

Liberian Ministries
Country Wide Ministry Plan
July 7, 2004

To: Mission Supporters

From: Rodney Edwards

Date: April 5, 2004

Outline

To Take a Nation for Christ in 20 Years

- I. Ministry Opportunities
- II. Brief History of Liberia
- III. Ministry Needs
- IV. Funding Methods
 - a. Self Supporting
 - b. Capital Gifts
 - c. Orphan Sponsorship
- V. Administrative Structure
- VI. Timeline of Implementation

VII. Current Trip-

As briefly as possible I will describe our recent trip to Liberia. Donald Hurst, retired agricultural instructor from Hatch Bend, Florida, Fred Edwards, pastor of Suwannee Baptist Church, Suwannee, Florida and I made the trip together. Both Donald's and Fred's churches are members of the Lafayette County Association. I am a member of The Church @ Cross Point, a Southern Baptist church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Donald's primary purpose in making the trip was to determine if there were improvements available in the agricultural portion of the mission activity that could be made. Fred's purpose was to gain personal information about the actual ministry activities of the Children's Village and to preach during the three day revival that was planned. My purpose, other than observe the work being done, was not clear to me until actually arriving. I believe this report represents my purpose for making this trip.

The three of us departed Baltimore-Washington International on Monday, March 15, 2004 and arrived, after a long and difficult series of flights, in Monrovia, Liberia just after midnight on Wednesday morning, March 17th. We traveled with Shadrach to the home he has rented on the outskirts of Monrovia. After sleeping a few hours we examined the Monrovia facilities including the cold water production area, the house, the truck and the jeep. We spent the day getting acclimated and went into Monrovia to complete our passport processing, check in with the U.S. Embassy and purchase additional supplies for the trip to the Village.

The entire group of people traveling to the Village, approximately 50 people, loaded into the truck, jeep and Shadrach's car and began the trip late Wednesday afternoon. The trip took about twenty hours due to some tire problems on the jeep and we arrived at the Children's Village on Thursday, March 18th.

The remainder of Thursday was spent touring the Village, getting to know some of the people and preparing for tomorrow's activities which are scheduled to include three worship services and three meals for the people attending.

Friday, March 19th, gets off to a slow start. The morning worship service is cancelled due to the slowness of the people arriving. The registration process proves to be difficult as we seek to record every church and every person attending. Each person receives a manually prepared registration card to identify them for meals and other activities. The registration process extends throughout the afternoon so there is no midday service either. The people are feed breakfast and the afternoon meal does not begin until approximately 4:00pm. The logistics of the meal service were much more difficult than expected. It's important to state that serving the meals to these people was our idea not Shadrach's. So we assume responsibility for these difficulties. Due to delays in the food service, the evening service, our first, began late but was well attended and glorified God.

Saturday, March 20th, saw all three services and meals served in order. What spare time that was available was spent talking with the local people and examining the Village. We also saw the process of selecting and felling a large tree for lumber production.

Sunday, March 21st, had an early morning EvangeCube training session by Fred and an hour of doctrinal questions and answers between the various church leaders and Shadrach. It was amazing to see how well Shadrach communicated the truth of the scriptures with these ministers, deacons and other leaders. The midday service was the highest attended of all and, along with the previous services, saw decisions made for Christ. Following this service the people came to the guest house area to receive donations of clothes sent over by the people of northwest Florida. The response was tremendous. After the clothing was distributed the people were feed and dismissed. The revival was a large undertaking and a wonderful success.

Monday, March 22nd, was spent recovering from the revival, touring Karmo's Town, visiting with the school children and with the clinic personnel. We also had a first hand examination of the lumber cutting process which takes the large tree and transforms it into useable lumber.

Tuesday, March 23rd, had us preparing for the return trip to Monrovia in order to make the mandatory three day advance confirmation of our flights with Ghana Airlines. The time at the Children's Village primarily revolved around the revival and in gaining a full understanding of the ministries in place there and those that are planned for the future.

