

## **Newsletter from Sierra Leone**

Our sincerest apologies, it has been a while since we sent an update on our work in Sierra Leone since we returned there in October 2010. We returned to Freetown instead of Nixon Hospital in Segbwema as Joelle, who turned five last December, needed to attend a school that would enable her re-enter the education system on our return to the UK. Our move to Freetown was made possible as the Church in Sierra Leone also wanted Michael to undertake a bigger role to develop the health facilities they own and which would also include overseeing the work at Nixon Hospital. Our first few weeks in Freetown were challenging especially with regard to accommodation for the family and work. Thankfully these issues have now been resolved as we moved to a two bedroom flat just before Christmas. In addition Michael was allocated an office at Conference Office in January – which was great!!

Joelle started her new school soon after we arrived in Freetown and has settled in quite well. She has made lots of friends from her swimming and ballet classes.

Janelle has also taken quite well to the weather in SL and even though we took her before she could completed all her immunizations she has been healthy. Thanks be to God!

Michael's role has changed significantly and is still evolving but his responsibilities include overseeing Nixon Hospital in Segbwema and putting together a business plan with the hope of turning the hospital around. The hospital has now been renovated with funds from the government of Sierra Leone and the focus has now turned towards securing partners to secure its long-term future. We are presently in discussions with a number of international NGOs including the Voluntary Service Organisation (VSO) and Save the Children of Sierra Leone in this regard.

Please pray these discussions would prove successful and that the church would be able to identify partners to work which would secure the future of Nixon Hospital.

Joanna prepares for the teaching assignment in Segbwema in the summer. It is planned the whole family be relocated for nine weeks in the end of June to August when she is scheduled to teach 106 students the obstetrics module of the SECHN course. In addition, she has made arrangements with the Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone (CHASL) which is sponsored by the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone to help with their Mother and Child Health programmes by supporting the midwife in charge there. Joanna is also in discussion with the Aberdeen Women's Centre (AWC) - formerly owned by Mercy Ship in Freetown. The plan would be for students at Nixon Memorial Nursing School to undertake practical training at AWC as their facilities and training programmes are believed to be at international standards.

### **Bi-Centenary Celebrations**

This year marks 200 years since the first Methodist Ministers, led by Rev. George Warren from the UK, arrived in Freetown. MCSL is celebrating the milestone with a series of activities which would climax in a big celebration in November 2011. It is hoped, that as part of the bi-centenary celebrations Methodists in Liverpool and Freetown (cities of origin and destination) might contribute prayers of thanksgiving.

These, it is hoped, may be used collectively in the different locations during the months of September to November 2011.

The celebrations were launched by Rev. Stephen Poxon when he visited Sierra Leone in February and the service was appropriately in the George Warren Memorial Church in Freetown.



Rev. Stephen Poxon launching the Bi-centenary celebrations at the George Warren Memorial Church – Freetown with the chairman of the celebrations committee – Rev. Peter Clarke.

Please pray that these celebrations would be successful and most importantly that they will focus the church's attention on work done by the pioneers who helped spread the Christian gospel all over the world at such great risk to themselves as we remember Rev. George Warren who sadly died six months after his arrival in Freetown.

## Visitors

During the month of February we had a number of visitors specifically Nixon Hospital.

The first visitor was Dr John Cochrane on the 4<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2011. Dr Cochrane was instrumental in the setting up of the Community Based Health programme at Nixon. Through his untiring effort, funds were raised to commence the programme and his church in the UK also sponsored the project for three years to the tune of nearly £40,000. The visit was to enable Dr Cochrane assess the impact of the Community project and its sustainability now that his church's sponsorship has come to an end.



Dr John Cochrane (m) with President of Conference Rt. Rev. Arnold Temple (r) and Secretary of conference – Rev. Jambawai

Dr Cochrane, in his debriefing session with the President and Secretary of Conference, expressed satisfaction at the work done by the Church and Nixon Hospital in particular, the community projects. He was pleased the work, which started over three years ago, was still ongoing and making a difference to the lives of the communities in which it operates. He cited specifically the impact of the outreach clinics to the villages and the placement of students of the Nursing School in the community for their practical training. He noted all these initiatives - in addition to the other health promotion activities - were making a difference in the villages.

The second group of visitors (12 in all), was led by Rev. Stephen Poxon, the Chair of the Lancashire District and former President of the Methodist Church of the UK. The team visited from 18<sup>th</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

During their visit the group, which included 2 doctors and 5 nurses was based at Nixon Hospital for most of the time. At Nixon the two doctors and nurses conducted Life Saving Skills training sessions for the final year students of the Nixon Memorial Nursing School. This programmes dealt with the management of obstetric emergencies. The course was deemed relevant, appropriate and timely for the students. The group also brought with them a considerable number of equipment and drugs to assist the hospital, whilst the doctors and nurses assisted with some of the clinical work at the hospital.

The group has expressed an interest in assisting the hospital in the near future since the Lancashire District is now twinned with the Kono/Kailahun District of the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone.

The group also attend the graduation ceremony of the first group of students (12 in all) to graduate from the Red Rose Partnership Skills centre in Kailahun on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. The Skill centre is supported by the Lancashire District



Graduands of the Red Rose Partnership skills Training Centre - Kailahun

### Prayer Points

1. Please pray that the Bi-centenary celebrations would draw people's heart to God and would be an occasion to evangelise to spread the good news
2. Thank god for the blessing of accommodation for us.
3. Please pray to thank God for the work of all our partners – both here in Sierra Leone and abroad who work with us on diverse projects to bring the gospel to life in the lives of the disadvantaged and marginalised communities.



Prepared by Joanna & Michael Tettey serving as mission Partners with the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone with support from Joelle & Janelle