



# PATHWAYS INTO SIERRA LEONE

## Welcome to Pathways!

### SL FACT:

Sierra Leone is again 177th out of 177 for worst quality of life in the world, according to the UN Human Development Index

### Prayer Corner

#### Prayer Requests for Fall 2005

- Pray for blessings for SL leaders—Alpha, Andrew, Moses and Joseph.
- Pray that farmers receiving chickens will come to know Jesus.
- Praise God for supporters and volunteers in Canada
- Pray that financial needs of the Project will be met.

#### WE NEED YOUR PRAYER SUPPORT

To be added to our SL Prayer update list (by email) please contact us at [cvandijk@cvmcanada.org](mailto:cvandijk@cvmcanada.org).

Thanks!

Welcome to Pathways! This newsletter is provided to update you about the work that the Christian Veterinary Missions of Canada is carrying out in Sierra Leone. You will be told about the history of this small country, meet some of the people involved in the rebuilding efforts, and hear about some of the projects that are being completed in order to provide the people of Sierra Leone with the help that they desperately need. It is exciting to know that there are so many people who are willing to work hard to answer the call that Christ has made to them!

One Canadian remarked that, in working so tirelessly to improve the education in Sierra Leone, she is simply following the pathway that has God cleared for her. That is a

wonderful analogy describing the life of every Christian— every event and moment in our lives is a result of simply following the pathway that God has laid at our feet. By reaching each pathway's end, we have satisfied the intentions and purposes which God had carefully planned for us at the journey's beginning.



The future of Sierra Leone — its children.

For a group of people, a pathway into Sierra Leone has been marked out and they have been compelled to follow it. With God as the Trail Guide, these followers are working their way down a path that is difficult and yet full of blessings. Though they never know where the next bend in the trail may be, they're confidently following their Leader. Welcome to this journey down the path into Sierra Leone.

### NEW! Sponsorship program for children of SL!

Do you feel God calling you down a pathway into Sierra Leone? You may want to consider sponsoring a child! After working with children in the Wellington Orphanage this past summer, Shanti Van Dijk wanted to set up a child sponsorship program that would match donors with children who desperately need such basic things as food, clothes, medical care and education. As a sponsor, you will receive information about the child and learn what a difference your contributions are making in this child's life.

If interested, please contact Shanti care of CVMC!

# Small Country, Big History

Many of us are aware that Sierra Leone, a small West African country, has in recent times suffered as a result of civil war. But do we understand to what degree? The years of civil unrest experienced there are some that many in the West would be hard-pressed to imagine. Think of ten years filled with violence, destruction, murder, mutilation, rape, abduction, slavery, homelessness— all at the hands of your fellow countrymen driven by greed. Difficult to imagine? Sounds like something from a Hollywood blockbuster, doesn't it? For North Americans, that's entertainment. For Sierra Leoneans, that was reality.

For most of its history, Sierra Leone has led a relatively peaceful existence. Discovered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by a Portuguese explorer, Sierra Leone became the home of many freed slaves returned to Africa. The country's inhabitants became independent of British colonial rule in 1961. Although poor and operating with extremely primitive agricultural practices, the people of Sierra Leone envisioned for themselves a future full of hope and prosperity.

Soon, their hopefulness became hopelessness. Civil war broke out in 1991 when Liberian rebels attacked and took over the diamond fields to finance their army. Until 2001, the rebel forces warred with the government in an effort to overthrow the ruling elite and to take control of Sierra Leone's rich diamond resources. The whole of the country was ravaged, but the rural areas were particularly devastated. No one can say for certain what the death toll was, but estimates say that anywhere from 50,000 to 100,000 lives were taken, while millions of other residents were displaced.

These statistics say nothing of the truly atrocious acts carried out on Sierra Leone's innocent civilians; women and children were raped, men taken for slavery, residents tortured, mutilated, burned, and shot, homes and livelihoods laid to waste. After a decade of warfare, Sierra Leone was a country left torn, ravaged, and in utter despair. With no industry or infrastructure, medical care or education, farms or homes, Sierra Leoneans were left to start the rebuilding process with very few tools, skills, supplies, or direction.

However, aid was not far off. Since 2001, many organizations have teamed together to help this fledgling country begin again. Though it remains ranked as the world's poorest country, Sierra Leone struggles forward, making small, yet progressive steps. Hopelessness is slowly becoming hopefulness again; the dark night of the past is slowly fading as promise of a new day awaits Sierra Leone.

## Why Sierra Leone?

*Our Story...*

*by Conrad and Anna Van Dijk*

Until Conrad revisited Sierra Leone briefly in 2002, we felt like our destiny of helping third world countries had been unfulfilled. On the first day, Conrad was taken to visit Wellington Orphanage in Freetown. The 60 children sang, "We welcome you in the name of the Lord, Uncle Conrad," as he entered. It touched his heart, especially when he heard that they often didn't have enough to eat and would run away to find food on the streets. He struggled to find a way to help.

During the next two days of his trip, Conrad toured rural Sierra Leone and saw what massive destruction war had left in its wake. During subsequent trips, he received, what we believe is a God-given answer: assisting farmers, and the orphanage, with poultry flocks so that they could earn a living for themselves, something that is beginning to happen right now!

Looking back, we can see clearly how the Lord has directed our paths— giving us the desire, when we got married in 1969, to step out of the ordinary and....

*(Tune in to hear the rest of the story in the next issue!)*



## “Give a man a fish...”

“Give a man a fish, and you have fed him for today; teach a man to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime.” This familiar adage needs no explanation to most, and the underlying principle is evident: to truly help someone is to equip him with knowledge and resources rather than just with the need itself. This principle is the driving force for those behind the Sierra Leone Poultry Project.



