Lott Carey Mission School in Brewerville, Liberia Celebrates Centennial

Since 1908, the Lott Carey Mission School in Brewerville, Liberia provides high-quality education for children K-12. Many students are former child soldiers from Liberia’s recent civil wars.
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Lott Carey’s Mission
The Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention helps churches extend their Christian witness to the ends of the earth. We execute this mission in the following three ways:

Health
• Prevention
• Restoration
• Reproduction

Education
• Alleviating Poverty
• Empowering Women
• Building Civil Societies

Ministry
• Evangelism & Discipleship
• Leadership Development
• Facility & Building Maintenance
The Lott Carey Baptist Mission School (LCM) in Brewerville, Liberia celebrated its 100th Anniversary with an academic and athletic demonstration, and worship April 10-13, 2008.

The historic event was witnessed by more than 1,000 students and hundreds of alumni, family members, friends, staff, and a special visiting group that included:

- Lott Carey President, Dr. Keith A. Troy
- Laymen’s League President, Calvin Martin
- Lott Carey Staffer, Bernard Lott
- Lott Carey Educational and Management Consultants to LCM, Charles and June Monterio
- Minister of Education and Administration at Shiloh Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., Rev. George Mensa
- Lott Carey Nigeria Superintendent, Rev. Kenneth C. Ebong
- Lott Carey Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. David Emmanuel Goatley

The event began with a warm worship experience on the campus where the students, staff, and administration packed the inside of the campus and swarmed outside.

President Troy preached an engaging sermon in which he reminded students of the tremendous gifts that God has given them and encouraged the children to say to the person beside them, “You don’t know who you’re sitting next to!” Dr. Troy was a hit with the entire student body.

The highlight of the week was the special address by the President of the Republic of Liberia, Her Excellency, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. President Johnson Sirleaf—the first democratically elected female head of state of an African country—stressed that students should seek academic excellence, personal integrity, and high ethical standards for Liberia to grow as a nation.

President Johnson Sirleaf is leading Liberia in a season of steady economic improvement, redevelopment of infrastructure, increased national security, reconstitution of institutions and services, and a higher status in the international community.

In her message, she also paid tribute to the rich history of LCM and the long and loyal leadership of the retiring Superintendent, Rev. Jeremiah W. Walker, who concluded his tenure of 36 years with LCM on June 30, 2008.

Another popular event was a science fair, where students proudly displayed their physical science, chemistry, and physics experiments with unlikely materials—a clear indication of how the years of civil decline and war took a toll on every aspect of life, even the academic progress of children.

The third day of celebration was for sports and recreation. Dr. Walker, Dr. Troy, Dr. Goatley, and the Lott Carey visiting delegation led a parade with more than 1,000 students. Witnessing the joy and excitement of pre-k to grade 12 students marching in the parade was a scene to behold. The event included music from a band and a thrilling display of traditional acrobatics, drumming, and dancing.
LCM athletes competed in four sporting games against the nearby Ricks Institute in boys and girls basketball, girls kickball, and boys soccer. Each school won two games.

During the festivities, the visiting delegation traveled 70 grueling miles to visit LCM-Bopolu. Started as a “sub-station” in the early 1960s, this second Lott Carey school is in a rural economically distressed community.

Since that time, the school has evolved to be the only school in the area. Education is now provided up to the eighth grade with every indication that the school will eventually provide education through grade 12.

The tenacity of Principal Isaac Varmah and the families, students, and staff in the area are inspiring to all who visit the school. The school does not have the transportation to move people the 35 miles of dirt road to the main highway where people have to travel another 35 miles to the city. A visit to Monrovia can take a day from Bopolu and when someone becomes ill, it can be fatal.

One recent visitor, Reginald Peterson, was so touched by the Bopolu community that he spearheaded an effort for Lott Carey to purchase a truck for the school. We are grateful for those who are working to ensure that our sisters and brothers in Bopolu have one form of basic transportation to strengthen the capacity of their work.

On the last day, West African pastor Rev. Kenneth C. Ebong gave the sermon at the closing worship service Sunday morning. He was able to connect with students and staff with his unique combination of preaching and singing.

