

## December Newsletter – Michael & Joanna Tetley



So much has happened since our last newsletter and not the least of these were the Presidential and Parliamentary elections held in the country on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2012. We are grateful to God that the elections and declaration of the results were conducted peacefully.

On the work front considerable changes have taken place in what we both do as mission Partners. Michael is combining his current role as Health Co-ordinator with his new role as Acting Development Secretary. He is overseeing all the developmental work currently undertaken by MCSL. These range from Livelihood and food security projects, Paralegal work, and Health governance to the Community Based health care programmes in Freetown.

As many people know the civil war in the country destroyed a number of institutions both physically and intellectually and the legal sector was no exception. As a result access to justice is often the domain of the educated and those with the economic strength to do so. Usually the poor, especially women and children, are denied their basic rights due to their inability to pay for this service. The paralegal work undertaken by the church is designed to address this imbalance and is seen as the church taking a stand for the marginalised and down trodden, especially ( but not limited to) women, children and those marginalised in the society to access justice at little or no expense to them. The church is partnering with a number of civil society organisations to deliver this project in the Southern and Eastern part of Sierra Leone.



The community based health care programme is based in Freetown and provides material, spiritual and counselling support to people living with HIV/AIDs. The centre is supported by Christian Aid and the Global Fund. This programme is one of the most successful in the country and is usually showcased as best in practice to other organisations and donors. Presently the centre has a piece of land which the church would want to develop as a resource centre to enable us set up a skills centre for the training of our clients and patrons.

The above are just two of the projects the church has engaged in to make a difference to the lives of people on the margins of society – be it because of finances, religion, gender or social status.

In addition to these projects there is also the regular activities undertaken to support various institutions such as Nixon Memorial Hospital. In October the church took delivery of two containers from a charity in the UK and among the various items was a consignment of drugs for Nixon Hospital. MCSL is very grateful to the Whitmore charity and especially Bro Ryan Kelley for his continuous support for the schools and the Nixon hospital.

Joanna's new role has posed a number of challenges – balancing the demands of the school run with delivering what is required of her. We are grateful to God that with the support of some key personnel she has so far been able to combine these two demanding roles, albeit not without their peculiar challenges. Joanna's role as the Assistant Health Co-ordinator means she deals with all aspects of health related matters, not only Nixon's. There are plans in place to run health awareness clinics in a number of churches as part of the Health and Wholeness programmes. These clinics would be held in churches on a dedicated 'Health and Wholeness' Sunday. The congregation would be given talks on a number of public health issues such as malaria prevention, HIV/AIDs, non communicable diseases such as diabetes and infant and maternal health. Especially unique to the program is utilizing the knowledge and experience of members of the congregation with a medical background as it is hoped they are the ones who will administer the basic health examinations such as blood pressure checks, HIV/AIDs and malaria testing and generally run the clinic.



As a family December has been a busy month as we celebrated the birthdays of Joelle and Michael, in addition to our wedding anniversary. We were also busy with the social activities which ultimately are many around this time.

As we prepare for the arrival of our Lord this Christmas we take time to reflect upon what Christmas means to us as Christians charged with the responsibility of demonstrating Christ's love to the communities we serve. Christmas should not be the only time we demonstrate Christ love for us all

but rather the climax of our dedication and demonstration of His love to a world short on that commodity. Let us make the Peace, Love, Wonderful counselling and the Mightiness of our Lord and Saviour come alive this Christmas and indeed every day in our mundane tasks.

May Christ be praised.