Wednesday, March 24th, we arrive back in Monrovia after a fifteen hour trip. The balance of the day is spent recovering from the trip and talking with Shadrach about the mission work. We do go into Monrovia to a hospital to see a woman who is there from Karmo's Town. Then Shadrach finds some of her relatives in Monrovia to take care of her.

Thursday, March 25th, and Fred and I are up at 4:00am talking about the financial aspect of the ministry. We determine to discuss the business details of all the different ministry activities so that we can put together a comprehensive document for everyone to see. Today we also confirm our flights at Ghana Airlines in Monrovia. Then we spend time having a couple of items fixed on Shadrach's car. Shortly after lunch we find a place to discuss the details of each ministry. We go through each ministry activity and each revenue source in great detail to determine all the costs and expected income amounts related to each one. Every personnel position is listed with the salary requirements, every material and supply item is discussed along with the related costs. By the end of the three hour meeting I have enough detailed information to put together a preliminary budget/projection of all ministry costs. We return to the Monrovia house and I use Shadrach's laptop computer to build the budget spreadsheet. A copy of the spreadsheet is attached with this report.

Friday, March 26th, we spend the day resting and trying to document much of the information that we have gathered during the trip so far. The freezers will not make ice and Donald, Fred and I spend a good bit of time discussing the various reasons for this problem. Finally we design a test plan that involves five variables and five days for one of the freezers. Shadrach will put the plan into action when we leave and I will check with him from the states to see what the results are. Shadrach has requested to go through his financial projections with me so that I will have more complete information in order to finalize the budget worksheet. When we get together it is obvious why everyone is so excited about the ice business and other business projections. The numbers are huge. I'm not convinced that they can be realized however and work through the details behind the numbers with Shadrach so that I can build a more accurate model. Shadrach leaves me with his laptop to create the budget. We also go with Shadrach to visit an aunt who lives in another part of Monrovia.

Saturday, March 27th, our last full day in Liberia. I'm up at 5:00am building the ministry budget/projections worksheet. It takes a while as the dual currency portion requires extra effort. Finally the preliminary draft is done. The numbers do not look good for the activities currently underway. However, after going through the details with Shadrach again I modify a couple of assumptions that are in the calculations and the deficit shrinks tremendously. It looks like the total cost of the entire ministry is about \$12,000 U.S. higher than the total revenues. This isn't nearly as bad as I feared. I continue to fine tune the calculations but the numbers remain consistent. Shadrach and Gertrude take us into the marketplace of Monrovia to pick up a few gifts to take home. We then go through the five step process to try to get the freezers to make ice. Shadrach writes the steps down and promises to put them into effect tomorrow.

Sunday, March 28th, we leave for the airport at 7:00am and actually depart Monrovia around 2:00pm. The return trip is long and delayed.

Ministry Efforts-

First, it is certainly fair to state that I am not a minister and am less qualified to evaluate the direct ministry efforts of the Children's Village than many others. Knowing that, I seek to keep my comments within the realm of my knowledge and experience, which is primarily business.

My respect for Shadrach and his call to perform these ministries in a remote area of a war torn country is extremely high. His willingness to leave the United States and bring his family to Karmo's Town to live is proof within itself of his commitment and dedication. Therefore nothing that I say is meant to reflect on Shadrach's character, calling or ability to carry out this ministry.

The ministries currently in place are primarily the school, a kindergarten through twelfth grade institution, and a health clinic that provides free and low cost medical care to the people of this area. I will describe my findings for these two ministries and also make comments regarding the various facilities that are in place at the Village.

The **school** has 650 registered students. Our visit to the school on a regular school day was Monday the 22nd. The number in attendance on that day was probably around 300 based on my estimate. However, Fred counted over 85 children in the kindergarten class alone. So my estimate might be off. The classrooms were quite and orderly. The teachers were teaching and the students were attentive. Other than overcrowding in the lower ages, the classrooms were functional and seemed to meet the basic needs of obtaining an education. The floors were clean and orderly. The teacher to pupil ratio was reasonable for the upper grades but the smaller children's grades were approaching saturation. Each child seemed to have the necessary supplies needed for basic coursework. The teachers were actively teaching the basic courses such as math, English, history and Bible.

