

# Liberia Education Update

## August 2020



Henri Wilmot Dennis United Methodist School in Topoe Village, Lower New Georgia, was one of the United Methodist Schools that I visited as a WASSCE monitor. Students from Henri Dennis UMS and two other schools took the WASSCE on this campus. The school building is on the right and Lott G. Matthew United Methodist Church is on the left.



Children from Obelia Scott Ross United Methodist School sing during worship service in Boway, Bong County on August 30 with their choir director, Rev. Dr. Jerry Kulah.

### **Give to Advance Projects**

Construction of New School Buildings  
#3020670

Missionary Support #3021129

Operation Classroom # 3020494

Scholarships #15125B

### **Grades 6-9 Return to School**

Fears of COVID-19 are reducing, maybe because the infection rate is dropping, or because most persons recover, or because people are just tired of the restrictions. Whatever the reason, people are moving about (without masks) and the Ministry of Health gave permission for students in grades 6 - 9 to join the 12<sup>th</sup> graders in school. The start date for the 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> graders was August 10, but on August 9, the Ministry of Education announced that we needed another week of preparation and the official date to resume class was moved to August 17. With the rationale that young children will have difficulty keeping on masks and maintaining social distance, teachers are to send assignments home for students in Kindergarten through grade 5.

Although this is the official plan, principals in rural areas are telling me that many students are not coming back to school. Since children are not physically in school, parents are reluctant to pay tuition and fees and non-government teachers are reluctant to work without pay. Our usual 10-month school year has not ended, but budgets are exhausted. August was the twelfth month of the 2019/2020 school year which will carry-on into October when the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders return to school. Scholarship and salary support sent for schools keeps teachers on campus instead of leaving to make farms or find other means of income to provide for their families.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Graders Take WASSCE**

The West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (the WASSCE) began on August 17 and ended on September 2. Principals served as supervisors assigned to different a high school each day. The West Africa Examinations Council asked for each private/faith-based school system to provide a monitor for the WASSCE. I served as the monitor from the United Methodist School System and observed students taking exams at ten high schools in Montserrado County- four United Methodist, two Catholic, one Seventh Day Adventist, one Lutheran, and two private schools. I was impressed with the level of professionalism of the supervisors and the proctors, and the seriousness of the students I observed.

### **Boway Visit**

When I visited Boway, Bong County in March, my focus was solely on the school. In August, I went to Boway again with Rev. Dr. Jerry Kulah and, this time, also with Lango Toe, the Coordinator for the Liberia Annual



Meeting in the library with the staff of the Obelia Scott Ross UMS before the Sunday morning worship service. The school is next to The United Methodist Church building, is on church property, was built with the support of Operation Classroom of the Minnesota (United Methodist) Conference and is staffed by church members.



Just as the United Methodist school is the only school in the town, this is the only clinic in Boway. Health Department Coordinator, Lango Toe, takes notes at meeting with the Boway Community Clinic staff.



The children in Yao Lepula no longer must go to the creek to carry water to the school.

Conference's Health Department. Lango came to meet with the staff and access the Boway Community Clinic.

The clinic was constructed in 2008 by CODEVPRO (Community Development Program) of the Liberia Annual Conference with support through Central United Methodist Church in Oslo, Norway. We met with the clinic staff on August 29 and the school staff on August 30. One community member told us that, before the clinic was functioning, sick persons were carried from Boway in hammocks for four hours to reach a clinic and now they are carried for two minutes.

### Handpump in Yao Lepula

Yao Lepula is a small rural town in Nimba County. The roads leading to the town are not paved and are very challenging year-round, but especially in rainy season. This town has a United Methodist church and school. Jeff Tomah is the pastor and the school principal and is also involved in agriculture. Pastor Tomah raises bees and produces my favorite honey.

The people in the community go to the creek for water, but now schools are required to have clean safe water for drinking and handwashing. From my first visit to Lepula several years ago, Pastor Tomah's request has always been to have a handpump for the school and church. I shared this very necessary request with the Holston Conference during my visit to the United States in 2018 and Holston Conference quickly sent a gift to the *Water for Life Advance* project. After overcoming many challenges with getting materials and technicians to this area of the country, there is now a handpump in Yao Lepula.

*"I would have lost heart, unless I had believed  
That I would see the goodness of the LORD  
In the land of the Living."  
Palm 27:13 (NKJV)*

Thank you for your prayers and support.  
Be well and safe in God's Kingdom.

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