

The Prospects of Quality Christian Education in Post-War Liberia: The Way Forward

A Report

By

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Today's Liberia

After experiencing 14 years of one of the most devastating civil conflicts ever in sub-Saharan Africa, the nation Liberia stands in all kinds of needs today. One of the outstanding needs is the need for both quality and holistic education that emphasizes biblical Christian values know that the war no doubt left behind a scenario of moral decadence that only such education can help bring remedy.

During the 14 wasted years, most of Liberia's school-aged children were internally displaced while others fled to refugee camps in neighboring countries. This condition led to the creation of a new generation of school-aged Liberian children who have been exposed to sub-standard or no educational opportunities at all. Thus, today, in the "New Liberia" (Post-War Liberia), discussions about the restoration of quality education is the cry of both governmental and non-governmental organizations (this includes the Church and the entire Christian Community). This reality has also been affirmed by many international leaders visiting Liberia. In that light, when President George Bush recently visited Liberia, he donated one million textbooks to the Liberian schools in recognition of this situation.

Why We are Involved

As an individual member of IAPCHE for over five years and also the head of a Christian organization (AYLOM—African Young Life Outreach Ministries) we care a lot about and believes in quality Christian education for and in Africa. We think this is an opportunity for the Christian community both within and outside of Africa to help push Liberia forward in her post-conflict era.

AYLOM as an organization presently serving in three West African States (Nigeria, Ghana, and Liberia), has been involved with evangelistic, educational, and leadership development. Our emphasis is Christian primary and secondary school. A few years back, AYLOM in collaboration with a non-profit group (VAAD—Vision Awake Africa for Development) built a tuition-free school on the Buduburam refugee Camp in Ghana that is presently educating over 500 Liberian elementary school children. AYLOM also coordinates with other Christian schools regularly to train teachers, develop their curriculum as well as help other less privileged children and young adults pay their tuition based on needs and availability of funds.

AYLOM has just been in Post-war Liberia for over three months and this nation is our focus presently. In this short time, we have started home schooling 20 pre-school and elementary kids using a Christian curriculum developed in the USA. Modalities are being worked out for AYLOM's largest proposed project (The Young Life Discipleship and Development Complex) which will include a campus intended to educate over 1500 elementary and secondary students annually in Liberia.

How You Can be Involved

Apart from these African initiatives, we believe that institutions of Christian Higher Education and Educational organizations in other parts of the world can assist in several ways. Some of these include:

1. Being able to recruit and help send volunteer teachers for short-term and long-term teaching services abroad (to Africa/Liberia) to particularly selected or recommended Christian schools.
2. Making short-term trips to conduct seminars that will enhance teaching scales and staff development.
3. Helping with textbooks, curriculum development and other educational materials and,
4. Occasionally organizing fund drives to help feeding programs and educational projects in African elementary schools.

We believe that the above are also ways by which agencies, organizations, institutions and individuals can get involved in serving emerging schools in developing countries. Though there are other things like making monetary donations for specifically defined projects for educational purposes, and volunteering to use one's vocationally and experiential skills to personally get involved in building and other projects.

Lastly, fostering closer relationship between schools in different parts of the world can begin here: 1. we can start by developing viable students exchange programs that give students some 6 months to one year opportunity to live with and have experience with other students in other parts of the world and 2. We believe that forming regular summer teams of young and older students from various parts of the world who may visit to encourage each other and perhaps plan some educational projects that are both cost-effective and can be done within the period of one week to one month will go a long way relationally.

It is an opportunity and fun serving schools abroad. Besides, service in the Christian community is always an opportunity or a privilege. Helping with quality Christian Education in a post-conflict nation like Liberia is indeed a way forward but greater than that, it is serving our Lord Jesus Christ too.