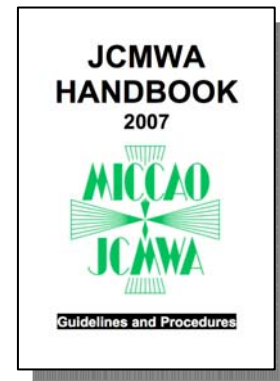


2008 Activities Summary
Rev. Viking Dietrich
ELCA missionary serving in West Africa

2008 marks my last full year as General Secretary of the Joint Christian Ministry in West Africa (JCMWA). I was called for a four-year term in 2004, and as I finish this mandate, I am happy about what we have been able to accomplish. I say we, because the organization could not have made these accomplishments without the support of many people, staff and standing committee members, church leaders, and supporting organizations such as sponsoring congregations in the ELCA,

The main goal during these four years for the organization was to strengthen the group internally and lead it in a transition to African leadership. The future will be the real test of our accomplishments, but nonetheless we did meet several objectives, many of which came to fruition in 2008, that I would like to share with you.

1. **ORGANIZATIONAL HANDBOOK.** Over the years, I studied and collected information about JCMWA's activities and procedures. Much had already been established, thanks to the efforts of those who had worked in JCMWA before us, but needed to be written down. In the process, many guidelines were developed and better defined especially concerning accounting practices. The JCMWA Handbook has six chapters (Governance, Administration, Activities, Chart of Accounts, Budgeting, and Financial Reporting) and 26 appendices (including administrative documents, job descriptions, and report forms).



The manual was approved in October of 2007 by the Standing Committee, and was distributed at the beginning of 2008. In 2008, the manual was studied at three regional assemblies, and then adopted by the General Assembly in Nov 2008. This is a document that will be improved and modified over the years. The contents are in electronic format, so revisions should be facilitated

2. **REGIONAL COORDINATORS.** A new position of regional coordinator was established. Several people have served as coordinators for the different regions, and each has contributed to defining the position. These coordinators are becoming more responsible for the implementation of programs in the regions as the General Secretary has more and more administrative responsibilities. When I first started, Hassan Jaa'e Na'Ungo of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria coordinated activities in Nigeria. That year, Rev. Moise Baou of the Evangelical Church in Chad took responsibilities for the Eastern Region that includes Cameroun and the Central African Republic. Hassan served as Coordinator for the Central Region from before 2004 to 2006 and Moise served from 2005 to 2007. These two coordinators were the trail blazers for the position.

Hassan, right, at the General Assembly in Chad in 2006

Moise, far right, at the Standing Committee meeting in Dakar in 2005



In the Western Region, having only the Lutheran Church in Senegal and the United World Mission as member organizations, it has been difficult to find a long term coordinator. However, JCMWA was helped by Montaga Diagne in 2007 (right) and by Sidi Sow in 2008 (far right). Together we were able to organize several events, including a September Assembly of people working with the Fulani in Senegal and neighboring countries. The assembly will convene for the fourth time in 2009.



Pictures taken in Dakar, Senegal

Daniel Dama of the Union of Evangelical Churches in Benin has served us as the Northwest Coordinator since 2006. Residing in Bamako, Mali where he works part time with the Lutheran Mission in Mali, Daniel epitomized what the role of coordinator could be and his example will be an inspiration to the others. In 2008, Daniel organized a Music celebration in Sevare Mali, seminars in Kara, Togo and Parakou Benin, a regional conference in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso, and lastly a meeting of Christian Fulani intellectuals in Niamey, Niger. Daniel worked tirelessly for three years, creating a name for the organization in the fore mentioned countries, and attracting 4 new member organizations. Sadly for JCMWA, Daniel resigned at the end of 2008 in order to pursue his studies in music. If you would like cassettes of his music, write to him at **BP 8070 Badalabougo, Bamako, Mali or Daniel Dama damdandaw@yahoo.com**



In September , I visited Daniel in Ouagadougou to support his conference and to interview a candidate who could replace him as coordinator. Mr Boureima Diallo is from Burkina and is associated with pentecostal Churches there. After studying in England for four years, he returned to his country with a dream of starting his own ministry to the Fulani as a Fulani. His orientation to the work of JCMWA will be one of my last duties as Secretary. He has created a website for his ministry in Burkina that is very interesting.

