



Father Stevens Liberian Leprosy Trust

Mission to Liberia

Father Gerald Anthony Lee Stevens, OHC spent most of his life as a member of the Order of The Holy Cross, the oldest male Episcopalian order in the United States. He worked as a hermit monk in Liberia during the 1960's as a member of mission team from OHC. When OHC had to abandon their mission there in the 1990's Fr. Stevens begged to continue it alone. He did this through the first civil war (1989-1997) and in early 1999 after the second and most horrible civil war erupted again and through the request of a parishioner at St. John's Episcopal Church here in Memphis, TN., I was contacted to "help send some supplies and medicine to him" since I had opened Liberia for FedEx. I was able to send this via my FedEx network through Ghana and secretly transported to Trinity Cathedral.

Fr. Stevens was finally forced to flee for his life in December 1999 and arrived here in Memphis where he took up residence at St. Columbia as the resident monk serving others as he desperately waited for the war to end and he could go back to his beloved Liberia and his "Family". It was during his time here that I met him, and I too became "infected" with his love for this tiny leprosy colony named Mbalotahun which means village of healing in the local tribal language. Between this period and after I returned from active duty for 911, I learned in great detail what this mission entailed which was the very life blood for some 2000 men, women and children that had been devastated by the civil war and largely ignored by the crumpled government with its own poverty and corruption in the wake of the ending of the war in 2005.

Fr. Stevens and the OHC during their term there built a leprosarium, schools and an agricultural co-op that sustained this impoverished village where in Fr. Stevens' own words were the home of "the poorest of God's poor". After going through many obstacles and challenges by God's Grace I took him back to Liberia in April 2006 to serve out the rest of his life with his Family there. Unfortunately, on November 22, 2007 Father Stevens passed unto God's Hands.

I took up his mission and with the help of a few of his friends have gone back each year to maintain, support and minister to this beloved village of Christians and Muslims in his memory and for God's greater Glory. We have restored St. Luke's Leprosarium and Medical Clinic, built a new school, St. Philip Episcopal Elementary School, dug two fresh water wells including

running water to the central village, regrown the agricultural footprint with cassava, pineapple, rice, fish ponds and palm oil. In addition, Father Stevens founded the first African monastic order called the Community of Love in Jesus (CLJ) which completed the mission footprint supported today. The most current project is completion of a vocational school for the children of leprosy patients who themselves become orphans due to the handicap of their parents.

A special thanks for priceless support from the Diocese of West Tennessee, which at the time of Fr. Stevens death in 2007 helped create the trust I administer today that allows me to be a boots on the ground missionary and support the life needs of this special Christian village where Father Stevens lies in rest near the hut he inhabited during his time from the early 1960's till his death in 2007. Bishop Don Johnson, Chancellor Charles Crump, Vice-Chancellor Andy Cobb and over the last many years, Cannon Chip Davis are the reason this outreach can care for a special group of Episcopalians in the Diocese of Liberia where the Right Reverend Johnathan Hart lends his support when we are present in country.

We are a 501 (C) (3) charity under the West Tennessee Diocese and welcome all support for those who knew Father Stevens and through this outreach support these sweet Liberians, knows as "the poorest of God's poor"