

TRYING SMALL

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



Transforming Lives and Building Futures in Liberia

The individuals in the photograph are lay leaders for the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL). The purpose of this photo was to commemorate the completion of Level 3; they now have just one more level to go before graduation. These students and this process were the primary reasons for my coming to Liberia. All the lay leaders who come to Totota and complete the four levels are transformed. They transition from preaching works righteousness to preaching Jesus' righteousness, emphasizing that we are saved by faith alone. In other words, they become Lutherans.

When I'm not teaching lay leaders in Totota, I'm instructing prospective pastors in Gbarnga. I love teaching and feel blessed to have a job that allows me to do what I'm passionate about.

Since taking office approximately a year and a half ago, the Bishop of the LCL, Rt. Rev. G. Victor Padmore, has been vigorously advocating for the development of the LCL's university. In the past, the LCL has operated two schools of nursing and

midwifery, one in Zorzor and one in Phebe. Recently, these schools started offering bachelor's degrees. Totota, where I live, will serve as the main campus of the Lutheran University of Liberia (LUL), initially housing the College of Theology and the College of Education.

A few weeks ago, Bishop Padmore asked me if I would be willing to take on two roles:

- Serve as Dean for the College of Theology
- Facilitate the establishment of LUL in Totota until a university president is appointed.

After consulting with my supervisor in Chicago, I agreed to Bishop Padmore's request. Since then, I've been feeling a mix of excitement and a nearly overwhelming sense of urgency.

Our goal is to begin teaching classes at the Totota campus of LUL in the next few months. There is much to be done, from recruiting students and teachers to creating classrooms and managing logistics.

We have a vision statement:

"To be the model for high-quality higher education in West Africa and beyond."

We also have a mission statement:

"To educate individuals as innovative, productive professionals, and entrepreneurs."

However, what we need most is God's blessing. Over the next few weeks, I will be sharing a lot of online information about the LUL. I'm asking that you take a look and pray. I've long believed that education is the key to Liberia's future, and this is our opportunity to help make it happen.

