

REPORT ON VISIT TO SIERRA LEONE TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF Rt. Rev. ALBERT S. BEAH HEAD OF METHODIST CHURCH SIERRA LEONE (MCSL) ON 22nd OCT. 2017 IN FREETOWN.

I was asked by the Co-ordinator of the Africa Desk at World Church Relations (WCR) of Methodist Church Britain, to attend the funeral of the President of Methodist Church Sierra Leone (MCSL) who died on 28th September 2017 in Nigeria after a long illness. The body of the President was then repatriated to Freetown for funeral rites and burial. I was nominated to attend on behalf of WCR and also in my capacity as a Mission Partner who worked in Sierra Leone from 2007 – 2014. Subsequently Methodist Church Benin also asked me to deliver a note of condolence to MCSL on their behalf. This is my report following my visit.

I arrived in Sierra Leone on 18th October 2017. MCSL arranged for me to be received at the airport and facilitated my transfer from the airport to the mainland and taken to the YMCA guest house for my stay in Freetown.

On Thursday 19th October 2017 I attended Vigil at Balmer Memorial Methodist Church, John Street during which I delivered a message of condolences on behalf of WCR and on my own behalf as a former Mission Partner to Sierra Leone. I also delivered a separate message on behalf of the President of Eglise Protestante Methodiste du Benin (EPMB) to MCSL and the bereaved family.

On Friday 20th October a funeral service was held at Wesley Church (Lamina Sankoh Rd, Freetown), where the body was laid in state for viewing. Another vigil was also held at St Augustine Church in Bo on Saturday night. I again delivered messages of condolences on behalf of both WCR and EPMB.

On Sunday morning (22nd October) another funeral and communion service was held in Bo before the body was transported to Kenema where he was buried in the grounds of Sidney Groves Methodist Church, Circular Road Kenema.

I left, together with the delegation from Ghana and the Secretary of Conference MCSL, for Luangi airport (Freetown) on the morning of Monday 23 October, 2017, for my flight back to Cotonou.

General Impressions

I was generally pleased with the hosting arrangements that MCSL put in place for the team that visited from abroad. I have conveyed my personal appreciation and on behalf of WCR to both the Acting President Rt. Rev. Arnold Temple and the Secretary of Conference Rev. Bobb-Williams for their hospitality.

I pray the church in Sierra Leone will be able to chart the turbulent waters ahead with God's help and wisdom as they prepare to elect a new leader.

Prepared by Michael Tettey

Mission Partner Benin.

26 October 2017. Benin