My opinion is that the ability to provide a basic education to the children of this area is paramount to developing good Christian citizens that will be successful financially, physically and spiritually. The idea of one day having 1,500 or more full time students is a wonderful ministry that glorifies God. This school, unlike many in America, integrates fully the Christian truths of God's word into the day to day curriculum of their coursework. It is required that a teacher be a professing Christian in order to work here. At a cost of less than \$31 per year per student (\$22,000 / 650 students) I believe God's money is being well spent. The number of students that can be served is limited by a lack of ability to feed the children a lunch while at school and by the distance some children must walk.

I did not obtain the number of patients served nor the type of illnesses treated by the **health clinic**. Therefore I cannot give a proper report on the cost per patient. With a net cost of \$7,000 per year it would not take many patients to reflect a low cost per patient ratio. There is little doubt that the need for decent medical care in the Karmo's Town area is great. In addition, with the ultimate goal of housing 250 orphans it would be a requirement. As to the clinic's impact for Christ, always a consideration when His money is involved, I was not able to see the interaction with actual patients. The clinic is part of the Children's Village which is known to be a Christian organization designed to assist orphans, local children and adults in various ways. The message is clear that Christ is the focal point of the entire development. With additional medicine, equipment and training the medical clinic should continue to serve Christ through its service to others.

The **facilities** in place at the Children's Village now include the school, clinic, church, guest house, bunk house and water tower.

The **school building** is made one-half of mud block construction and one-half of tarpaulin covered bamboo. The roof of both parts is made of tarpaulin. There is no electrical lighting in the school, no sanitation facilities (bathroom) and no running water. An outdoor toilet was in the process of being built while we were there however. Even with the lack of modern facilities, the school building

seems to function effectively for the purpose it was designed. Students were being taught and seemed to be learning. I do not know what effect the upcoming rainy season will have on the school since it is not extremely weather proof. Shadrach's first planned construction project is for a church building and the second is for a new school building. I would agree that a new school house should be a priority. Shadrach has estimated the cost of construction on the new school building to be \$40,000.

The **health clinic building** is of mud block construction with a thatched roof. The blocks are plastered over and painted white. It has six patient rooms plus a reception area and most of the floors are plastered for additional cleanliness (I think one or two may still be dirt). We only went by twice and only one of those times were there patients (two women with small children). With this limited exposure I would say that the clinic is large enough to handle the immediate needs of the community.

The **existing church building** is simply an open air covering made of wooden poles with a tarpaulin roof. The pews are benches of a single board with no back. Some are oversized 2x4's while others are 2x6's and 2x8's. As mentioned before, the rainy season is coming this month so the usefulness of the structure will diminish. Although I am not sure of the plans to have a full time church in place immediately, the ability to hold services and training sessions for pastors would be greatly improved by a new building using modern construction techniques. Shadrach has planned for the church building to be the first new construction project of this year. I do not know enough about the plans for getting a church started to offer a recommendation as to whether it should be delayed or not.

The **guest house** (originally scheduled to be a dormitory) is of concrete block construction with a tin roof. About one-third of the rooms have a plaster floor. The balance, including the hallway, are still dirt. There are opening for windows but none currently are in place. Some of the lumber being harvested on the property is scheduled to be used to frame in the openings. I am not sure of the plans to purchase and install the actual windows. Doors are also needed. The plans that I reviewed for the building showed two sets of four bathrooms each containing a toilet and sink. This is in keeping with the original design of the building as a dormitory. I am not sure what the plans are now for the bathrooms but there needs to be one per guest room which would mean at least four should be included. The building is not closed in under the roof but is open down its entire length. The block walls in the interior stop at about eight feet in height which also leaves the rooms open to the hallway. There are no doors at this time. I do not know for sure but assume that a ceiling is anticipated at the eight foot level given the construction of the walls. The guest house is certainly the most substantial and best built building on the property but it needs quite a bit more work. I would suggest that the two most pressing needs are to finish the floors throughout and to install the bathroom fixtures. After that the windows and doors should be installed, the outside sealed under the eaves and the windows and doors installed. As we show the village to potential supporters it will give them more comfort to see things completed.

