

**EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF LIBERIA (ECOL)
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ANNUAL REPORT 2016
PRESENTED AT THE
13TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF ECOL
BY REV. MOSES G. PAYE, ECOL PRESIDENT
NOVEMBER 26, 2016**

We are very grateful to God for the opportunity to serve you this year. We are also grateful to all who supported us with their prayers and other resources and for the opportunity to serve. We see this as a statement of our partnership in the stewardship of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for our love for his church and cause. This report covers ministry activities at the national level from February – November 2016. The following activities were carried out during the period under review:

1. TRAINING:

ECOL benefitted from a total of 8 trainings that were conducted during the year under review including 4 for church leaders, 3 for trauma healing facilitators and 1 for children workers. 5 of the trainings were funded through the Equipping Servants for Service Project (or Equip project) which we currently run. The project is SIM-funded and provides financial support to facilitate the training of ECOL pastors and church leaders in rural parts of the country. The project covers the cost of transportation, stationeries, printing of materials and facilitators' allowances.

✓ **Kongbah District**

Our Equip project training team of 4 persons visited and conducted church leaders' training in Maima and Beaden, Kongbah District on March 21-April 5. Facilitators included Pastors Harrison Dargbeh, Joseph G. Armah, Jallah D. Smith and James M. Fully.

✓ **Todee/Careysburg**

A training aimed at preparing church leaders for ordination in Todee/Careysburg District was conducted on April 21. In attendance were 18 participants. Facilitators included Pastors Jeremiah M. Kollie, Moses T. Gwole, Samuel B. Johnson, and Augustine Binda.

✓ **Trauma Healing (Equipping and Advanced Sessions)**

3 trauma healings trainings were conducted on May 7-21. These were not funded from the Equip project. Two international facilitators (Ray Hutchison from the USA and Thaddeus from Kenya) along with Nancy Writebol served as the main facilitators. The first training was an Equipping session conducted on May 7-13 at ICM, ELWA Compound and was aimed at training trauma healing small group facilitators. 31 participants attended the training. The advanced session was held on May 16-21 and brought together 25 participants who had completed the equipping session a year earlier. Also, a separate session for children's workers was held alongside the advanced session.

✓ **Lofa**

The ECOL training team also conducted a church leader's training in Porlorwu, Lofa County on June 27-July 14. The training team included Pastors C. Harrison Dargbeh and Morris Barwor. The team also visited Voinjama and Kolahun districts.

✓ **Montserrado**

We also organized a 3-day children's ministry workers training on October 13-15 at the International Church of Monrovia (ICM) on the ELWA campus. The training was conducted by Jerome Siakor, Director of AWANA-Liberia and a co-facilitator. 11 persons participated in the training and represented 10 churches from Montserrado, Margibi, Todee/Careysburg and Western

Region districts. Participants trained are expected to establish AWANA fellowship programs in their churches and communities and effectively use the AWANA materials. Each church represented was given a set of AWANA books that cost \$30 USD.

✓ **Lofa River**

On October 15, Pastor Momoh Senah conducted a one day training for church leaders in Tahn, Lofa River District. A total of 27 participants attended the training which was a part of the district's mini conference held that month.

2. ECOL Missionary Outreach (EMO) Program

The ECOL Missionary Outreach (EMO) guide was updated in May, 2016. The document will guide all ECOL Missionary programs including recruitment, sending, and code of conduct of ECOL missionaries, responsibilities of missionaries and their sending churches, etc.

We are pleased to inform this body that ECOL now has 2 commissioned local missionaries on the field. They were commissioned on June 27 at the Evangelical Christian Fellowship in Paynesville, and are currently being supported monthly. Those commissioned are: Emmanuel Sackie, who is currently involved with church planting work in Bong County, and Dexter Brown who is doing similar work in River Cess County. We purchased two motor bikes for our two missionaries to facilitate their transportation in rural Liberia. Donations for the motorbikes came from the SIM funded Equip project and a friend from the USA. The missionaries have each planted a church this year and are nurturing these churches.

