

REPORT FROM MICHAEL, JOANNA, JOELLE AND JANELLE TETLEY – MISSION PARTNERS IN TOGO – September 2020

The COVID – 19 pandemic created many disheartening changes which forced us to create a ‘new normal’- at work, at home and in our public life. We are happy to report that as a family, we pulled together to weather this newness of life. The children started online school – where they had to be closely supervised – whilst the adults shuffled between working from home and going to the office. The wearing of masks in public became the norm; having one of the adults as a ‘designated shopper’ whose job was to brace the outside world of supermarkets, markets and paying of bills became the norm; not having an option to go to the beach or even to have play dates became the norm. The ‘new normal’ saw many of us living a sort of ‘hermit’ lifestyle. Some enjoyed it, while others struggled. In the end this ‘new normal’ became the norm.

In March 2020 as the lockdown began and the country’s borders closed, many previously planned church events were postponed. The highly anticipated ‘Women in Leadership’ Conference which meant to gather women leaders of the Methodist church from Togo, Benin and Ghana to learn from, share with and encourage each other was cancelled. The EMT’s synod which would have seen the beginning of new leadership was postponed. The uncertainty of the situation made planning impossible. However, because of the national measures put in place, we thank God, the number of cases in Togo remained relatively low.

THE FORMATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH OF TOGO’S HEALTH TEAM

In July the mainstream churches – Methodist; Catholics; Presbyterian – and mosques were given permission to partially open their temples. The Methodist church was permitted to re-open 18 temples in 13 parishes. To capitalize on this opportunity, a health team was put together to give up to date, correct information on COVID – 19. This team was made up of members with a background in health and Pastors from the Lome temples. The national requirements limited the Sunday services to only one hour with ten minutes allocated for the health session. This was planned to be carried out every Sunday.



Rev. Angele DOGBE updating the Eglise Methodist du TOGO (EMT) health team

COVID – 19 HEALTH PROMOTION SESSIONS BEGIN IN THE TEMPLES



Many temples created their own outside publicity materials – banners and posters.

July 19 was the first Sunday service post lockdown and the first health promotion session was held, where general information of the disease, demonstrations on hand washing and a forum to ask questions were presented. Brochures which helped to reinforce the presentations were distributed on importance of wearing masks; social distancing and hand washing. Additionally, members of the health team were allocated to visit the temples in the interior parishes with the objective to work alongside local church members. The hope is by the end of September 2020, all the parishes would have a health group who will be trained and equipped to carry out regular health promotion programmes.

The girls have started a new academic year and have gone back to school armed with their masks, hand sanitizers and the knowledge of the importance of social distancing and proper hand washing. They were happy to return and we pray they remain happy and healthy throughout.

We make the best of our daily living here. The country's land borders are still closed; beaches are still closed and play dates and after school activities are banned. But we continue to trust that God has us in His Mighty hands.

We thank you for your prayers and financial contributions which have been the underpinning of our progress. As we continue to work to improve the lives of the people in TOGO we ask you continue to pray for us to be effective at work, in the church and in our home.



National COVID – 19 Team monitoring the Sunday morning church service



Members attending Sunday Services are required to practise social distancing; wear a mask; wash or sanitize their hands before entering the temple.



Social distancing and wearing of masks enforced before, during and after services

The practice of social distancing and wearing of masks during service is mandatory



Social distancing and wearing of masks are mandatory for ALL attending





Hand washing demonstration done in the Sunday Service health session



Hand washing and proper use of mask demonstration done in the Sunday Service health session