The grand finale was a banquet honoring the retiring Rev. Jeremiah W. Walker as superintendent after loyal leadership for 36 years at LCM.

Attendees also celebrated how Lott Carey is having an orderly transition from Rev. Walker to the new superintendent, Rev. Emile D. E. Sam-Peal. He comes to LCM from a year of serving on the staff of the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia and 16 years as the General Secretary for the Liberian Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention where he led the organization to forge unprecedented missional relationships to benefit people throughout the country.

Rev. Sam-Peal is excited about investing his life in the life of children and Lott Carey is blessed to have him to lead us as we begin our second century of educating the children of Liberia.
Until the 1950s, the Lott Carey Mission School was the only accredited high school sponsored by an African American missionary agency. Happy 100 years!

Photos courtesy of Charles Monterio
Since the 1960s Unione Cristiana Evangelica Battista D’italia (UCEBI), Lott Carey’s mission partners in Italy, has been greatly enriched and influenced by the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America.

The world greatly benefited from King’s commitment to non-violence and his teachings on the importance of fighting all forms of racism, stress on human dignity, passion for fighting poverty and the connection with the testimony of a strong and genuine Christian faith.

UCEBI, along with Lott Carey, organized in Italy in 2007 and 2008 a series of events involving churches, choirs, youth, schools, civil and political institutions. These events aimed to highlight the relevance of King’s message for today, both internationally and in our country of recent immigration. We organized conferences, meetings in the cities, courses in the schools, and concerts in the jails and in asylum seekers and refugee camps. The main event took place October 31 to November 2, 2007 in Rome. Rev. J. Michael Sanders led a team of some 60 people from the Fountain Baptist Church in Summit, N.J. to lead in preaching and worship. Dr. Goatley led a team of peacebuilders from Lott Carey churches and the NAACP College and Youth Division who talked about resolving conflict in peaceful ways in cities across Italy.

We also enjoyed music, testimonies, preaching, panels, work groups, and the presentation of a book which we published on King and his legacy for today. During the conference we also launched a Martin Luther King International Award, a public recognition which assigned associations as champions in the field of human rights, freedom, justice, non-violence.

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On April 4, nearly 2,000 people—many of them standing—braved a freezing evening in Rome to take part in the 4-hour presentation of the Martin Luther King Award for Human Rights.

The evening, organized by the Italian Baptist Union and Lott Carey with the generous support of the city of Rome, couldn’t have gone better. Immediately we were aware that not only church members filled the square due to the coverage the event had received by local and national newspapers.

In Rome the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. began in the morning with a programme of words and music held at the Professional State School “Teresa Confalonieri.” In the main hall readings from King were interspersed with the Gospel Choir “Life Waters Ministries International” led by Negleatha Johnson and the “Jazz Game Project” group as well as with speeches by the person responsible for relations with the schools from the Rome council and testimonies from the United States: Councillor Dr. William A. Bell from the Birmingham City Council (Alabama) and Dr. Laurence J. Pijeaux, president of the Civil Rights Institute, Birmingham.

The presentation was in Campidoglio Square, where a huge photo of Martin Luther King and some of his most famous words dominated the square. Watching the many tourists that were visiting the square, I was particularly struck by a group of young people led by their school teacher. Their attention was drawn to some of King’s writings on display—they stopped to read them and take some photos. Some even got notebooks out of their rucksacks to copy King’s words:

“Love is the only force able to transform an enemy into a friend....People often hate each other because they are afraid of each other, they’re afraid of each other because they don’t know each other, they don’t know each other because they don’t talk to each other and they don’t talk to each other because they live separately from one another.”

In front of the stage “I have a dream” was written in giant letters while behind the stage the Campidoglio palace was lit up with colored lights.

The event was divided into three parts. In the first, short films showed the important moments both of King’s life and of the Civil Rights Movement. A minute of silence was held to commemorate his brutal assassination on the Lorraine Motel balcony in Memphis. The Gospel Choir “Life Waters Ministries International” sang various spirituals as the most moving moments of King’s life were recalled including the famous hymn “Take my hand” which King asked to be sung that very evening in Memphis.

