

Love of Liberty

Liberia's coat of arms contains the slogan, "The love of liberty brought us here." It reminds me of an oft-repeated (and misused) verse from John 8: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (v32)." The truth of which Jesus speaks is the truth of the Gospel, the truth that his death on the cross redeemed all mankind. The Gospel truth sets us free from the slavery to sin and the guilt that plagues every one of us. The love of Gospel liberty has brought One Africa Team to Liberia.

Political Liberty

Liberia's history as a nation is rooted in the soil of liberty. In the early 19th Century, thousands of people of African American ancestry emigrated from the United States to Liberia. The American Colonization Society established Liberia as a refuge for former slaves. In 1847 the local leaders declared Liberia an independent nation. Soon afterward the American settlers elected Joseph Jenkins Roberts as the country's first president. European governments never colonized Liberia during the "scramble for Africa" in the late 1800s.

Sitting at Roberts International Airport just outside of Monrovia, I reflect on what just happened. I was here for 11 days of teaching with our One Africa Team Outreach leader, John Hartmann. Missionary Hartmann had been here a little over two years ago in December of 2019. He came to lead doctrinal discussions with leaders of the Confessional Lutheran Church of Liberia (CLCL). Four months later, COVID canceled our trip just days before take-off.

Two years later we were making preparations to return to Liberia. Changed requirements for COVID vaccines and visas delayed our return to Monrovia by a couple of months.



OAT Missionary John Hartmann addressing the leaders of CLCL

Love of Liberty in Christ

One Sunday I was privileged to listen to lay preacher Cyrus Shagbeh. Loudly and vehemently he begged the Lord to free him and all his members at Jehovah Fire Ministries. He asked for freedom from slavery to fornication, envy, gossiping, jealousy, anger, and selfish interests. The devil uses all manner of sins to enslave us to frustration and fear in this world. But the love of liberty brought Christ to our world. He came “to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...and to set the oppressed free” (Luke 4:18).

One Africa Team supports ministries that promote local responsibility and ownership. We are working hard to strike a balance. On the one hand, we respect that the CLCL is conducting its ministry autonomously without outside oversight or support. On the other hand, the love of liberty requires us to stand firm in the freedom of the Gospel. We must not let anyone be burdened by the yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1).



OAT Missionary Dan Kroll and Cyrus Shagbeh of the CLCL

We desire to strengthen the unity in teaching and practice between our Liberian friends and other Gospel partners in Africa. Please keep the men and women of the CLCL in your prayers. Ask the Lord to bless our efforts to share the Gospel freedom with our brothers and sisters in Liberia. May he strengthen their love of liberty through the mighty name of Jesus.

Missionary Dan Kroll lives in Malawi and serves as One Africa Team's liaison to West Africa

Please pray for those working in fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news and receive updates. Learn more about our mission fields in Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts at <https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>