The **bunk house** is a pole and tarpaulin structure that is used primarily as a sleeping quarters for those staying at the village. We brought about fifty people from Monrovia for the revival and they slept everywhere there was a spot. With three separate rooms available, many of them slept in the bunk house. I do not know what the long term plans are for the building. It may be disassembled at some point.

The **water tower** is in place but is not usable due to the pump not being installed. The man from whom the pump was purchased was supposed to travel to the Village and hook up the pump. This has not happened yet. This should be done as quickly as possible since the access to fresh drinking water would improve the sanitary conditions and would permit the guest house bathrooms to be utilized as soon as the fixtures are acquired and installed. Another reason this should be done is because money was given specifically for this purpose and is discourages further contributions when the previous money sent does not seem to have accomplished its purpose.

The ministries planned for the future include a new church, an orphanage, a Bible college and a trade school for career preparation. I do not have specific financial information about any of these planned ministries but will provide what commentary I can that might prove useful.

The construction of a church building and the resulting **church plant** is the first project that Shadrach plans to complete based upon the projected earnings from the ice business. As we will look at later, I'm not sure the amount of profit originally projected from this activity will allow an immediate start to this project. In any case, I did not discuss the full scope of the new church and would like to hear Shadrach's plans. Shadrach has estimated that the construction will cost \$40,000.

The founding principal for the Children's Village was to provide a Christian environment for approximately 250 children orphaned by the civil war. The necessary effort in starting the **orphanage** would be substantial in that three dormitories would be required. Perhaps these could be phased in over time with only orphans fitting a certain age group or sex being taken in until the next building is ready. I am concerned about this portion of the ministry being delayed for two reasons. First, the entire ministry is presented as an orphanage yet we are caring for no orphans. Second, with the civil war at an end, the orphans that require help are slipping away from us every day. The very things we are hoping to prevent (hunger, poor health, illiteracy, crime, lack of Christian principles) are all occurring as we wait. The new plan that Shadrach has put forth is to gain \$20 per month sponsorship per child. With that money it is estimated that the children can be housed, fed, clothed, given medical attention, educated and trained. It would be my recommendation that we focus on this portion of the ministry in order to meet the vision that God gave Shadrach. Perhaps there will be a way to construct the first dorm and begin caring for these children within the next few months.

The **Bible College** (pastor training school) is a very exciting ministry. Having seen first hand the lack of scriptural knowledge and understanding by the region's pastors and church leaders, I can't help but think that teaching these church workers the truth will help to better reach the area for Christ. It is scary to think about what might be taught in many of the area's churches. I watched for over an hour as Shadrach taught forty-three pastors and their key leaders many basic Bible truths that we would expect our sixth graders to know. Then I saw him spend another hour one-on-one with a local pastor going through the plan of salvation and other basics. Shadrach does a great job of teaching and the need is desperate. I do not have specifics on how he plans to administer this training or what costs might be associated with it. I assume that the new church building would be used for the purpose and that there would only be supply costs but do not know that for sure. The Bible school would also be for any regular school students who felt called to the ministry.

Finally a **trade school** is planned to give training in certain occupations to students and others so that they can earn a living after they leave the school and orphanage. This ministry fits in well with the overall Village concept of preparing the students to be good Christian men and women who can support themselves, promote Christ and be contributing citizens of Liberia. It is also the least pressing of the tasks that are before us. I would suggest that planning be done to ensure that this is ready when needed but that no assets be expended on this until the other, more pressing, ministries are addressed.

