

Partnership visits to Eglise Methodista du Togo (EMT) & Eglise Protestante Methodista du Benin

15 - 20 January 2020

Reasons for visits:

- To meet with EM Togo & EPM Benin leaders separately
- To visit MCB mission partners serving with EM Togo at Lome
- To discuss ongoing partnership issues with each partner

MCB mission partners – Michael and Joanna Tettey, serving with EM Togo

Panic gripped me at 04.33 hours! I was on my way to London Heathrow airport with a missing Yellow Fever Certificate but eventually found it. I could not justify how a small-sized document would

jeopardise my visits to three countries – Togo, Benin and Ghana. I boarded the plane and was glad to arrive the hotel fifteen hours later even though I encountered severe delays. Upon arrival, I was glad to see Joanna Tettey and Rev Angele at Lome Airport, patiently waiting for me despite the two-hour delay, what a mighty God we serve!

The next day, Michael and Joanna Tettey – MCB mission partners collected me from the hotel on their way to the Church office. It was a good opportunity to see them in their new office and to discuss their general welfare and duties. Joanna, as a trained mid-wife, helped with EM Togo Community health strategy. The strategy is to be approved

by Conference at the next gathering scheduled for April 2020. In the meantime, she is working closely with Rev Angele – the Secretary General to deliver a workshop for Women in Leadership. MMS Ireland funds this initiative and participants are expected from Benin, Togo and Ghana in March 2020.

Michael has been helping with development duties for the partner church. EM Togo board members recently agreed to implement its new 5-year strategy as projects when approved. Michael will take the lead on fundraising for projects both locally and globally. Michael also plans to advance EM Togo's partnership with MC Ghana by seeking to establish an English speaking church service in Lome. MC Ghana would recreate by starting a French speaking church service in Accra. Later, I visited Michael and Joanna's newly renovated residence located just outside Lome city. The house security was recently improved to prevent unwanted intrusions. Togo elections are scheduled to take place February 2020 and we all pray for peaceful campaigns and fair election results. Their daughters, Janell and Joelle were at their Secondary school during my visit and the whole family seems to have settled at their new abode.



Joanna and Michael at their residence in Lome

Meeting with EM Togo Leaders

Rev. Grace Lawson, the President of EM Togo welcomed me and extended sincere gratitude to MC Britain for its ongoing partnership and support for past years. She was saddened that she could not attend the MC Britain Conference on two occasions because her visa applications were denied at British High Commissions.

I was glad to see her in good spirit despite being off work with a fractured leg. We met in the Chapel, on the same premises as EM Togo Connexional Office on 16 January 2020. EM Togo leadership team with two board members were in attendance. Rev Lawson raised few issues mentioned for future action at the 2019 Annual Conference.

These topics formed EM mission priorities waiting to be verified by the Conference. For example, the desire for EM Togo is to start a Radio Station to promote evangelisation, its visibility and to challenge awkward theologies spreading across the nation.

EM Togo leaders invited short term mission personnel and volunteers, such as journalists and medics willing to serve for short periods and upskill Togolese youths in the process.

The board members thanked MC Britain for sending the Tetteys and look forward to working closely with them. Rev Angele, was also thankful for MC Ireland financing the Women-in-Leadership workshop to be held in March 2020. It hopes to encourage women to take up top jobs within sacred and secular circles, sharing the significance of holding the seminar when two females were leading EM Togo. We also discussed various partnership issues, clarifying



EM Togo Board members at the meeting



Rev Grace Lawson - President and Rev Anaele – Sec Gen

few MCB policies affecting existing partners. I commended EMT leaders for its ongoing work as well as its future vision and enquired about its Safeguard policy. EMT leaders assured me that its safeguarding policy was in the pipeline though there were ongoing conversations with Compassion and Togo Social Services to develop its Child protection policy.

Later Michael and Joanna joined us to introduce themselves, explained about previous mission services at Sierra Leone and Benin. Each expanded on personal professional skills and knowledge for executing their duties. They stressed the importance of working alongside their local colleagues to promote co-transference of knowledge and skills plus succession planning. They both have wealth of experiences to draw upon in serving the partner church. Michael and Joanna are looking forward to aligning their work with EM Togo strategic plans and supporting the communication strategy for the new mission station if it goes ahead. Their daughters – Joelle and Janelle have settled at school and made friends. May the partnership be fruitful at various levels including strengthening the twinning opportunity with the Southern District of MC Ireland.

Meeting with EPM Benin Leaders

It was an early start, leaving the hotel at 5.00am to cross the Togo - Benin border before rush hour. We arrived at Porto Novo in Benin by 10.30am. I met with EPM Benin leaders to discuss ongoing language challenges with my office. However, a translator was invited on this occasion to tease out various queries about the Scholarship And Leadership Training (SALT) Programme with the Nationals in Mission Appointment (NMA) programmes. There was also request to empowering teen mothers. EPM Benin has been collaborating with its government on developing its Child protection policy. It plans to consolidate its efforts in producing relevant documents soon.

Michael and Joanna Tettey later joined the meeting along with the Good Samaritan Hospital leaders. This meeting doubled up as their final send-off event

after five years of immense contributions at the hospital. Michael worked as the hospital administrator with EPM Benin. He implemented various training and initiated audit programmes. Joanna as a midwife improved the privacy for child and maternal care at birth by soliciting for new wards and better working arrangements. During this time, MC Britain and Cevaa have worked together with EPMB to improve the infrastructure and hospital systems to make the hospital more self-sustainable. The most recent support from MC Britain was the freighting of hospital equipment (including one for dialysis) for the hospital.

There was a short history lesson about MC Britain's involvement with the GS Hospital from onset. The hospital started as a clinic in 1996 at Porto Novo, with the World Church Office support for the purchase of



Rev Hounsa –EPMB President with Michael Tettey



Janelle, Joelle, Joanna and Michael Tettey at Porto Novo

hospital drugs and subsidised staff salaries in conjunction with EPMB. As the clinic expanded, the hospital bought the land. Later on, space became a challenge with limited space available to separate mothers that had caesarean operations from those with natural births. By 2012, the construction of the hospitals main building commenced, services expanded until it overgrew itself requiring a spare room for neo-pathology. A recent collaboration between MC Britain and Cevaa aims to provide a Specialised Maternal Unit due to increasing demand from surrounding communities. The Tetteys initiated this programme before moving on. Their last visit was a memorable occasion, with Janelle and Joelle present when the PBS leaders acknowledged their contributions as mission partners in past years.

CAFAB Bagbe

As we approached the Conference room at EM Togo headquarters, a Methodist hymn melody filled the air. Morning devotions started at 9.00am and we – Michael, Joanna and I joined the meeting. There were 16 staff members present. A staff member led devotions, sharing from 1 Kings 17: 19 – 21 and Matthew 4: 17 -22 on response to God’s call. She shared that we were all created for worship though some are appointed to specific offices and others participate in God’s mission. We were encouraged to offer our skills, knowledge and resources for his kingdom. God wishes for prompt response i.e. without delay. All are welcome but only few seize the opportunity to share Jesus with others.



Michael and family with PBS Hospital leaders

We later travelled to Bagbe to view the venue for the proposed Women-in-Leadership Workshop being co-ordinated by Joanna. The event is scheduled for March 2020.

Thank you.

*Dr Bunmi Olayisade
Africa Partnership Coordinator
February 2020*