

Partnership visit to Togo 2nd – 9th December 2015

Aims – To meet with the senior leadership of Eglise Methodiste du Togo (EM Togo)
To meet with All African Conference of Churches representative for West Africa – Dr Dossou

- **Meeting with Eglise Methodist du Togo leaders at Lome - Confidential**

I travelled to Lome from Cotonou to meet with the leaders of EM Togo. This was because the current President had been out of office for several months. At the meeting, EM Togo leaders confirmed that Rev Charles Klagba initially asked for his annual leave and later extended his leave of absence to embark on training in France. The church leaders were consulted and agreed to release him however none of the Bishops agreed to act up because the Connexional year ends in February 2016. Charles Klagba spoke to me on the phone from France and confirmed that he was attending the next conference in Lome in February or March 2016 to enable him hand over the leadership in person to his successor.

In the mean time, the vice president has been responsible for Church administrative duties and the General Secretary responsible for pastoral issues. Currently there are three signatories to authorise financial transactions

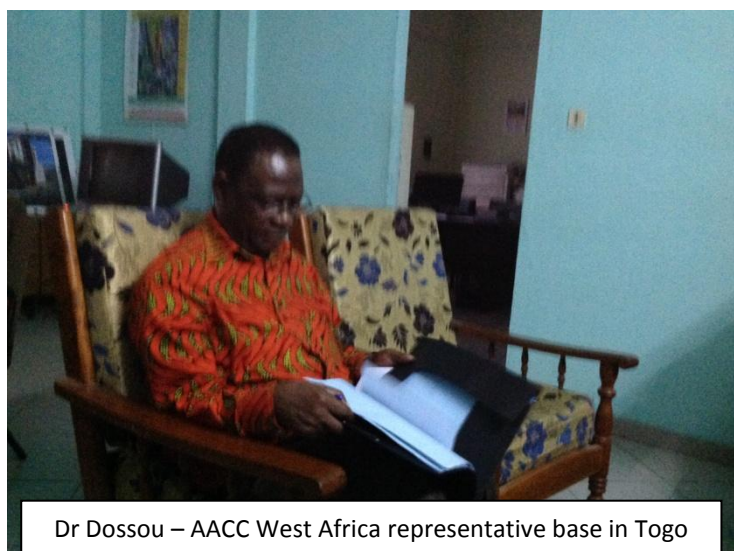
on behalf of EM Togo. The General Secretary countersigns with the Treasurer for financial activities in the absence of the President. There was no need to retrieve new signatories because of the impending hand over by Charles Klagba to the new head of church in February – March 2016. However I explained that the release of the annual grant would be delayed until the new President is inducted to ensure that the new mission priorities were identified and supported. They were grateful for my visit and concern and were willing to present the statement of accounts. I advised that a year-end EM Togo audited account would suffice in 2016. I plan to keep in contact with this small conference until a successful handover has ensued.



Accounting assistant, Accountant and Vice – President of EM Togo

Meeting with the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) representative for West Africa – Rev Dr Simone Dossou

I had the privilege of meeting with Dr Dossou the AACC representative for West Africa based at the Lome office. It was a joy to know the Ebola crisis was now over though Liberia was still struggling with possible emerging cases. We prayed that the situation would be well curtailed to allow the most affected countries to start rebuilding their national health systems to safeguard reoccurrence. There was also concern about the persistent Boko Haram terrorist activities in Northern Nigeria that could spill into neighbouring countries namely Cameroon, Chad and Niger, even



Dr Dossou – AACC West Africa representative base in Togo

though the Nigerian government promised allocating increased resources to combat terrorism. Boko Haram was said to be responsible for about 20,000 deaths plus ongoing kidnapping to date. The most worrying problem was increased number of female suicide bombers which might be linked to the missing girls even though this has not been confirmed. There were suggestions that disillusioned kidnapped girls might consider this an escape means rather than serving the terrorists. The new Nigerian government has prioritised the problem; however more work still has to be done in the fight against terrorism.



Rev Dr Valentin Dedji – lectured at UPAO in Benin under the SALT

Lastly Dr Dossou thanked MCB for its support for the Ogoni refugees from Nigeria who arrived in Benin around 2005 following Ken Sarowiwa's murder at Delta State in Nigeria. They later settled at Quidah in Benin. At that time, there were over 700 people to start with but during a recent visit to the community, the number had shrunk to about 300. A general grant from MCB was given to AACC in 2012 to settle the displaced families and help promote community cohesiveness in an environment initially hostile to them. The community has since developed and some of the children were now attending Benin schools

though this is not always the case in displaced communities. I thanked Dr Dossou and Rev Alagbada for their leadership roles in supporting these displaced people and kindly asked for a written update on the situation to assess progress and consider partnership support with AACC and EPMB in future. It was good to have Rev Dr Valentin Dedji attend the meeting having just completed the group training at UPAO sponsored by MCB SALT programme. Dr Dedji also visited Quidah at the onset of the crisis and sent a report on the visit with a few British Methodists that met the displaced communities in Benin. We all prayed for the situation and praised AACC for its continued support for the people who were said to be living in deplorable conditions because they were refused refugee status for political reasons. The Benin government does not want to fall out with the Nigerian government and Ken Sarowiwa's rebellion against the Nigerian government for dreadful environmental atrocities caused by Shell in the Niger delta was a sensitive and shameful problem. Unfortunately it is the poor community members that spoke out, that fled for their lives and remain without a voice. Is there any justice for the poor and underprivileged...?

Thank you
Dr Bunmi Olayisade
Africa Partnership Coordinator