

# TRYING SMALL

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



Najohn, Norah and Me standing over a faucet that hasn't had water going through it for 4 years.

## A Bit of a Break

The main thing I do is teach. I teach ministers for the Lutheran Church in Liberia where I live, and I also teach at the United Methodist University (UMU) in Gbarnga, which is a 45-minute drive away. For the past few weeks, I haven't been teaching. The UMU semester ended the first week of July, and students are not due to arrive in Totota until August 6th. I've been planning on this break from teaching for some time and used it as a chance to go to Foya.

Foya is in the bushiest part of Liberia, far away from urban centers. Soon, the roads will close due to the rain and mud, and they will not open again until sometime in late October or early November.

The reason I went to Foya was to work on a couple of projects for the Foya-Borma Hospital: 1) Installing a solar system to support their operating room, and 2) replacing a stolen solar water pump. Over the past few years, I've installed two other solar systems at the hospital: one for the obstetrics unit and the other for the lab. I can't tell you how it warms my heart to see these systems functioning well.

I don't go alone; I go as part of a team. A fellow named Najohn has been with me for all the installations. I started teaching Najohn how to do electrical work about 10 years ago. Today, it's how he makes most of his income, and he really does great work.

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The newest member of the team is Norah. I started teaching her all kinds of things related to construction, including electrical work, about 5 or 6 years ago. This was her first trip to Foya, and many at the hospital were very surprised to see a woman doing this kind of work. Over the course of the week we were there, we saw many disconcerted frowns gradually transform into nods of approval.

I could go on and on about Najohn and Norah, but it really is as simple as this: we have a lot of fun. We work hard and laugh a lot while we work.

I love teaching, but this break was alright... let there be light.



On the road to Foya