Then followed the official speeches. Pastor Anna Maffei, President of the Italian Baptist Union in her brief and touching welcome reminded us how relevant—in the presence of racist ideologies—King’s teaching is for today. While religious and multicultural differences are enriching for all, they should not be confused with social and economic differences which penalize the weaker part. We and gypsies, for example, are equal, in our needs, in our right to love and be loved, in our human rights, as people. The Commissaire Mario Martone, representing the Council of Rome, said that as soon as the Italian Baptist Union
had presented the project, the then mayor, Walter Veltroni had decided to support it.

Next, the city elder of Birmingham Council, William Bell, spoke of his experience as the first black mayor of Birmingham as well as the first afroamerican to head the city council. His witness showed how the civil rights movement had led to concrete changes. Laurence J. Pijeaux, on the other hand, stated how difficult it had been in an America which tries to forget its racist past, to found the Institute for Civil Rights over which he presides. In the end, tenacity won out and the museum is visited by millions of people from all over the world.

In the second part of the evening the Vice-President of the Baptist Union, Rev. Salvatore Rapisarda introduced the Martin Luther King Award for Human Rights, saying how difficult it had been for the examining commission given the number and quality of the various candidates.

The Naples Peace School and the Onlus Iroko Association from Turin were declared joint winners. The prize and the three special mentions (the Rome Arci civil service, the Colombia Vive Onlus and Claudio Turina) were presented by Eckert Coen, the mayor of Rome’s delegate for interculture and multiethnicity and by Edouard Kibongui from the Executive Committee of the Baptist Union.

The evening ended with a magnificent concert offered by the Orchestra of Piazza Vittorio a multiethnic group made up of 16 musicians from nine different countries which well brought out the spirit and message of the award.

“Love is the only force able to transform an enemy into a friend....People often hate each other because they are afraid of each other, they’re afraid of each other because they don’t know each other, they don’t know each other because they don’t talk to each other and they don’t talk to each other because they live separately from one another.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
In 1996, I sat at my computer and printed out the name of the ministry that God had given me—now known as Chosen 300 Ministries.

Since our early beginnings, we have used the same motto, “Uniting The Body Of Christ To Reach The World.” The body of Christ was easier to define—all those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ regardless of their race, denomination or the diverse ways we practice our faith in the savior. If you are a part of the kingdom, then you are my brother or sister.

The word our ministry has continued to redefine is “world.” It means those who are not a part of the kingdom. It means people we refer to as “of the world.” It means the world around us, our community, those within the confines of our immediate reach. It means reaching those who are less fortunate; the homeless, the needy, the incarcerated, and those within “our world” who need help. It means extending the gospel of Jesus over the airways, Internet and television. Previously, I did not think the globe was all of these things.

Lott Carey has made a tremendous impact on our ministry, helping us to extend the mission work of Christ, locally and around the world. My first encounter with Lott Carey was when my congregation—who are primarily homeless—were welcomed to have dinner at the Lott Carey Convention in Philadelphia. At this point, our ministry was still young and the financial support Lott Carey gave our ministry allowed us to move to a full-time ministry. Since that time, our ministry in Philadelphia has grown from serving 20,000 meals to 15 churches a year, to serving more than 60,000 meals to 37 churches a year.

In 2006, Lott Carey’s Executive Secretary, Dr. David Goatley, introduced me to PEP (Pastoral Excellence Program), a 3-year program funded by the Lilly Endowment to engage pastors into foreign mission immersions in Guyana, Jamaica & South Africa. PEP also provides pastors with workshops and training sessions to equip them with useful tools needed when striving for pastoral excellence.

After much prayer (I had never even flew on a plane before)—okay, a whole lot of prayer—I decided to take the plunge. Since I entered the program, it has made a tremendous impact on Chosen 300 Ministries to extend our definition of the word “world.”

The first immersion in Guyana, South America, we were able to partner with our host church to establish a monthly food distribution of 4,000 lbs of rice flour, peas, and dry milk. In the process, we were also able to encourage three U.S. churches to sponsor two Guyanese churches to do a food distributions managed by Chosen 300. I had two additional visits to Guyana. In June 2007, I returned to witness the impact
of the food program and to provide additional training to the church leadership. The second visit last July was with a team of pastors to expose them to our work in Guyana. People are not only being fed naturally, but it has also created an evangelistic avenue for the churches. More people are coming to know Jesus as their savior.