The ECOL Missions Board has received a total of \$79, 150 LD and \$600 USD for missionary support from ECOL members, churches and friends from June, 2016 to present. We have provided monthly support for missionaries up to December 2016, and will need a commitment of all ECOL churches and members to continue their support in 2017.

Three others are also serving on the mission field and are recognized by the ECOL missions board but are yet to be supported. These include the following: Sam Fally, who has planted a church in Sannah Town, River Cess County, Albert Flomo, who has also planted a church in Palala, Bong County, and Jackson Washington who serves as co-worker of Dexter Brown in Yarkpa Town, River Cess County. Together, our men on the field have planted four new churches in this year alone. We must step up our support to also include these men who are serving faithfully on the mission field. We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to all the churches and individuals who are currently supporting our ECOL missionaries on the field. We encourage all ECOL churches to support the ECOL Missionary Outreach program so that this dream of reaching the gospel throughout Liberia will be achieved in obedience to our biblical mandate.

3. ECOL Relief Program:

The ECOL relief committee was established during the Ebola outbreak in 2014 to provide emergency relief to those affected by the outbreak. Since then the committee has broadened its scope to respond to other emergency needs of ECOL churches and individuals.

- a. In April this year, Living the Bible Way Church in Todee/Careysburg district was affected by a demolition exercise carried out by the government of Liberia. Churches and residential homes situated on more than 1000 acres of land in the Fendell Community were broken down prompting mass displacement of people including the pastor and members of Living the Bible Way Church. On June 30, with support from some ECOL churches, friends and the national office, the ECOL Relief Committee was able to purchase and carry relief items to the displaced church on the Kakata

Highway. Items purchased included 30 bags of rice, 20 gallons (10 liters) of refined oil, and 5 boxes of bath soap for 60 church members.

We also distributed 77 boxes of Manna Pack rice to the displaced church 2 months later. The food was the remainder of 600 boxes donated by ELWA Ministries Association – USA (also known as EMA-USA).

- b. We received 600 boxes of Manna Pack rice during the period under review from EMA-USA. 10 churches in the Western Region district, as well as the Palala Evangelical Church, Welekemah Evangelical Bible church, City View Evangelical Church and Living the Bible Way Evangelical Church benefitted from the distribution.

4. ECOL Agro-Project

The national leadership is pleased to inform this body that the long awaited ECOL agriculture project has finally hit the ground running. 100 nursery palm trees were purchased and planted in June this year on 6 acres of SIM land here in Tubmanburg, Bomi County. We have also purchased and planted 1000 pineapples between the palm trees. The project is mainly intended to generate income to support the running of the seminary and professional studies we intend to establish once we have the permit from government. We intend to raise support to plant additional 100 palm trees in 2017. Elder Tibah Vinton currently heads the agro project. Western Region district provide manpower for volunteer service on the farm as well. The ECOL agro project will only be a reality if all of us provide our support and services because a good harvest will depend on how well we care for the farm. We need much needy funds to cover the cost of fertilizers, farming tools, expert consultative fees, and allowances for two men who will be full time care takers of the farm. The palms are expected to be ready for harvest in three years, but the success of the project depends on our collective support.

5. SIM partnership and Funded Projects

SIM remains ECOL's key partner and we continue to enjoy a growing relationship. The partnership has greatly improved the quality of ministry in ECOL. SIM's scholarship project for ECOL continues to provide university/seminary training for leaders and potential leaders in various disciplines. Five ECOL scholars are currently being considered by the scholarship committee this year. SIM missionaries are actively involved in church ministry within ECOL this year ranging from preaching, teaching, supporting projects, and regular church attendance. Additionally, ECOL currently benefits from three SIM funded projects. They include the Equipping Servants for Service (Equip) project, the Liberia Church Ebola Response project and the Trauma Healing program.

a. Equipping Servants for Service (EQUIP) Project:

