

Partnership visit to Igreja Metodista Wesleyana em Mozambique from 20th May – 25th May 2017

**Aims – Discuss partnership issues with Bishop Dinis Matsolo – Synod Bishop of IMWM
Meet with National in Mission Appointees in Mozambique
Visit Chimoio mission station initiated by MCB ex-mission partners, to meet new minister**

Mozambique visit – 20 -24 May 2017

I departed to Mozambique early the following morning with the ongoing Synod gatherings and arrived in Maputo on Saturday 20 May 2017, picked up at the airport by Dr Carlos Fuma. Bishop Matsolo was still at Swaziland for the MCSA Synod meeting. Very early on Sunday, we flew to attend Rev Mutasa's commissioning service at Chimoio – a

mission station of Igreja Metodista Wesleyan Mozambique (IMWM) over 1000km from Maputo. We arrived around 10.00 hours at the start Sunday service and it ended at 13.30 hours. The dominant local language was Shona therefore IMWM approached MC Zimbabwe for a minister and Rev Mutasa arrived in February 2017 with his wife and two young sons aged five and two.

Rev Mutasa's commissioning service was well attended with lots of singing by children, youths and women's choirs from communities in Cruzamento. Bible readings were taken from Acts 17: 22-31; 1 Peter 3: 13-22 and John 14: 15-21. Over eighty people attended the service and stayed afterwards for celebrations hosted by the



Rev Mutasa and family at the commissioning service with IMWM leaders

community. We had the opportunity for intercessory prayers and welcome messages from church and community leaders. We later got a lift to Chimoio town centre afterwards to stay the night.

Bishop Matsolo and I went back on Monday morning to meet Naison, Snikiwe, Tim and Theo Mutasa at the mission station started by Malcolm and Gina – MC Britain ex-mission partners to Mozambique 2012-2015. The construction of the 3-bedroom manse started by Malcolm and Gina was now completed and church services were regularly held on the premises. The newly posted minister seconded from Zimbabwe was still waiting on his work permit, consequently they all have to cross the Mozambique-Zimbabwean border at the end of each month for new visa applications before returning to base. Children schooling, transportation issues, induction into MC Southern Africa Conference were outstanding issues requiring attention. However, it was a delight to see the collaboration between South Africa,



Chimoio mission members at the commissioning service of Rev & Mrs Mutasa



Chimoio mission manse initially constructed for MCB mission

Mozambique and Zimbabwe in supporting this initiative to ensure continued use of facilities provided by MC Britain. We also visited the Circuit Steward and his family that led the church in the absence of a minister. Malcolm and Gina were to relocate to Zimbabwe from Mozambique but transition stalled. This was an opportunity to meet with partner church leaders to maintain relations and support mission initiatives.

The community has purchased a plot nearby to build a church and start a crèche in future. Meanwhile Naison plans to learn Portuguese and understand the laws and discipline of Methodist Church Southern Africa. The family also needs to familiarise itself with its new neighbourhood, church and community leaders.

Igreja Metodista Wesleyana em Mozambique Connexional Team at Maputo

Mozambique is a beautiful country with a very long stretch of the coast in South East Africa. It has a population of about 22 million with Christians predominantly in the south and Muslims in the north. Mozambique shares its northern border with Tanzania and historically many Arabs settled in this region. There are ten provinces in the country, Maputo province is most Southern and harbours the capital city. Chimoio is in the middle and located in Manica province that borders Zimbabwe. Catholicism is prevalent and is the state religion. Being the only Portuguese speaking country in South-Eastern Africa region, it seems slightly isolated.



Dr Carlos Fuma – IMWM Lav Leader and Bishop Dinis Matsolo with Bunmi

The IMWM is a growing district and now boasts twelve ministers. In past years, it started mission stations at Chimoio and Nampula as part of its mission expansion programme. I was unable to meet with Rev Leta based at Nampula with her young family having just returned from the Synod meeting held the previous week but I spoke with her on the phone. She has been a recipient of the National in Mission Appointment programme and ministered to refugees fleeing war in Congo and Central Africa these past years. The church also managed a crèche/ nursery school for the refugees as well as provided counselling plus a place of worship on the campsite.



Isabel Hazias – National in Mission Appointee as IMWM HIV/AIDS programme coordinator

The Chimoio mission station was set up by MCB mission personnel in response to request for IMWM mission expansion initiative. After the three year mission service ended in Mozambique, it is exciting to see joint

implementation of a succession plan by the three countries – Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa; responding to the wish of the most marginalised dwellers unable to support a Methodist minister in the circuit. Most of the congregation members here are peasant farmers living in Cruzamento, though the municipal town of Manica is located some kilometres away if one has a means of vehicle to travel by road.

In Maputo, I met with Isabel Hazias – the HIV/ AIDS programme coordinator at the Connexion office. Through the year the church conducted various health initiatives from blood giving services by the youth to health check-ups for HIV/AIDS testing, tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes as well as blood pressure checks and health promotions for early detections. Regular blood counts and measurement of body mass index help monitor health status. Health care in Mozambique is well subsidised and there is good access to HIV/AIDS drugs. Three training sessions were organised for church leaders to increase early interventions in treating patients. The greatest challenge has been poor nutrition worsened by protracted famine in past years. HIV/AIDS patients are unable to take medication on empty stomachs due to painful and unpleasant side effects. Individual members and congregations have assisted but there is no long-term food-provision plan yet for AIDS infected and affected families.



Mrs Nelma Nhaca – IMWM office administrator

Mozambique also has malaria problems all year long due to its flood plains and geography unlike many other countries where infection is seasonal. The church is working closely with government and non-governmental agencies to address this issue. I met with Mrs Nelma Nhaca – the office administrator coordinating these meetings. She also links up with me on partnership issues and arrangements of my visits within the country. I had the privilege of meeting with the Connexional Lay leader Dr Carlos Fuma, who invited MCB to their Mission Congress later this



Ministry of Health in Maputo - Mozambique

year and the MC Southern Africa's Conference planned for the first time in Mozambique in 2018. IMWM ministers meet twice annually for retreats on church growth and their welfare. It is inspiring to know the Holy Spirit honours the simplicity of the gospel where Jesus is the focus and the gospel offers hope irrespective of class, race or location. I am constantly reminded that the significant things in life are freely given by the Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness etc. Often I lose focus on Christ from time to time and 'major on the minors' in life and ministry until His gentle Spirit urges me onto the right path. May we be found faithful when He calls?

It was during my partnership visit that I heard the dreadful news about the Manchester Arena bomb tragedy. It was a big shock and very sad to hear of loss of over twenty people including children and 116 people injured on 22 May 2017. Later that same week, on 25 May 2017, twenty eight Coptic Christians were killed and twenty two wounded in Minya, 140 miles south of Cairo on their way to St Samuel's monastery. Three vehicles were attacked and shot at deliberately by masked gunmen. May good overcome evil and the God of justice hear the cry of His people? May their souls rest in peace and God cause all their evil plans be aborted before execution in Jesus' name? Amen

Romans 12^{19& 21} –¹⁹ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord....²¹ Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Dr Bunmi Olayisade
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