In October 2007, we entered our second immersion, journeying to Jamaica, West Indies. To the average American, Jamaica symbolizes sandy beaches and the warm soothing unpolluted waters, forgetting about the poverty that lies outside of the tourist areas. I went with expectations carrying my experience from Guyana with me, but this immersion was different. This time we stayed in houses for part of the trip and hotels for brief intervals. I remember standing in the shower with no hot water saying, “I can do this.” I really enjoyed working with the pastors of Jamaica but the highlight of the trip was speaking at the schools.

They told me I could say the “J” word (Jesus), which I found amazing, coming from a country where prayer was removed out of the school system. Trapped in my American bondage I went through the whole sermon and did not say Jesus once, and they all reminded me of it too. The second school I was ready, surrounded in an outside courtyard by about 900 high school students, I shared with them the Gospel of Jesus. At the end of the message, over 30 young people repeated the sinners’ prayer and gave their lives to Jesus. I felt the presence of God fall in the courtyard that day. The schools lack the resources to provide the children with top-level education, but one thing they don’t lack is the discipline and respect for authority.

During this first visit to Jamaica, the pastor of the Cacoon Castle Baptist Church shared how the church only collects about $30 (U.S.) per month. I was able to view the struggling expansion of the church. So far, the exterior walls were built, but it has been a while since any additional progress was made as large plants have formed in the middle of the roofless rooms. In January, Chosen 300 established a partnership with the Cacoon Castle Baptist Church. We duplicated the model we started in Guyana, distributing rice, flour, peas, dry milk, and canned fish. Each month, funds are wired down to the church from Chosen 300 Ministries. The church, in turn, buys the bulk food, and distributes half to the congregation and half to the community. The goal is to again provide food for the congregation as well as create an evangelistic effort for the church. After the distribution, the church returns
the receipts from the purchases and a signature log signed by the families who received food.

In March, I returned to Jamaica along with Dexter Scott (homeless outreach director of Chosen 300) to witness the food program in action. I was also able to establish partnership with the Linsted Baptist Church outside of Kingston, which was my second host church during my initial visit. The pastor stressed a desire for a computer lab at the church, so students from the local school would have a place to do their homework. In this community, most families could never afford to have a computer at home. During our stay, we were able to help Linsted by installing one computer lab with four computers. We also added four computers to the lab at McGraph High School.

Beyond the endeavors in Guyana and Jamaica, Chosen 300 has adopted an orphanage in Predesh, India, assisting in housing, rest room facilities, educational supplies and year round support. Without the support of Chosen 300, these children would be subject to child prostitution, slave labor in rice patty fields, or be killed and sold for their body parts. My wife Shandai, along with one of Chosen 300’s board members, has also extended our Christian witness to the families who live in the trash dumps of Cairo and the ministries Abuja, Nigeria. In June, we established a monthly food program with Shandai’s host church in Aturu, Nigeria.

Our re-defining of “the world” will never end as long as there are persons who need to be reached for the cause of Christ and poor people who need relief from their despair. Our recent successes in foreign missions, and our quest to come, are jewels in the crown of the Lott Carey Convention who took the effort to engage pastors to extend their Christian witness to the world. I encourage every pastor who is in need of a life changing experience that will impact them individually and the mission focus of their congregation to sign up for the Pastoral Excellence Program.

A special thanks to the Lott Carey pastors who continue to provide support to Chosen 300 including: Gerald L. Chapman Sr., Zion Baptist Church of Ambler; G. Daniel Jones, Grace Baptist Church of Germantown; Alyn E. Waller, Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church; Vincent Windrow, Olive Branch Baptist Church; Larry Branch, Love Center Unity Full Gospel Church Int’l; Keith Savage, First Baptist Church of Manassas; Elizabeth Vareene, Grace Of God Ministry; James Thornton, Salem Missionary Baptist Church; Gina Stewart, Christ Missionary Baptist Church; and Frank Coleman, Shiloh Baptist Church.

May the blessings of the Lord continue to be upon the Lott Carey.