Check out <http://www.fulaniministries.org/TESTIMONIES.htm>

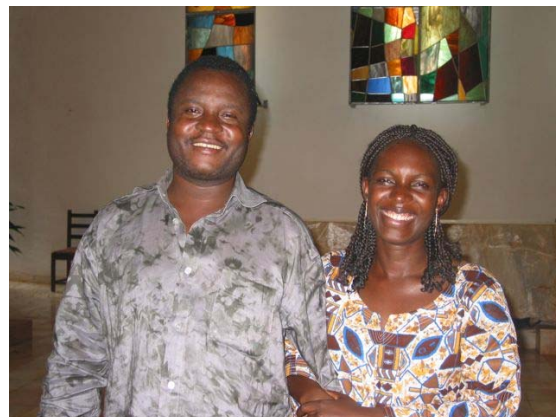
QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

In March, I made my annual trip to Nigeria. Rev. Ibrahim Jilani of the Nigerian Baptist Convention was chosen in June of 2007 to replace Hassan as Central Region Coordinator. At that time, I had a chance to give him an orientation to the work as coordinator, but I went to Jos in early 2008 to complete that orientation. The year 2008 was his first full year as the coordinator, and he learned a lot about what the member

organizations expect of him, and about the potential for the organization. This was a healing year for the organization in Nigeria after some disappointments in early 2007. Ibrahim's age and calm demeanor was just the right combination for reestablishing activities there. However, at the end of 2008, (were you following the news?) riots broke out in Jos, Nigeria, after local elections. Over 300 people were killed. The capacity for political contests to spark explosive ethnic tensions in Nigeria is unequalled, and most often these ethnic tensions coincide with religious differences. In the case of Jos, the 32 tribes indigenous to the plateau have become Christian, while the immigrated population of Hausa and Fulani is Muslim. JCMWA in Nigerai will focus again on Christian witness among Muslims. Please pray for Ibrahim and the people of Nigeria. If you want to contact Ibrahim, his email is jcmwacentral@yahoo.com



In 2008, the JCMWA Eastern Region went through a process of selecting a new Coordinator to replace Moise Baou. After decision making in April and May, and because of my home assignment in the summer, I scheduled a trip to Cameroun in August/September in order to train the new coordinator and preside at the regional assembly where he would be introduced. Rev. Nicodème Simbé is from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroun. He and his wife Adidja Valerie and their three children have moved from Yaounde to Ngaoundere where he will be based for his work with JMCWA. 2009 will be his first full year with JCMWA. Please pray for his safety as he will be traveling a lot as coordinator and the roads into Chad and into CAR can be dangerous. Nicodème has some understanding of English, so feel welcome to send him greetings of support from time to time. His address is simbenico@yahoo.fr



In summary, the position in JCMWA of coordinator is new. The first coordinators with whom I had the pleasure to work, Hassan, Moise, and Daniel, were all assigned to JCMWA on a half time basis. The position has responded to our need to have more activities for our member organizations and the work has grown. The Eastern and Central Region coordinators, Nicodème et Ibrahim, have been assigned on a full time basis. For me 2008 was a year of recruiting and/or training the new coordinators, including Boureima Diallo who will start in 2009.

3. REGIONAL COMMITTEES. Given that the General Secretary does not live in the same region as all of the coordinators, and hoping to provide a venue for regional member organizations to guide and monitor our activities, JCMWA decided to create regional committees. These committees meet twice a year with the coordinator of their region to give advice about the program and assess the progress. In the case of all three new coordinators, these committees also played a role in vetting candidates, interviewing and choosing the regional coordinator.