Revenue Producing and Overhead Items -

One of the exciting aspects of this ministry is its desire to become self sufficient. Given the current economic opportunities within Liberia in general and Monrovia in particular, it seems very likely that this can take place. The following comments represent my examination and discussions with Shadrach of the various existing and planned activities designed to generate revenue to fund the Children's Village ministries. Also, because I don't know where else to put it, this section will address the overhead expenses that are not directly related to a specific revenue source. In addition to this document, I will also include (and reference) a copy of the budget/projection spreadsheet that was created in conjunction with Shadrach while in Monrovia.

Existing Revenue Programs -

The **jeep** is used as a back country transportation vehicle to take people and their supplies out to Karmo's Town (and other villages I assume) and to bring others back to Monrovia. The revenue is good as shown by the attached worksheet and is estimated to bring in approximately \$6,000 per year after expenses and replacement reserve. Shadrach says the engine is still very strong even though the exterior looks rough. I have estimated the remaining life of the jeep at three years. The original purchase price will be recovered over this period.

The **cargo truck** is still in good shape but could use some cosmetic repairs. The rear, right cargo door is coming loose from the hinges. The truck makes a weekly run to Greenville, the capitol city of Sinoe County, to haul freight for Monrovia companies. There are also passengers and their supplies to carry when capacity is not fully used. From my understanding, the return trip from Greenville to Monrovia is not full of cargo. Therefore room is available for more passengers and their goods. I do not remember the exact details but it seems that the return trip is not usually full. This would give capacity for lumber and wholesale food goods to be picked up in Karmo's Town if true. Shadrach is careful to have the truck completely serviced (greased, etc.) between each trip. The annual profit from the truck is estimated to be around \$9,000.

The current **lumber operation**, using the chain saws, does not generate revenue since we are not permitted to sell the lumber, only to use it at the Village. However, the savings based on having to purchase and transport the lumber from Monrovia are significant. The church and school building projects planned for the coming year will require a significant amount of lumber. The value of producing this lumber onsite should more than offset the \$9,000 annual cost of the operation.

Cold water production using the ten freezers and generator is a compromise based on being unable to make ice with this equipment. The original plan was to produce ice which has a much higher profit margin than cold water. When this was not possible, cold water sales were substituted. When I first looked at the operation I couldn't see how it could be profitable. Even after the full details were examined it still looked like the operation was losing \$3,000 per year. However, Shadrach noted that I had 1,500 bags of water sold per day when it was really 3,000. This changed the loss into a \$25,000 profit. The real question, since this is a brand new business, is if the 3,000 bags per day sales amount can be sustained. As early as this week Shadrach mentioned that we needed to move to ice (which we'll discuss a little later) because demand for cold water was down due to rain and dropping temperatures. While we were there the days were very sunny and extremely hot. They were able to sell every bag they could produce. Now a quick explanation about the problem making ice. The primary reason that it is not possible to make ice with the equipment we have now is the lack of a second generator. It requires 24 hour power to consistently make ice and there is only one generator which runs only about 14-18 hours per day. This cools the water but doesn't make ice. A secondary problem was that Shadrach

didn't understand that the first time you fill a freezer (they fill it half way each time) it typically takes three days for things to freeze. Once frozen (if you leave a frozen mass in it) you can add and freeze other items much quicker. We did prove that ice could be made by running the generator for five days straight. They loaded one freezer half way with water bags, locked it and opened it three days later. Every bag was frozen. Then they added another 200 bags of water on top of the already frozen bags, locked it and opened it two days later with all the new bags frozen. This proves that we can cycle a freezer every two days.

Administrative overhead is not a revenue item but must be considered as part of the budget. This area represents all the costs incurred that are not directly related to a specific ministry or revenue producing activity. These type costs are usually spread among the various departments in a business. I have chosen to identify them and show them separately here in order to keep it simple. Basically these costs are the rental of the Monrovia house, salaries for a manager in Monrovia and one in the Village and the living and car expenses for Shadrach and his family. Shadrach does not take a formal salary at this time but obviously has to have food and clothing along with various other material needs. The total estimated cost was set at \$17,000 per year. This included \$12,000 for Shadrach's needs. I have no idea if this is appropriate and, given the average wages here, is probably high. However, a trip or two back to the U.S. for promotional purposes would use up a good portion of this money.

