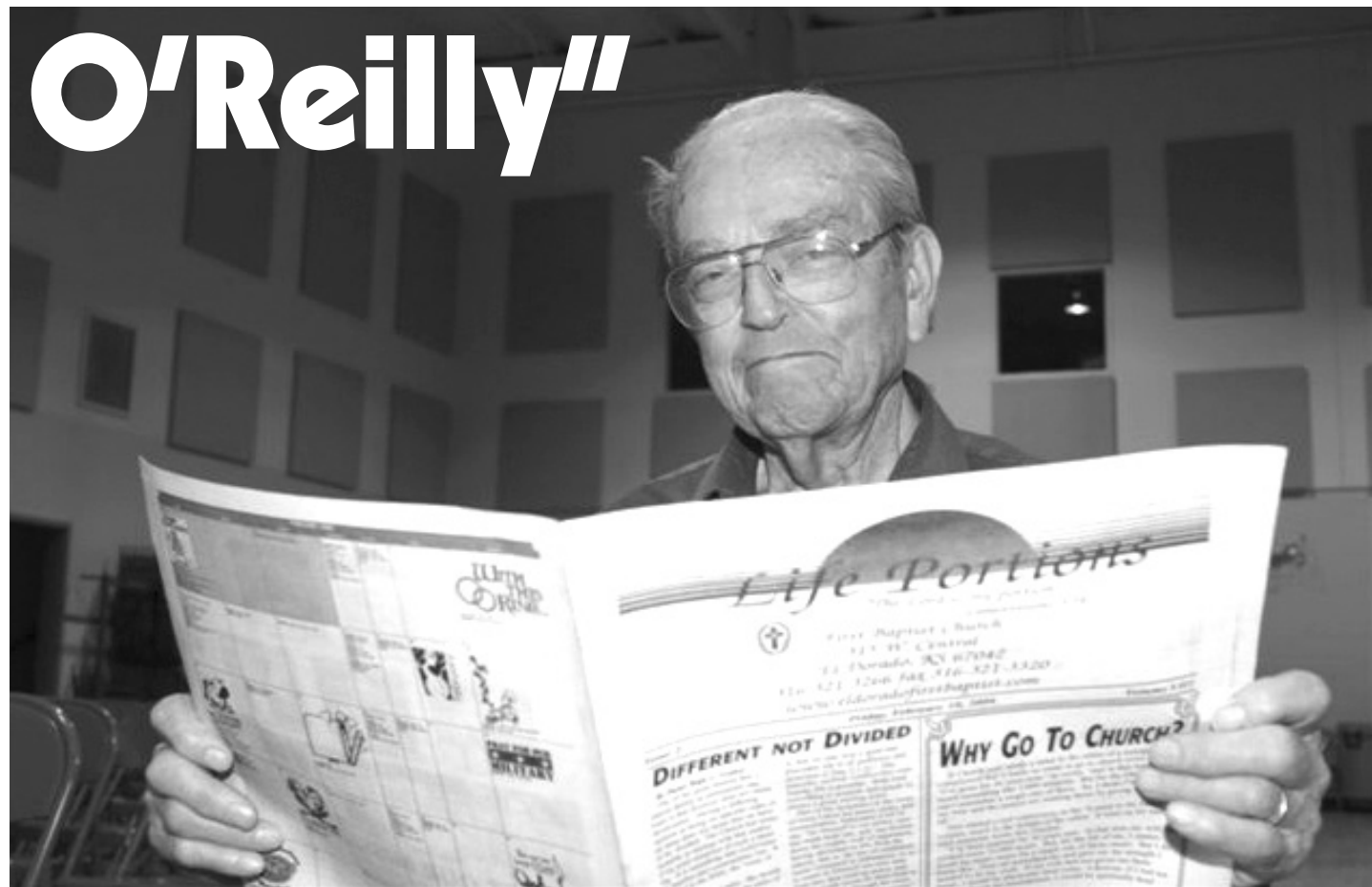
by EVAN GRABER

Longtime member of First Baptist Church, Justus O'Reilly, passed away this last Sunday. Most people more likely knew him as Jud. He was a man of extraordinary abilities, extraordinary commitment, and extraordinary discipline. This ranged from his years working in the family drug store in Girard, to being an All-American runner at Kansas State, to climbing the management ladder of Skelly Oil. His accomplishments were great, varied, and admirable; but I first knew Jud as my next door neighbor.

Jud was old when I met him. He was eighty-six; I was eleven. That did not stop us from becoming fast friends. He taught me how to drop kick a football (complete with demonstration). He let me pick apples and pears from his fruit trees. He told me adventurous stories from his youth. As I grew up, so did the things that Jud shared with me. He shared books, ideas, and advice. I am forever indebted to the wisdom that he imparted into my young life.

In the last years that Jud lived next door, health began to be a concern; and there were many nights that I was invited over to stay the night to give him a hand.

We made a couple of late night runs to the hospital. It never turned out to be anything too serious, but as he put it "At



my age you do not feel like taking any chances". It was during these stays that the nature of our relationship matured again. By this time, I was coming to the end of my high school years; and I was making plans to go off to college.

At this point, the stories and advice were no longer told and given as general anecdotes. The stories rang with the honest voice of personal experience and heartache. The advice was pointed and personal. The things he told me during those years still resound in my ears and in my heart as I face my life today, and the reason they ring so true is that I saw how truly they

were lived.

I could tell stories, offer maxims, and teach the lessons today that Jud taught me. Instead today, I remember Jud. He knew that there is more to life than stories, because he lived them. He knew that life is more than maxims, because they had governed his life for years. He knew that life is not something that can be taught. It is something that can only be lived.

Jud was a man who loved the Lord with all of his heart, his soul, his mind, and his strength; and he loved this neighbor as he loved himself.



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