Members of JCMWA lost a very good friend this year, when Nguinda Jean died from injuries suffered in a car accident. Rev. Nguinda, Director of the Agency for Christian Muslim Relations for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroun was also in charge of Fulani ministries for his Church. I met Jean when we spent 10 days together in Sept 2004 evaluating the Lutheran mission in Sevaré and Douentza in Eastern Mali. He participated at the Standing Committee meeting that year in Wusasa and again in 2005 in Dakar. In 2006 and 2007, he was my principle contact person in Cameroun, and he helped me put together the regional committee. During the four weeks prior to his death, Jean and I were in daily communication as the regional committee convened for the selection of Nicodème Simbé as coordinator. Please pray for his family and community.

4. THE GENERAL SECRETARY. During my many trips in the region, I spoke with church leaders and others involved in Fulani ministry about JCMWA's transition to an African leadership, raising awareness of the upcoming change, and moreover, preparing and convincing people of the change. The recruitment was officially started in Nov 2006 at our General Assembly in Chad. A year later in Oct 2007, the Standing committee interview two candidates, but decided to continue their search. In Oct 2008, the Standing committee interviewed two more candidates and announced their selection at the General Assembly that immediately followed.

Mr Thomas Magadji, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroun, has been Director of Sawtu Linjiila, an ELCC radio station in Ngaoundere that specializes in Fulfulde broadcasts. Mr. Magadji exceeded our imagination, as he more than satisfactorily met the qualifications necessary for the work: academically, culturally, technically, etc.



Thomas was received with great joy, as everyone in the assembly lined up to greet him and give him their best. We are all anticipating great things from Thomas as he takes the reigns of the organization.



For me, the selection of Thomas is the best of the best of JCMWA's accomplishments during my mandate. I am happy to know that as I leave, the organization is in good hands, and that this long standing goal of handing over the Secretariat to African leadership has been met. For the occasion, we invited Rev. John Gorder (ELCA) who served as General Secretary from 1980 -1992 and who really founded the organization.



From January until April, I will be overseeing Thomas's orientation and transition, including a four week visit to Dakar and the Western Region. Thomas will take full responsibility on April 1.

5. ADMINISTRATION. The year began with the mailing of the JCMWA Handbook, followed by the mailing of the 2007 Standing Committee Report. Letters reminding members of contributions were also sent. Working with an accountant, we finished the financial report for 2007 by late April and sent it to the auditor. Unfortunately, the auditor delayed, and before he finished I was on home assignment for two months. Although we still have some problems with getting financial information out to our supporters, we have kept accurate records, responded to financial problems swiftly, and received positive reports from the auditors each year. In this picture, our accountant Mme. Diop is working with the coordinators on the 2008 accounts and 2009 budgets



6. WEBSITE. For some time, I have wanted to start a website for JCMWA, but I have not been able to find someone trained who could volunteer. Finally, at the end of 2008, we have begun to put together a website. The person creating and administering the site for us is a Fulani Christian whose full time work is at the Lutheran Hospital in Ngaoundere where he is the technology resource person. I encourage you to visit the site, register so that you can enter the site. It is definitely “under construction”, so expect delays.

The site is : <http://www.jcmwa.org/>

7. DIVERSE.

Beyond the trips and events mentioned above, I gave a lecture and participated in a week long consultation on the Fulani in May, in Bangui, CAR. I was in Pennsylvania this summer. We used part of our home assignment for medicals and for the ELCA summer missionary conference. But due to lack of response, I only visited four churches this summer, a lot less than my usual tour of 16 to 20 churches. This was caused because the home assignment was not planned and I received the instruction only in March. Between March and my return in June I was on the road for more than 30 days, so I didn't have time to pursue invitations.

Thank you for your continued support of ELCA mission work. I encourage you all to stay in touch with JCMWA and continue to support the work among the Fulani even as I leave. Please keep us in your prayers as we transition to a new call.

Rev. Viking Dietrich

jcmwa@orange.sn

mob: +221 – 77 608-04 81

home: +221 – 33 864 07 47