Planned Revenue Programs -

Ice Production is the original purpose the generator and freezers were purchased rather than a new truck. The projected profits from ice production are substantially higher than with cold water. The additional costs to be able to produce ice are increased fuel usage and a second generator. An additional generator purchased in Monrovia was quoted to Shadrach at \$14,500 U.S. but he feels it could be bought for perhaps \$2,000 less. The attached budget numbers show that the additional costs could be recovered in less than a year if the sales projections are attainable. Since they are much lower with ice than with cold water and, per Shadrach, the weather has less of an impact on ice sales, the actual profit earned should be substantially higher.

A **new truck** purchase is planned next in order to take advantage of additional cargo demands. If we are able to obtain a permit to sell lumber and begin a wholesale distribution of village goods to Monrovia and Monrovia goods back to the village, an additional truck will have even more revenue earning potential. It would require approximately \$19,000 to purchase a used truck for this purpose. Currently we estimate that each truck can earn \$9,000 per year after all expenses and vehicle replacement charges.

The ability to run a **bus service** would also provide good revenue potential. What they call a bus we call a mini-van. Although we have not formally budgeted the revenues and expenses connected with a bus operation, it is estimated that the profit per bus would be in the range of \$3,000 to \$4,500 per year. Shadrach's original plan was to purchase two buses. I am estimating the cost of a decent used bus would be around \$12,000.

The final piece of the transportation picture would be **taxis**. They would be the least expensive vehicles to purchase (I am guessing \$6,000 - \$8,000 for a decent used car) and would generate the least amount of profit. Although we have not made a detailed budget breakdown for the taxi service, it looks like the after expenses and replacement recovery costs that annual profit would be around \$2,000 to \$3,000 each.

Lumber sales could be one of the most profitable activities of all if...we can obtain a permit allowing us to cut trees for resell and if...we could cut timber from land other than our own. The

amount of trees on Village land is sufficient for our own construction purposes but not for sustained sales to Monrovia. More research needs to be performed here. It might be that the local farmers would allow us to cut trees off of the land they are farming in return for land clearing. Of course this brings up the need for additional workers (pretty cheap) and additional equipment (not so cheap). I will ask Shadrach to obtain additional information in this area.

Wholesale food distribution could be a continual source of revenue that would also create a market for the goods supplied by bush people, providing them with a way to obtain the Monrovia goods that they want. The concept was developed by Shadrach and essentially involves bringing items the villagers need from Monrovia (salt, sugar, flour, soap, etc.) to be bartered for the food products produced locally (red oil, bananas, plantains, cassava, etc.). The markup is usually 500% between the bush and the city due to the high trucking costs. We would be able to provide the trucking at cost or, if the return trip had less than a full load, for free. This wholesale foods activity would require coordination since you could not keep many of the food items in storage and would also require that some inventory of Monrovia goods be maintained to use as payment. Perhaps even a small store would be set up in the village for those wishing to purchase with money rather than through barter. We have made no effort to budget the potential revenues and expenses but do see this activity as a renewable source of income that would also benefit the villagers.

Primary Changes-

As mentioned at the very beginning of this report, I have the utmost respect for Shadrach and believe he is doing God's will in Karmo's Town. The next few comments are meant to point out areas that, in my opinion, require correction.