A fully completed chicken barn with the family its supports.

The idea for the Sierra Leone Poultry Project dates back to September 2002, when Conrad Van Dijk, a poultry veterinary by profession and mission worker at heart, during a visit to war-torn Sierra Leone, envisioned a means by which Sierra Leoneans could again be fed, earn an income, and live without suffering. The vision was rekindled a year later when, during a subsequent visit, Conrad saw the war-caused ruins of what was formerly a commercial poultry farm of 100,000 broiler and layer chickens, a hatchery, and a feedmill.

Witnessing the true need in Sierra Leone, Conrad felt a calling to use his resources to minister to Sierra Leoneans by providing them primarily with a means to help the people earn a sustainable living. In response to their belief that helping people in need and sharing what they have with them is their God-given commission, the Van Dijk’s desire is to provide aid and recovery in the name of Jesus and as an expression of His love for mankind.



**“The goal of the project is to establish 1000 low-income farmers with flocks of 200 birds each.”**

As chairman of Sierra Canadian Humanitarian and Development Organization (SCHDO) as well as Executive Director of Christian Veterinary Missions of Canada (CVMC), Conrad realized that since these organizations shared similar Christian values, aims, and objectives the best course of action would be to have the groups liase and work together. In 2003, SCHDO began working with CVMC in Canada and Christian Extension Services (CES) in Sierra Leone. From here, the Sierra Leone Poultry Project was born.

The goal of the project is to establish at least 1000 low-income farmers with flocks of 200 birds each. In addition, the project also aims to set up the basic structure of a small poultry industry, which would include a feed mill, a hatchery, and a slaughterhouse. The pilot project has been running since 2003 and movement into the main project is happening now that most obstacles have been overcome and the logistics are being worked out. Conrad’s immediate plans are to set up 60 farmers on a permanent basis and to expand from there. Through donations of used poultry equipment in Canada, a small feedmill, hand feeders and waterers are now available for the farmers to use. Currently, the chicks are being supplied from a hatchery in neighbouring Guinea. However, the long range goal is to develop a hatchery in Sierra Leone that can supply at least 15,000 chicks per week.

Conrad estimates an income of about \$100 per flock for each farmer: \$70 from the sale of the chickens and \$30 from the sale of manure. That’s more than most Sierra Leonean workers can earn in wages. In addition, anywhere from five to twenty others will experience an immediate positive impact as a result of this income.

Within the past two years, there has been definite progress made. Obstacles continually need to be overcome and problems solved. Setbacks are common and somewhat to be expected. None of this has weakened the resolve of either Conrad or his team in Sierra Leone. They’re looking forward to making the project self-sufficient as soon as possible. Faith and prayer are what continue to sustain them as they work to move the project forward.

# One Man and His Mission

## MEET THE PLAYERS

In every issue of Pathways, we'll introduce to you a person involved with the work in Sierra Leone. The man you're meeting today is especially noted for his leadership in the Poultry Project.

Meet Alpha Abu. His desire to provide aid for Sierra Leone and his fellow countrymen runs deep. He is a man of faith and vision. Alpha currently serves as Program Manager and thus oversees the Poultry Program and other smaller projects.

The road that Alpha has traveled to reach this position has been a long, difficult one. Alpha was raised in southern Sierra Leone where his father worked as a prison guard. He was a young Christian journalist and during the civil war, Alpha worked for Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service and also produced documentaries for NGO's. He came to Canada in 2001 through a scholarship from Crossroads after meeting and assisting Lorna Dueck of 100 Huntley Street when

she was in Sierra Leone. Near the civil war's end, Alpha felt the call to help in post-war reconstruction. At the time, however, he was living and studying in Canada; financially, he could do nothing to help his countrymen.

Some would call it fate—

both Alpha and the VanDijk's call it providence – that they crossed paths during his extended fourteen-month stay in Canada as a result of the war. When the time came to return to Sierra Leone, he looked to his Canadian friends as an avenue of aid. A committee made up of his Toronto area friends and contacts which he called 'Sierra Canadian Humanitarian and Development Organization' (SCHDO) was formed to support Alpha's return to Sierra Leone as well as his efforts to establish an NGO there. Unable to overcome some sizable obstacles, Alpha and his supporters joined CES. As a separate department under CES, SCHDO and its activities are funded through Christian Veterinary Missions of Canada (CVMC).

Alpha is no stranger to what it means to be in need. Because he knows all too well what it is to have nothing, he refuses to allow others to suffer as he has. True to Sierra Leonean form, Alpha extends a generosity to his friends and neighbours, a generosity which astounded Conrad Van Dijk during his first visit to Sierra Leone - "My host has no salary and no income. He bought a new bed, a fan, a mosquito net, and rented a generator for me because he wanted to make sure I was well taken care of. I do not know where he got the money or even less, how he was ever going to pay it back.... Such people you learn to trust totally".



Alpha, Alfreda, and daughter Winnie

Please prayerfully consider financially supporting the Sierra Leone Project.

Please make cheques payable to:  
**Christian Veterinary Missions of Canada** and  
use the slip enclosed with this newsletter.  
Thank you!

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THE WEB!  
WWW.  
cvmcanada.org

THANKS FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT!

All donations are tax deductible. Designated gifts will be applied as directed. If need is satisfied or changed CVMC will direct gift to a similar need. Gifts will be acknowledged as received, and an official income tax receipt will be issued at year end.

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