

Visit to the United Church of Zambia on 22 – 29 September 2011

The aims of the visit were to strengthen relations between UCZ and the British Methodist Church and to visit serving mission partners in Zambia.

Day 1 – 22 September 2011

Arrived Lusaka International Airport at 6.15 pm and checked into a hotel to rest before the afternoon meeting with Synod Officials. The meeting was cancelled due to uncertain outcome of Zambia election result. All staff returned home early but I met with the Synod Treasurer in the hotel later that evening.

Discussion focused on implemented actions to reduce incurred debt e.g. reduce expenses on consumables such as fuel, stationery etc. to keep outgoings down. UCZ also needs to seek ways of developing and/or optimizing their assets to increase its revenue generation. The Finance Manager's post is sponsored by CYM for two years and minor restructuring is taking place to reduce salary expenses. However he commented that minister's salary scale should be reviewed because it is much lower than that of other professionals. I advised possible use of more lay/ volunteers in church activities to free up ministers to carry out exclusive ministerial services. Working and consulting with UCZ members is the way forward in ensuring a sustainable church in the 21st century.



Carpentry class



UCZ training programme



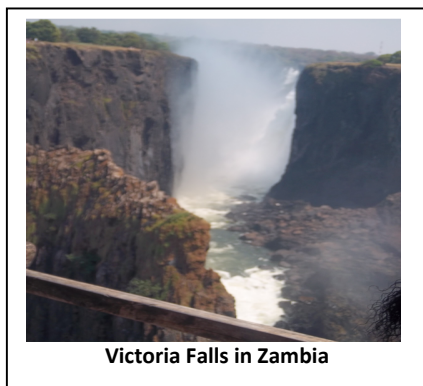
Tailoring class

Day 2 – 23 September 2011

Attended daily prayer meeting at 8.00am and departed for Choma afterwards. Arrived at Chodort Training Institute at 2.00pm and was met by David Nixon. I visited the carpentry workshop for boys, sewing classes for girls, block making unit, production workshop and computer suites. I met both staff and students in training and I heard about successful graduates with successful small businesses in a nearby town. In the past there were only two male tailors in the market; now four ladies have joined the trade. I met with Mr Subi Thomas – a recipient of the MCB NMA programme. The post of Principal will soon become vacant as from March 2012 therefore a request for a mission partner has been submitted.

I also saw the small preschool, though school had finished for the day. The on site library for the community was closed; it is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays. I met with Rhoda Nixon later and she mentioned that she was settling in her new job at the preschool and also does home visits with her colleagues.

I participated at a house group that met monthly at the Nixons' home at 7.30pm. About 18 people of different nationalities were present. We shared food, fellowship and prayers together beforehand. There were two visitors from Ireland also there.



Victoria Falls in Zambia



Zambian crafts

Day 3 – Saturday 24 September 2011

Had an early 8.15am start from Choma. I stopped at Livingstone en-route to see the Victoria Falls. Arrived Mwandia at 2.00pm and met with Keith and Ida Waddell. We toured the hospital, school and church. I viewed the luxury guest house built by the Americans and inspected the house being constructed by Church of Scotland for Keith and Ida. Mwandia is of great importance to Church of Scotland because it was the first village where Dr Livingstone preached to the locals and various preaching stations spread from this point. There is still a tree and church building in remembrance of David Livingstone and both the hospital and school built nearby. I met with pastors, youth coordinator, medical professionals and school principals. We all had a lovely meal at Keith and Ida's home later in the evening. I received several requests for assistance with providing classes for the education of orphans and vulnerable children. A grant application request had already been submitted. There was a need for the provision of IT skills for the community members and to increase the employability of young single mothers and of the rural dwellers. BO is to link Keith with Jenny Featherstone for computers.

Day 4 – Sunday 25 September 2011

Departed Mwandia at 7.15am and traveled to Livingstone (153km). Then proceeded to Choma (188km). Had a very short break and traveled to Kitwe (610 km) via Lusaka. Arrived at Jenny Featherstone's place at UCZ Theological College, Kitwe at 8.30pm and had a meal with her.

Day 5/ 6 – Monday 26 – Tuesday 27 September 2011

Joined in the Holy Communion service along with UCZTC staff and students of the Theological College chapel at 7.30 – 8.30 am. I later met with the College principal, Dr Bwalya, and we discussed the ongoing partnership between UCZTC and MCB. He was very appreciative of the support MCB has given all these years and was also grateful for the two mission partners lecturing at the college - Jennifer and Glen.

