

Farewell to Freetown... and on the move again!



Public Transport!

Many things have happened in the last three months, but we praise God for His direction and faithfulness. In March, WEC International made the decision to end the work in Sierra Leone as of September. The last few months have been spent informing people and working at ways of closing down the work here in

a manner that encourages sustainability. We believe that God can use the Children's club programme in an amazing way to reach children and communities, but not all the churches have caught the vision. For the juvenile prison ministries, we have prayed that God would provide alternative Christian groups to continue the work. We still do not have a definitive answer, but there are a couple of possibilities - please continue to pray with us that there is a positive Christian witness into the Remand Home and Approved School.

It is a time of transition for all of the team, both national and ex-pat. As the office will close in September, most of the team are looking for other work. Some are investigating the possibility of Bible school with a view to later ministering in Sierra Leone. For the ex-pat team members, there is the question of God's future direction. We are all aware of God's hand over us, but the decisions are not easy!

When we came to Sierra Leone, we believed that God was calling us here for a time, and we know that this time is now coming to an end. Therefore, as planned, we will be leaving Sierra Leone in August to return to the UK. Once there, we will resume our studies at All Nations. We anticipate the time in UK to be a chance for reflection on our experiences in Sierra Leone, and also to wait on God's leading for the next step. We still believe that God has called us to serve Him in sub-Saharan Africa, and are in contact with the WEC UK office about possibilities. Please pray with us that God makes His way clear, in His time (although we often feel we would rather it was in our time).

THE HIGHS AND LOWS

Highs...

- 1** Going to the opera – Krio style!
- 2** Seeing an unemployed friend open a shop to support his family
- 3** Another exciting team retreat
- 4** Prize-giving at the Approved School
- 5** Seeing God's provision for housing near All Nations

Lows...

- 1** Realisation that we need to say farewell to friends we have made here
- 2** Water shortages again – fetching water in jerrycans from 1 mile away (fortunately we can pay someone to carry it on their head for us!)

We have just finished the two-year children's club programme, and are currently proof-reading it before printing. A Parental Training course of 10 lessons has also been devised and is being piloted in Freetown and Kailahun. The aim is to support parents and to challenge some of the many cultural practices that are not necessarily healthy, while offering Biblical alternatives. The Parental Training is causing great excitement! After one session in a location near Freetown, the church responded, "We all need to hear this - let's take it to the chief." Here is a potential opening to communities that otherwise might be closed to the Gospel.

PLEASE PRAY...

1 For good closure of the project in Freetown

As Sylvanus, Francis and Stephen have been working for several months on the basic education with the boys in the Approved School, we felt it was right to acknowledge their work by holding a prize-giving ceremony. Staff at the prison attended and the boys were presented with certificates for completion of part 1 of the Numeracy course. For many of the boys in the prison, this was the first time they have ever received a certificate for anything, let alone for academic achievement. They were justly proud of themselves! One of the boys asked to speak on their behalf and thanked Sylvanus and Francis for their hard work and their support. It was a special time. The teaching continues at this institution, with the boys now learning some basic English.

2 For continued good health

3 For opportunities to say good 'goodbyes' to friends in Sierra Leone

The past months have seen friendships deepen, with people sharing much about their lives, experiences and concerns for the future. Sierra Leone will hold general elections next year and many people are nervous about the stability of the country. One man commented that, "...some of the candidates are so desperate for power that they will do anything to get it." Please pray for the country that the fragile stability will not be broken in the run up to the elections.

4 For God's continued provision as we return to the UK and all its expenses!

5 For stability during the run up to the elections

We have learnt so much during our time here, about people, God, and ourselves. We have appreciated your support so much, and as we enter another phase of our missionary journey, we hope you will continue to walk with us.

6 That God would bring light into the darkest places in Sierra Leone

Take care and God bless,
With love from,
Stephen & Catherine

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Until the beginning of August 2006

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