ECOL currently runs the Equip Project intended to facilitate the training of rural pastors and church leaders. This is an SIM funded project and stationeries, transportation and allowances are provided to enable our training team carry out pastoral training in rural Liberia. 6 of the 9 trainings mentioned above were conducted with funding from the Equip Project during the period under review including the two conducted in Kongba district, one in Todee/Careysburg, the AWANA training for children's ministry workers in Montserrado, and the Lofa River training. SIM receives narrative and financial reports for funds we received for Equip project training.

b. Liberian Church Ebola Response Project

The Liberian Church Ebola Response Project is the second project funded by SIM during the period under review. The project was developed as ECOL's response to the Ebola outbreak

which devastated the country in 2014 - 2016. The project is intended to provide relief and counseling services to Ebola affected families, and create Ebola prevention awareness in churches and communities.

- a. In January , 40 families benefited from relief aid and counseling services through the project, and two homes of beneficiaries were renovated.
- b. In March, 43 families also benefited from relief aid and counseling services through the project, and two homes of beneficiaries were renovated as well. The project expired in May this year but was renewed in this month for a year.

6. Trauma Healing Small Groups

9 trauma healing small groups were conducted during the period under review. Pastor Moses G. Paye facilitated 5 of the small groups; Pastor Jeremiah M. Kollie, 2; Pastor Augustine Binda, 1; and Lucia, 1. The wet season did not permit us to facilitate additional healing groups. Also, 28 ECOL leaders were trained by the American Bible Society and SIM to facilitate small healing groups, but getting all our trained facilitators to establish healing groups in churches and communities remains a major challenge for the program. There are currently four Trauma Healing Master Facilitators in Liberia, two of whom are ECOL members – Pastors Moses G. Paye and Jeremiah M. Kollie.

7. DONATIONS:

During the period under review, we received the total donation of \$25, 808 USD from friends and partners as reflected in the table below:

#	DONOR	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
1	EMAUSA	Special Ebola relief support	\$3,500
2	Anonymous Friends (USA)	Gift for national leaders	\$600
3	Evangelical Free Church (USA)	Radio, Missions and Relief	\$1,300
4	SIM-Liberia	Convention 2016	\$1000
5.	Friends (USA)	Radio program at two radio stations	\$1550
6.	EMA-USA	Tuition for 600 students	\$13624
7.	Friend (USA) – prefers anonymity	Motor Bike for Fahn M. Johnson	\$1000
8.	Don Walker	Bereaved family, relief, motorbike for Lofa, three weeks’ missionary trip to 3 districts in Lofa	\$3,234
	Total		\$25, 808

8. Motorbikes:

We are pleased to inform you that the national office was able to purchase 4 additional motorbikes during the year under review. 2 of the bikes were purchased from donations from Don Walker and a friend in the USA (mentioned above), another from the Equip Project fund with approval from SIM, while 1 bike was purchased from a combination of ECOL local church support and donations. 2 of the bikes were assigned to our 2 missionaries on the field, while the remaining 2 were assigned to Pastors Fahn M. Johnson in Cape Mount County and Daniel Molly in Porlorwu district, Lofa County respectively. In all, we have now purchased 11 motorbikes for the work of ministry in ECOL

since last year. Our plan is to assign 2 motorbikes to each of our 10 districts to facilitate visitations, trainings, evangelism and church planting in remote parts of the country.

9. Visitations

Pastor Anderson (USA) was guest of ECOL from June 2 – July 1. While in Liberia, he visited the displaced members and leaders of the Living the Bible Way Evangelical Church in Todee/Careysburg district and the United Evangelical Christian Fellowship and ECOL agriculture site in Tubmanburg.

