



## FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

Visit our website

[www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

to find out more about the ministry and how you can get involved.

The website also has a great deal of marriage resources and links to other marriage organizations available.

Donations are tax-deductible and make the ministry to couples locally and internationally possible.

### Marriage in Another Culture

We are presently in Liberia, West Africa; a world away from the one we know so well. Electricity depends on generators, expensive and not always available. The availability of clean water also presents many problems. The horrible road system leads to snarled traffic and difficulty getting from place to place. Liberia is now almost six years out of a terrible civil war; one that ravaged the land and left the people hurting.

The civil war brought about a massive displacement of family and the damage to relationships was enormous; one writer stating that it dismembered the Liberian family and made it dysfunctional. Yet, others state that the dysfunction has been there all along, that while the civil war certainly hurt families, many problems existed even before the war. The average annual income in Liberia is \$140. Poverty, widespread illiteracy, unemployment, teen pregnancy, high divorce rates and problems with post-war psychological adjustments have serious implications for the family. Two 21 year-old girls working where we are staying have 2 children each and never have been married. Several people here have told us that the out-of-wedlock birthrate is 98%. We cannot even comprehend such a statistic!

Yet, there is hope; hope for this country and hope for the family. God is raising up men and women committed to Biblical marriage and with a passion to see strong marriages in Liberia. We have spent time these past two weeks with several of those people. In fact, today, (April 2) we taught a workshop on lay counseling with 182 in attendance—praise God! Last week's Franklin Graham Crusade received a great response and response to our marriage seminars have been very positive also. God is working!



Our friends and ministry co-workers here have a battle on their hands; the Biblical view of marriage is not prevalent. One man asked us; "Once married, the wife is the husband's property, right?" In another instance, we were told a story regarding a "demanding" girlfriend. A man was married, but his girlfriend demanded a car for Christmas or she would not see the man—the problem was seen that she was demanding, not that the man had a girlfriend on the side. I counseled young man who was seeking financial help for his wedding to a woman he is living with—the wedding is more important than the fact that they are living together and violating God's will for them. This young man desires to be a pastor, but finds fornication less of a problem than not having a big wedding. In our training today, a woman commented on the fact that many pastors will not let their wives counsel other women; they must stay at home and take care of the children and home.

Yet again, there is hope, we had a great response to our seminars (237 marriage workshop attendees) and to see so many at the lay-counseling training was very heartening. We believe that God is working and that this nation is poised to be a beacon for Christ in Africa.

## Liberian Marriage Ministry



I met Pastor Junius Gailor last November at a workshop I presented in Liberia and quickly realized that this is a man not only committed to Biblical marriage, but knowledgeable, experienced and moving forward in marriage ministry. I had the opportunity to meet him during his trip to the US in February and found that this is a couple who will be used of God to affect lives and marriages in Liberia. Junius and Cynthia are Liberians who left the US to return to their homeland specifically to build strong marriages. They have their own ministry and resources, but require more resources to effectively continue their work in Liberia. We were privileged to work with them during this past week and the resources provided to them will be used wisely to help Liberians.

Junius and Cynthia are an example of what God is doing in this country. Raising up Liberians to minister to Liberians. It cannot be about Americans coming to Liberia to minister—we need to train and build up those here to do the ministry they have been called to. There is a need for Americans come to Liberia to train and help Liberians in marriage and counseling ministry. We experienced the hunger of the Liberians for this kind of help. Working together we help meet this great need and will be a part of God changing this nation.

## Lives and Marriages Changing in Liberia

Pastor Robert Bimba attended one of our marriage seminars in July 2007 and told us last week that since that time, he has had a passion for building strong marriages in Liberia. He pastors Abide in the Vine Fellowship outside of Monrovia and has been presenting a marriage teaching monthly utilizing resources found on our website. Lives and marriages are changing because of God's work through this pastor! Pastor Bimba told us he needs resources to increase his teaching and we will be providing some of those resources when the container arrives in a few weeks. The pastor also desires to open a lay counseling center in his church. This will be a key area for a center in Monrovia, because there is a mosque and many Muslims in his neighborhood. We were blessed to meet this man of God and look forward to what God is going to do through him. Pictured with Pastor Robert is his wife, Lucia and daughters, Favor, Faith and Flourish.



### Action Point: What are you going to do?

There is a spiritual war going on in Liberia right now! The country of China has many building programs going on in Liberia and we have seen Chinese clinics and business all over Monrovia. Muslims also are moving in this area. People in the US need to rise up and help this country turn to its Christian roots. Will you help? Pray for this country; for President Ellen Sirleaf (who attended the Crusade one night), for Junius & Cynthia Gailor, Robert & Lucia Bimba, Joseph Roberts, Samuel Bier, Ebenezer Browne, and the other pastors taking a stand for Biblical

marriage and also opening lay counseling centers. Consider getting involved; are you able to teach? Are you a counselor? Consider giving of your knowledge and expertise to the Liberians. Consider donating marriage and counseling resources. We presently have resources for 10 lay-counseling centers—the pastors we met with want to see hundreds all over the country. There are many ways you can get involved; contact us and we can help connect you to Liberians to use your gifts and abilities to help change a nation!

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### Resources Available at [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

- Click "Links" to find organizations to help strengthen marriages.
- Click "Resources" to discover many excellent marriage materials.
- Click "Manual" to learn about the Fortified Marriages manual and workbook.
- Click "Crisis Resources" to download a helpful resource list.
- Articles and information are also available to learn more about God's design for marriage.

