

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Why Go To Sierra Leone?

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This is a very good question and many of my brethren have asked this question. We understand the Lord teaches that we should teach others the gospel. This is found in several passages in the New Testament. In fact, it was a command for the apostles to do so and they gave directions to others to do so also.

We see the example of Paul, Peter, Phillip, Apollos, Timothy, Titus and others going on trips to teach. We find that many who went and taught the gospel in the New Testament were persecuted and in danger but they still taught. Stephen was stoned; Paul was shipwrecked, beaten and put in prison. The church at Jerusalem was being persecuted (Acts 8:1) and we are told that Christians were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. We find that those that were scattered went about everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4). Why did they go and teach under such terrible conditions?

It is true that there are many places in the United States that need the gospel brought to them. We have many vacancies of congregations of the Lord's people in the west, upper mid-west, the east, southeast and other areas. Why not go to them – it is much safer and cheaper. Why go to Sierra Leone?

It seems that some have a great doubt about the individual we have been dealing with now for almost a year. It seems that many who know nothing of him have made a

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general judgment that he is a fraud and not honest. It reminds me of what Paul told Titus in Titus 1:12-13 that a prophet of their own stated all Cretans are liars. Yet, Titus was to stay in Crete and set things in order and appoint elders in every city. Why if all of them are liars? Do we want to appoint elders out of a group that is all liars? He was to do it because Paul commanded him to do so (Titus 1:5). Evidently Paul thought there were some who were not liars are either they could be changed by the teaching of the gospel of Christ by the preacher Titus. Could this also be the case in Sierra Leone?

Brethren warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem in Acts 21. Agabus who was a prophet was very adamant about Paul not going. Paul set things straight in Acts 21:13-14. He went because there was work to do for the Lord in Jerusalem. He needed to relay the information of what God had done among the Gentiles through Paul. Yes, he was arrested and there was a great disturbance because of the work he was doing for the Lord. Could this also happen in Sierra Leone?

In Acts 17 Paul preaches in Thessalonica. Verse 4 states that some were persuaded and a great multitude of the devout Greeks and some of the leading women joined Paul and Silas. Because of this teaching and his association with Paul and Silas poor Jason and some of the brethren were taken to the rulers of the city. It is stated in verse 6 concerning those teaching the word of God, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too." Is it possible that these events could happen in Sierra Leone also?

In Acts 4:1-3 we find Peter and John speaking to the people, priests, and the captain of the temple. The Sadducees came upon them and were greatly disturbed that they taught about Jesus and the resurrection of the dead. Hands were laid on Peter and John and they were taken in custody. Was it worth it to be treated this way just to teach about Jesus and the resurrection?

Notice verse 4 – many of those who heard the word believed and number was about five-thousand men. Now we need to re-ask our previous question – was it worth it to be treated the way Peter and John were treated just to teach about Jesus and the resurrection? Would you think that 5,000 men might say yes?

Now why go to Sierra Leone? It seems many brethren are skeptical about this trip. Many have said why go to a place where there are seemingly no Christians. Some mention the danger because of the past civil war and the present increase in armed robberies. I must admit this attitude shocks me. Is it possible that some of our brethren here in the states are just “fair weather” Christians. Oh they want to teach but they want to teach where there is no danger – depriving the gospel to some who may want to hear it because the ones teaching may be harmed. Taking precautions for safety are certainly in order and backed by scripture – refusing to take the gospel to a lost and perverse generation or county is not backed by any scripture. A gospel preacher has a duty according to Romans 10:14-21. Is this duty only to be done when there are not threats of danger?

“And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” (Isaiah 6:8). None of the five that are going to Sierra Leone are on the same level as Isaiah, Paul, Peter, John, Apollos, Timothy, Titus or Stephen. We are just gospel preachers – men who have even had strong discussions and disagreements concerning this trip and the details of what we are going to do. One might even say we are the modern day example of what Paul and Barnabas went through concerning John Mark. Yet, as of this time we are all in agreement that the gospel needs to be taught to the people of Sierra Leone and we are going to go and teach it.

About a year ago John Gentry was contacted by a Joseph Saidu Bangura from Sierra Leone. It was an accidental contact but has turned into a great opportunity.

John Gentry has conducted many Bible studies with folks in Sierra Leone including Joseph. Joseph was very instrumental in setting up the studies with John Gentry and continues to be instrumental in these studies when he can.

Joseph has also been on several of our Moldova skype studies and is the one who invited us to come and bring the “unperverted gospel” after hearing this term on one of the studies with John Smith and myself. What if Joseph is a fraud? What if we are robbed? What if we do experience imprisonment, physical harm or even death? Then I pray that all of the five that are going will have the courage that Paul had in II Corinthians 12:10. Why go to Sierra Leone? Because we believe the opportunity is there to teach the gospel!

Brethren, this trip has opened my eyes to why we have congregations of the Lord’s people struggling here in the United States. It has opened my eyes to why we do not face persecution for the sake of Christ. It has opened my eyes to why our homes are struggling, our schools are in a state of despair and our government lacks respect for the will of God. It is because that we will not even stand up for Christ in our own country and as a result we have become “soft” and somewhat afraid to even carry the gospel to a somewhat questionable country such as Sierra Leone because it may be difficult.

We have brethren making trips to many parts of the world. I pray that they have not encountered the obstacles and negative attitudes that we have faced concerning this trip. The elders here at Greenwood have been very supportive of this effort. They recognize the need and they recognize the concern of danger. They also recognize that on Judgment Day a citizen of Sierra Leone will not say to them – “you had the opportunity, the funds, and the ability to mention Christ to me and you did not.”

All can not go to Sierra Leone. I am thankful that I can. I pray that I will use what talent God has given me and that the other four use the talent that they have been granted

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to teach the unperturbed gospel of Jesus. There are lost souls in many places including Sierra Leone – that is why we must go! Would you please include us in your prayers?