The wet season hindered us from fulfilling most of our visitation schedule. However, we made the following during the reporting period:

#	Visitation	Date
1	Kongba district	Mar. 21 – Apr. 5
2.	Monrovia Evangelical Church, Montserrado	April 2
3.	Kakata Evangelical Church, Margibi	April 10
4.	Sinkor Evangelical Church, Montserrado	Sept. 12
5.	New churches in Bong County	Sept. 9-11
6.	Bomi Evangelical Church (3 visits)	Sept. 17, Nov. 18
7.	Kollieman Town Evangelical Church	Oct. 29-30
8.	Tahn Evangelical Church	October 15
9.	Harris Field Evangelical Church	November 12-13

10. APPOINTMENT:

To ensure the smooth running of ECOL, the following appointments were made by the national office and approved at the first quarterly meeting of the National Church Council this year:

EDUCATION:

A. HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Rev. Aberdeen Gargli - Chairman
2. Rev. Jeremiah M. Kollie-Member
3. Rev. Moses G. Paye-Member
4. Rev. Augustine Binda-Member
5. Elder David Writebol - Member

B. PRIMARY EDUCATION

1. Rev. Samuel Johnson - Chairman
2. Rev. Theophilus Nma - Member
3. Mr. Arthur Wee - Member

SCHOARSHIP

1. Rev. Jeremiah M. Kollie - Chairman
2. Rev. Aberdeen Gargli - Member
3. Sivilli Nuvor - Member

FINANCE

1. Rev. Moses T. Gwole - Chairman

2. Mr. Adolf Wagner - Member
3. Mr. William H. Davies - Member

MISSIONS

1. Rev. Harrison Dargbeh, Sr. - Chariman
2. Elder Tiba Vinton - Member
3. Mother Musu Vinton - Member
4. Mother Mary Konan - Member
5. Pastor John Fare - Member
6. Rev. Joseph Lorpukollie - Member
7. Rev. Joseph G. Armah - Advisor to Missions Committee
8. Rev. Jallah Smith - Church Planting Coordinator

YOUTH/DISCIPLESHP

1. Mr. John K. Kpowee - Member
2. Mr. Jeremy Mongor - Member
3. Mr. Thomas Kparkah - Member
4. Mr. T-Mark Ellis - Member

11. ECOL 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The national office’s 5-year strategic plan for ECOL was approved by the National church Council in April this year. This strategic plan serves as a guide to direct ECOL ministry from 2016 – 2020. The General Secretary will make available the document to all churches as of January 2017.

12. SCHOLARSHIP:

ECOL still benefits from the SIM scholarship program for ECOL leaders and members. 6 ECOL scholars completed their studies under the scholarship program during the past year, and applications of five others are being considered by the SIM scholarship committee this year. Also during the period under review, the national office was able to secure a grant to pay the second semester tuition of 600 students in 8 ECOL church schools during the 2015/2016 school year which ended in June. The amount of \$13,624.93 USD was provided by EMA-USA and covered tuition for all students in the 6 schools based on total tuition bills sent to us by the schools as reflected below:

#	ECOL CHURCH SCHOOL	2 ND SEMESTER PAYMENT
1.	Evangelical Christian Academy	\$3547.50
2.	St. George Academy	\$1200
3.	John & Beryl Elementary School	\$1922.45
4.	Kolahun Evangelical Church School	\$2281.68
5.	Living Faith Academy	\$2084
6.	Cotton Tree Tutorial School	\$1717
7.	ICM - Peace Island Academy	\$967.50
TOTAL		\$13, 624

Additionally, 8 other ECOL students are among 16 Ebola orphans, who currently benefitted from a scholarship grant currently administered by SIM. The ECOL scholarship committee chairman, Pastor Jeremiah Kollie, and I helped SIM missionary Nancy Writebol to recruit the beneficiaries.

13. ECOL RADIO MINISTRY:

The national headquarters has been running a radio ministry since 2014. The radio program is known as Kingdom Way Radio Broadcast and is currently aired on two radio stations – Radio ELWA in Paynesville, and Radio Wee in Grand Bassa County which was added this year. The air time is paid for by a friend in the USA who helps to raise the support among other friends. We paid a total of \$1550 USD to both radio stations to air the program this year. The current contract ends in December and we are hoping to continue the program next year if funding is available. Both radio stations air our program on Tuesdays at 9:00 PM. We encourage ECOL members in reception areas to listen to Kingdom Way Radio Broadcast each which features Bible messages from ECOL pastors and international speakers.

