

August 2009  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Dear Friends,

A very common sight on the highways and byways of Sierra Leone is the sight of people walking along while carrying items on their heads. People carry heavy buckets of water in this way, and luggage, furniture, trays of fruits and vegetables, books, items of clothing, and anything else you can possibly imagine. In Freetown, peddlers and vendors roam the streets with their wares in this fashion. Young girls carrying several dozen eggs on their heads are selling the hard boiled variety for about 15 cents each. It is common to see women walking along bearing 10 trays of charcoal stacked one on top of another. One of my favorite sightings this rainy season was that of a man carrying a bundle of closed umbrellas balanced on his head, even as he held an open umbrella to fend off the pouring rain.



Mixed in amidst the cars and pedestrians, teams of men haul and push heavy, four wheeled carts carrying whatever items they've been contracted to move. Traffic often stacks up behind these carts in the narrow, two lane streets of Freetown. Young boys haul 5 gallon water containers on smaller, scooter-like carts, pushing and pulling these through city traffic, at times riding atop as these little carts zoom downhill past slower moving cars.

Jesus said, "Come to me all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) I often think of that invitation as I consider the physical demands of life in Freetown. Scripture is alive here in this place. As our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone meet weekly for worship and praise, they are witnesses to the life-giving power of Jesus' promises and the rest we find in Him.

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