

TRYING SMALL

Brian Palmer – ELCA Pastor/Missionary serving in Totota, Liberia

Jakob & Jeppe



Jakob digging sand for my church

Back in April I was asked to host two young men from Denmark, Jakob and Jeppe. In their early twenties, J&J stayed in Totota for three weeks and got the full package deal. They dug sand for construction of a church, they installed ceiling in the men’s dormitory, and they came with me as I taught in Gbarnga and fixed handpumps. They quickly grew comfortable with Totota and I was happy to see them freely passing around playing soccer and going to the road to watch soccer matches in the video club. They ate Liberian soup and rice every day and even accepted the inevitable intestinal consequences with smiles on their faces. We talked constantly and it was clear that they saw things they loved and things that challenged them.

Something J&J loved was worshipping at my church. I’ll try to remember to send a link to the video I took during a service while they were there. The service was small, loud, long and spontaneous.

There was an air of friendliness that was truly refreshing.

One week we went to a fund-raising event at a different church. The event consisted of a series of activities designed to raise money. We didn’t mind that, after all it was advertised as a fund-raising event. The thing that challenged us was the “tree.” The tree was a branch that had candy and juice tied all over it and people could pay small money to pick some fruit from the tree. So far so good. The problem occurred when they brought the tree out and presented it to the congregation. Everybody was asked to stand and extend their hands toward the tree and pray that God would bless it. As this was a little out of our comfort zone, J&J simply stood and looked at one another with slightly puzzled expressions on our faces. Perhaps we were over analyzing.



Blessing the “tree”?

On the penultimate day of J&J’s visit we used money from donors in Denmark to buy rice and oil and distribute it to a few of the neediest folks in the community. As we delivered the foodstuffs most of the people simply stood and looked at one another with slightly puzzled expressions on their faces. Perhaps they were over analyzing. In the end they were all very grateful.