

Partnership visit to Gambia 15 – 22 March 2013

The purposes of my partnership visit were

- To strengthen the partnership between the Gambian and British Methodists.
- To understand and identify the mission priorities of the Presiding Bishop after her first year in office
- To visit programmes funded by the World Mission Fund
- To Meet recipients of Nationals in Mission Appointments grants.

Arrived Banjul on Friday 15 March and worshipped at the Wesley Cathedral Church Banjul on Sunday 17 March – St Patrick's Day! Service was interesting and lively though a few of the ladies were away to attend the Women's Federation Conference in the States.



MC The Gambia Choir



MC The Gambia in the Connexional Office

At the start of the week I joined the early morning meeting held at the Connexional Office and met with the staff. I later met with the Accountant whose post is being funded by the National in Mission Appointment (NMA) programme. The post has been beneficial to MC The Gambia in presenting its audited accounts and preparing its budgets. The post of the Education Secretary for Methodist Schools in the Gambia was also supported by the NMA grant and the partner church is now seeking ways to continue funding this post.

MC The Gambia is still struggling to train its ministers because there is no seminary in Gambia. Rev Samuel Mattia is being trained at Queen's Foundation funded under the SALT programme. There are quite a few supernumerary ministers still serving with MCTG pending training of younger ministers. The Presiding Bishop is developing its Ministerial Training strategy as it reviews its Church growth programme. The Methodist Church Nigeria is currently sponsoring a few Gambian ministers in its seminaries to assist its succession plan.

Meeting with the Presiding Bishop – Bishop Hannah Faal-Heim

Bishop Hannah came to post February 2012 and had spent the past year familiarising herself with Connexional Office operations, MCTG ministers, schools etc. She initiated a business audit on all sections to help identify the Church's mission priorities, optimise its personnel and effectively manage its internal and external networks.

MCTG's priority is to upgrade its communication system to promote a good two-way communication system within and outside its Connexion. There is currently no operational corporate email address,

therefore all staff had to use their personal email addresses for official use. Also there have been recurrent computer and printer breakdowns resulting in loss of data and expensive maintenance costs of these machines.

MCTG Social Services

MCTG struggles to pay its medical personnel because it gets no assistance from the government. However there is dire need for medical services in the rural community and costs are subsidised by the Church. Therefore MCTG has to implement various income generating ideas to help raise funds e.g. managing a small and efficient printing press.

Bishop Hannah also wishes to develop a safeguarding policy for MCTG after attending the MCB 2012 conference. She said this required urgent attention because the Church has its Kindergarten, Methodist schools, Sunday schools, Youth clubs etc. Assistance from MCB with regards developing and implementing the policy for both ministers and laity would be most appreciated.

Lastly the Presiding Bishop is still gathering information from its audit report to inform her mission strategy in applying for future grants.



MC The Gambia Connectional Office staff



**NMA recipient - Mrs Ashcroft,
the MMAP Director**

MMAP is an important mission initiative of MCTG based at Brikama – 22 kilometres from Banjul. It helps farmers build resilience in food security particularly in dry seasons by teaching seed preservation techniques during emergencies such as famine, floods etc and help manage disasters and climate change.

MCTG was very grateful for the NMA grant support for the post of Director of Methodist Mission Agricultural Programme. It raises mango, cashew and guava seedlings for the surrounding community and produces hot sauces, jam and marmalade on a small scale. Following the recent renovation of the nutritional unit of its medical clinic, MMAP wishes to work alongside the nutritionists to teach young mothers how to manage a small vegetable garden and provide seedlings for the pilot study. Any support given in this regard would help alleviate malnutrition among the victims – mostly young children.

Thank you



MMAP pepper seedlings for demonstration and production



MMAP staff holding a food pack – Marmalade and Hot sauce

*Bunmi Olayisade
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