

## Partnership visit to Methodist Church in South Africa from 17<sup>th</sup> May – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017

- Aims** – To meet with the group of Methodist and Baptist ministers on a cross-cultural to South Africa  
To meet with leaders of MC Southern Africa (MCSA) to discuss various partnership issues  
To discuss mission service placement with MCB mission partners serving in South Africa – Stephen & Jane Day

### Methodist and Baptist ecumenical visit to Johannesburg

Three Methodists and four Baptists went on an ecumenical group visit to South Africa. They departed from London Heathrow airport on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May and met in Johannesburg airport by Jane Day – a MC Britain mission partner serving with MC Southern Africa. They stayed at Mazenod guesthouse for nine days ending Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May. The group met with the Presiding Bishop and General Secretary of MCSA when they visited the Connexion Office and met few staff. Later in the week, they visited the Cradle of Humankind, Apartheid Museum, Soweto and took turns to lead daily evening reflections. As part of their cross-cultural experience, they also participated in a 'Women-in-Leadership' forum called *Magnify!* The women attended different



Churches to preach and fellowship with various congregations in and around Johannesburg. They later attended the Baptist Union Conference held at Rooderport before flying back to the UK the same day. Alison, a Baptist minister from Worcestershire (visiting South Africa for the first time), also joined the group for few activities including attending the Baptist Union Conference.



Jane Day – mission partner in Jo'burg with UK visiting ministers

social workers, carers and the recovering patients – all boys. They encouraged patients to complete the treatment course and aim to stay clean before sharing prayers. They heard of the support of a renowned South African artist that regularly visited to offer visible support and engage with the boys since the centre receives no government

This group visit was co-ordinated by the WCR Office in association with Jane Day to promote cross-cultural experience between British and MCSA female ministers. Both conferences celebrated 40 years of 'Women in Ministry' in recent years. Six of the UK ministers along with a layperson in the group participated in the *Magnify* programme at Pretoria. They met Methodist ministers from around and within Pretoria and discussed opportunities and challenges facing women in church leadership today.

I arrived at and joined the visiting group on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May. Earlier in the day, the group visited the drug rehabilitation centre for young men at Chris Hani hospital in Soweto. As ministers, they interacted with the

funding. At that evening reflection, we discussed the socio-economic and political challenges facing communities such as family breakdown, peer pressure, poverty, inequality etc. These were issues encountered globally therefore churches everywhere need to act ecumenically to effectively address them. After all, the gospel brings hope to all.

By the end of the week, the group tried to make sense of the various visits made during the week by participating in reflective conversations led by Nicky. They shared individual and group experiences. The women were grateful for the opportunities to listen and learn about the cultural



Reflective conversations led by Nicky

positions of women, their experiences and female ministerial stories in MC Southern Africa. This was an opportunity to develop partnerships across ethnic backgrounds, denominations and countries and appreciate the goodness of God wherever located. The visits provoked raw emotions when faced with the scale of inequality across communities and they marvelled at the level of poverty; the existing racial divide plus ongoing segregation issues in South Africa especially within churches. They alluded to the fact that legislations in Britain aim to reduce such disparity though problems still exist within and without churches.

The great news about this visit was that all group members encountered God at numerous times. Some during communion at the *Magnify* event, few at *Magnify* prayer stations, some when preaching at Sunday services. Some experienced harmonious and heartfelt singing during worship. A person committed her life to serving Jesus after preaching and a minister received affirmation of her call to ministry! The *Magnify* event led by Jane Day – MCB mission partner, cuts across the socio-economic class, race and communities providing a sacred place where all could be one in Christ.

#### Meeting with MCSA leaders -Presiding Bishop Zipho, Gen Secretary Charmaine and Mission Director – KK



MCSA Mission Director KK with Gen Secretary Charmaine

The MCSA Synod meetings started on Wednesday 17 May at various venues in different districts. Stephen Day was away to Swaziland with Bishop Anderson and Rev Dawn for their Synod meeting. I therefore seized the opportunity to inform MCSA that the first term of the Days' mission service ends in 2017 and all MCSA leaders unanimously agreed to extend their placement in Johannesburg. They commented on the brilliant work done in Germiston circuit by Stephen and Jane and the challenge of replacing them whenever they wish to leave finally. Both Stephen and

Jane would be back in the UK in summer 2017 for their furlough and re-stationing them within Germiston circuit would take place afterwards.

- I thanked them for welcoming the UK ministers group on visit for just over a week and offered a reciprocal visit
- MCSA made enquiries about scholarship grant and its timetable following frequent recent changes. We also discussed the possible end of MCB annual grants for MCSA

- African Methodist Youths plan to organise its biennial event in South Africa in November 2017 while the African Methodist Council hopes to have a thematic meeting latest by 2018
- MCSA commented that short and long-term ministerial exchanges would be beneficial to its conference and useful for leadership training. Currently ministerial student exchanges with American seminaries exist

It was a very fruitful visit particularly with the UK ministers visiting South Africa for the first time. I was also able to update MCSA leaders on MCB grants for this year since lots of confusion exists and continued discussions are necessary. My partnership visits offers me an opportunity to see how decisions made about grants impact lives, programmes, budgeting and relations. MCSA mentioned the importance of sensitive considerations and continued dialogue to maintain trusts and empower partners to develop its mission initiatives in sustainable ways.

For example, Southern Africa is yet to recover the effect of famine e.g. Cape Town as at May 2017 operates on only 11% of its water supply in its reservoirs due to insufficient rain. Therefore, many farms in its agricultural belt generate less agricultural products and income. May the good Lord give rain to bless His people?

*2 Corinthians 9<sup>10</sup> : Now may God who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness.*

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