Financial Reporting – There is no effective system of financial reporting in place to track the actual income and expenditures of the Ministry. This is unacceptable for several reasons. First, it is impossible to make good financial decisions without having accurate and timely information to base them on. Currently Shadrach maintains receipts for the major expenditures he makes but these do not provide enough information to create a clear financial picture of the operations. Second, it is difficult to ask churches and individuals to designate portions of the funds God has entrusted them with to an organization that cannot show where and how past gifts have been spent and that can't provide an accurate accounting of how future monies will be spent. Third, the scope of the ministry is expanding as new revenue earning assets are brought online which create a multitude of small income and expense transactions. Fourth, the economy of Liberia is almost completely cash based. Large volumes (if not in actual value then in physical quantity) of cash are maintained without proper recordkeeping to ensure that it is protected. And fifth, should anything ever go missing, Shadrach is completely exposed with no records to support his claims. I am attempting to put together a manual accounting system that would allow fairly easy compliance and yet would provide the information needed to correct the four issues mentioned above. This will not be easy for the Liberia side of the ministry to learn and will be inefficient at times to maintain but I believe it is absolutely necessary. This system would be designed so that weekly summary sheets would be sent (emailed) to the U.S. headquarters for distribution to the various churches that provide support. This would also allow analysis by stateside individuals that could help identify both positive and negative trends in the data in order to provide better advice.

Management Personnel – The growth of the ministry and the separation of the two Liberian segments (Monrovia and Karmo's Town) by a day's travel means that it will be impossible for Shadrach to be the

primary manager and decision maker in both places. Since God called Shadrach to the ministry it would make sense that he focus the vast majority of his efforts at the Children's Village and its ministries. This would mean that a strong manager must be put in place in Monrovia to manage the various revenue activities and to handle much of the accounting as well. This is a position that can be trained.

Gertrude's uncle (young guy) is named Skipper and he may be a good, trustworthy and trainable man for the job. He has been helping Shadrach for some time now so is gaining experience in the business operations. He also is in college which shows an aptitude for learning. Whether it is actually Skipper or someone else, the important part is that someone take on this responsibility in order to leave Shadrach free to concentrate on the Village and in teaching the area pastors. I consider this much like the decision to ordain deacons in the early church. It didn't make sense for the disciples to leave preaching the word to wait tables then and it does not make sense now.

Appearance of Properties – Both the Monrovia house and Village grounds seemed to have a good bit of trash around. I know it sounds trivial but appearances matter when folks are evaluating an organization. In defense of both locations, there were well over 50 people camping at the Monrovia house and many more than that at the Village. Perhaps by now the grounds have been cleaned. I would recommend that a regular regiment of outside cleaning be given daily attention. My yard is not always the cleanest either but it's more important when you are funded by donations. It also helps to run a more efficient operation when everything stays neat and clean. This is another area where Shadrach should delegate responsibility to others.

Purchasing – Although bargaining (dickering, haggling, etc.) does occur in the U.S., especially at car buying time, it seems to be the rule of business in Liberia. This presents an opportunity to stretch God's money much farther. I have no way to evaluate the ability of Shadrach and Skipper to obtain the best possible price when purchasing but did not notice a significant amount of "shopping" when items were being bought. We bought sacks of rice, tires and other significant items while there. Perhaps there is room to improve the purchasing aspect through comparison shopping and in spending time locating the best (not necessarily the lowest) price. We are talking about buying several very expensive items in the near future and this could mean thousands of dollars.

Prioritizing – Shadrach has a general plan as to which ministries should be put into place next. However, a full project plan bringing all of the planned ministries and revenue activities together would give us something to manage with and to show other potential supporters. The plan should include many of the smaller, subprojects that are part of day to day life such as lumber production, completion of the guest house, etc. Efficiency and stewardship are both enhanced when God's plan is documented and worked by His people.

Summary –

The mission effort that Shadrach, Gertrude and others are making in Liberia is fantastic. I am excited to be a small part of the work and to have had the ability to visit. I praise God for Brother Carl Hadley, the Holmes County Association and the Lafayette County Association. Thank each of you for your good work.

I pray that you will take this report in the positive spirit in which I intended and that you will join me in thinking of every possible way to complete the work that God has started in Shadrach's heart. One day in heaven we will meet some very black people that are there because of the grace of God shared through your prayers, gifts and other efforts.