

Partnership visit to Benin 9 - 17 August 2018

Aims of the visit

- To meet with the new EPMB church leaders
- To discuss partnership issues and understand new strategic plans for 2018-2022
- To meet with other EPMB partners at the roundtable a year after reconciliation
- To meet with NMA beneficiary and MCB mission partners serving with EPMB

Visit to Good Samaritan Hospital (GSH) at Porto Novo

I was picked up at the airport by Michael Tettey and the next day we travelled from Cotonou to visit the Good Samaritan Hospital (GSH) at Porto Novo, where Michael works as the Hospital Administrator and Joanna his wife, works as a Midwife. Janelle (12) and Joelle (8) were both on holidays, therefore Joanna was minding them.

The new GSH administration block built by CeVaa, France



The Good Samaritan Hospital initial started as a clinic in the late ninety nineties and later expanded due to increased demand for its services from surrounding communities. I met the current Chair of the Hospital Board, Dr Jonathan Amegnigan; who was involved in the early days but now retired. He is a trained Medical Doctor. Dr Amegnigan was happy to see me

and was very grateful for the support received from MCB for so long. He explained how the World Church Relationships Office in the past helped purchase the hospital land and funded medical supplies for the clinic in addition to payment of staff salaries. As a result, the clinic was able to save towards building the current Good Samaritan Hospital. Dr Amegnigan thanked MCB for sending a Civil Engineer to assist with its construction plans and now GSH is the second largest hospital in Porto Novo. Unfortunately, the split within the Methodist Church in Benin occurred when construction started and he left. He was happy to be back as the Chair following the reconciliation of both factions in 2017.

Alongside him was the current Director of the GS Hospital– Reverend Onibon. The Director thanked MCB for sending Michael and Joanna and praised them for their contributions these past four years. He commented on the progress made in medical service delivery since they both arrived.

GSH has two full time medical doctors as well as other part time specialists. In 2012, MCB contributed substantially towards the construction of the hospital so it could start operations in 2014. Now due to popular demand, it needs more space. CeVaa (a French Mission agency), has just completed an administration block on its premises for

Dr J Amegnigan, Bunmi, Rev Onibon and Michael Tettey



staff to vacate spaces for patients in the hospital building. GSH plans to seize the opportunity to review its current personnel strategy plus delivery of specialist services as indicated by Michael Tetey.

In addition to that, GSH requested for financial assistance towards transporting some hospital equipment and medical supplies obtained from the United States. I suggested channelling the request through EPMB Connexion Office. The hospital currently receives no subvention from the government, therefore the medical supplies help subsidise its service delivery to those unable to afford basic health care. This remains a mission priority for EPMB.

Sunday service at Radio of Hope

It was early start on Sunday 12 August, as we travelled from Cotonou to Porto Novo to attend the 5th year anniversary of Radio of Hope, belonging to



EPMB choir at the 5th anniversary of Hope Radio

EPMB church leaders were in attendance. Rev Dr Amos Hounsa, EPMB President, preached from John 6:35. He shared that Jesus being the bread of life, offers spiritual food and reassures those who come to him of ongoing provision when we read the Word of God. The radio has been an evangelistic tool for EPMB for the past five years, disseminating words of salvation, hope and peace. It has also been useful in communicating public health promotions, supporting civil education and addressing

gender issues to hearers. That morning, the choir presented several songs and they were amazing. They are well loved by radio listeners and the service was presented live on the radio.

It was good to see the radio now renovated because it caught fire few years ago and MCB responded by sending a solidarity fund for which Rev Dr Hounsa publicly thanked MCB. However, though studio renovation was completed, transmission was limited pending procurement of a missing communication equipment. It was suggested that all partners should collaborate with EPMB to help restore the radio as an effective mission tool.

Meeting with EPMB senior leadership team

I had the privilege of meeting with EPMB church leaders on Monday 13 August 2018. In addition to Rev Amos, the General Secretary, Leader of the Men's Fellowship, Leader of the Women's Fellowship, Hospital Administrator and EPMB's Accountant were all present. It was an opportunity for me to explain to the new church leaders the various ways MC Britain support partnership with EPMB and UPAO –its seminary. I explained the use of the various grants, asked for outstanding 2017-18 grant reports forms. They appreciated the services of MC Britain mission partners

EPMB senior leadership team with Bunmi



– Michael and Joanna; the visiting lecturer to UPAO under the SALT programme and asked for support for its five year strategic plans. We all discussed the EPMB mission priorities together and considered how best to attract resources outside MCB.

Visits to EPMB projects

1. Dangbo farm

We visited Dangbo Farm located at the outskirts of Porto Novo. It had well-constructed buildings on a lot of farm acreage. The buildings were tired looking (over forty years) and the sheds needed updating. It could become an asset for an income-generating project. The current Director has agronomic skills and he was willing to offer training interested clients to raise funds. A business proposal could be developed to this end.



Dedication of GSH administrative block by partners

2. Atsukpa school dropout scheme



Michael Tettey – MCB mission partner with Bunmi

Ten teenage girls receive vocational training from church volunteers at an old school building as and when able due to lack of resources for upskilling. Feeding the girls and offering basic subsidies to trainers have been challenging. The main reason for the project has been to prevent teenage pregnancy or early marriages.

3. Anavie Women’s Centre

A well update Women’s Conference Centre set up in 1996 using regular women’s subscriptions. Hall commonly used for literacy classes in another part of the country. With this venue closer to Porto Novo, it hosts church guests during synod meetings plus church conventions or conferences. It offers a niche market and could possibly be rented out as hostel for small groups. For now, the church does not pay for using its facilities as it is managed by a Church minister.

Roundtable

It was great to meet participants from CeVaa (France) and DM (Switzerland) as well as partners from regional West Africa and Benin national organisations at the roundtable. Being a year since the reconciliation of the two Methodist Church factions that broke up since 1998, the new leadership shared its 2018-2023 strategic plans, values and priorities with partners. The partners volunteered to sponsor different projects in line with their strengths. Special request was made to MCB about Wesleyan studies and related issues. CeVaa promised to support Women empowerment in addition to



EPMB leaders at the roundtable meeting

health promotions. Defab (a French mission agency), was to assist with agro-pastoral projects whilst DM promised to support few other projects. It was a very fruitful roundtable and ways for future collaboration would be considered.

Thank you.

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