Requests

- UCZTH asked for the annual £1000 annual grant for library books since Church of Scotland has contributed the same amount this year. The grant is needed to purchase theological books to meet the quality assurance standard for the institution
- Wish to be linked with other theological institutions in Southern Africa – BO to link UCZTC with AACC
- Dr Bwalya asked for an opportunity for a sabbatical in the UK



Meeting with Jennifer – mission partner

Jenny Enjoys her placement and her next furlough is in 2013. She commented on the security problems on site and has to improve security measures to prevent burglary. She will be sending an invoice to me. She is currently working on development projects sponsored by Church of Scotland supporters and plans to develop a new social work module for the diaconal students at UCZ Theological College.

Meeting with the Lunds – mission partner

I Had dinner with the Lund family. The four children are still settling at Kitwe and being home-schooled. Wendy is often at home with the four children except for one day a week when Glen does not lecture at the college. Glen also assists with the library. I suggested transfer of the vehicle from David and Rhoda Nixon in March 2012 when they return to the UK since Glen and Wendy have no vehicle. They both have concerns with lack of security on site and steps are being taken to improve the situation. BO to be advised. The children mentioned their concern about the electrics at home and I shared this with Dr Bwalya and requested an urgent response since one of the children is disabled. The repair cost will be shared by both parties since the college has serious

monetary constraints. Wendy wishes to work with the local assembly as a trained musician, and she currently gives a few private lessons to children at their house.



Keith, Ida and Mubita Waddel



The Lunds family at UCZTC



David and Rhoda Nixon at Choma

I then visited the Mission and Evangelism Office at Ndola and the minister requested some short term volunteers when possible. The office is responsible for developing church themes and creative resources for UCZ and affiliated bodies. I suggested also recruiting UCZ theological students as volunteers during summer breaks. Traveled 380km to Lusaka and arrived at 6.00pm.

Day 7 – Wednesday 28 September 2011

I met with UCZ senior management at 9.30am. Rev Nsofwa, the Community Development Director said the opening prayer and Mr Ng'ambi the Administrative Secretary made the introductions. Bishop Chibuye, the acting General Secretary gave an overview of the UCZ's strategic plan and we discussed the challenges of implementing the plan. These were the comments made:

- Governance – there is a need to ensure that the laity, women, youths and rural dwellers have a voice/ representation as Council members to promote ownership of the vision. Consultations should take place before the Synod council meeting and members should be debriefed afterwards to promote unity of purpose in the church
- Human Resources – specialists were needed to advise on pension issues, restructuring options to optimise the existing structure or help with the review. Redundancy packages might have to be considered as well whilst planning to reduce operational costs. Recruitment of the right personnel having both skills and passion is crucial at this stage
- Communications – the new Communications officer was recently recruited and plans to work with ministers and leaders to convey UCZ's vision and goals to those at the grass roots. He hopes to play an active role when a new UCZ radio station starts in Lusaka and to assist senior UCZ members to become media friendly. UCZ plans to be more visible and raise its prophetic voice as a Church on contemporary issues such as justice, poverty, gender issues etc

- Knowledge Management – there is a need to archive historic records both electronically and physically. Assistance from international partners would be appreciated
- Finance and debt servicing – The ongoing debt management plan should continue and staff should be encouraged to suggest ways of improving service delivery at cheaper costs. For instance, pensioners or skilled UCZ members might be asked to volunteer in order to reduce consultant costs, with ministers being retrained to lead specific units as done by the Catholics. Land could be leased to women’s groups to reduce current problems of squatters. Performance related pay could be promoted to support sustainability and encourage fundraising ideas such as organising choir competitions etc. There should be a re-evaluation of the calendar of events e.g. have bi-annual conferences etc.
- Community Development – Support should be given to self-help projects and self reliant concepts in partnership with international partners. Diaconal work should be coordinated by retraining staff and defining roles. It would be advisable to make the unit autonomous in its operation to take advantage of the assistance from non faith based agencies e.g. human rights, poverty alleviation, gender issues, child rights etc. The unit could train the diaconal students on childcare issues and become a specialist in crèche management in the country providing jobs and generating income for the church at large.

Day 8 – 29 September 2011 -Departed back to the UK