14. CHURCH QUOTA TO NATIONAL OFFICE:

The total amount of \$98,050 was received from churches as quota to the national headquarters during the period under review. Compared to last year's total quota payment of \$78,805 LD, we saw a slight increase by \$19,245 LD which is 18.9%. While we welcome the progress made and are gratified for your desire and commitment to support the national effort, the truth remains that many churches still default on their financial obligations to ECOL, and yet expect so much from the national leadership. Brethren, this ought not to be so. Only 35% of churches paid their quota this year, and of this amount, only 26% fully met up with their financial obligation. A few churches support cannot effectively do the work of over 100 churches. ECOL is a gift but it is also a responsibility, and God will hold us responsible for our stewardship. Moreover, the future of ECOL depends on our faithfulness, commitment, dedication, passion, sincerity and integrity. What we do now will affect the next generation of ECOL members and leaders. Matthew 5:37 puts it bluntly: "Simply, let you 'Yes,' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No,' anything beyond this comes from the evil one." The national leaders continue to make sacrifices without monthly financial allowances because of the poor response to quota payment that continues to plague our church ministry. National leaders have families and needs and we must never forget the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18: "For the Scriptures says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.'" Except for a gift of \$600 USD for 10 national leaders, we took no allowances from the intake because of the following reasons:

1. The slow pace at which the support trickled in made it difficult for national leaders to take salaries that were allotted to them by the National Church Council.
2. Other emerging challenges forced us to respond immediately such as the Todee/Careysburg district church displacement emergency, the agro project whose farming calendar we nearly missed, and other life threatening health emergencies we addressed for 2 rural pastors and members that we could not just ignore became the priority.
3. Most churches did not pay their installments on time per quarter as was agreed, and also did not pay their installments in full when they paid.

OBITUARY:

Elder Peter Shilling of Kpayaquelle Evangelical Chapel was called home by the Lord on October 8. The late Peter was a committed leader in the Todee/Careysburg district, and was sent by ECOL missions board to the Kakata Evangelical Church in Margibi to provide leadership for the young church there for one year. A memorial service for the late Peter has been planned for Sunday, December 11, 2016 at the Kpayaquelle Evangelical Chapel in Bensonville.

15. CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS:

1. The lack of quota payment remained our foremost challenge during the period under review. This reluctance on the part of churches made our work most difficult since there was insufficient fund to cover cost of staff salaries, supplies, transportation, etc., etc.
2. Another major challenge we faced was transportation. While we were able to purchase 4 additional motorbikes during the period under review, the only ECOL car remained a major challenge at the national headquarters. The vehicle is nearly 10 years old and is overused because we have no other one. It has served us well over the years and there is a real need to have a new one as we enter 2017. The current ECOL Land Cruiser is old and suffered several breakdowns during the reporting period which affected the quality of our work. We can no longer take it to remote villages as we used to and bear in mind that commercial transportation is very costly. Moreover, a motorbike is not a better option at the national headquarters because it can accommodate more than two persons and it cannot carry more materials.
3. The late payment of convention fees by churches continues to be a major challenge every year. The constitution provides that churches pay their convention support not later than June of each year to enable the convention committee adequately prepare. Unfortunately, we continue to see 70% of payments done during or just before the convention. This has led to late preparations and inconveniences as is the case this year.
4. Also, we have noticed that many members of ECOL churches did not honor their individual financial commitment to the national convention. This posed a serious financial strain on both convention host and the national headquarters.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS:

We recommend the following:

1. That the Sunday after April 27 each year be set aside as ECOL anniversary service to commemorate the day ECOL was established if April 27 does not fall on a Sunday. The service should focus on thanksgiving to God, reflecting on the history of ECOL, appreciating the sacrifices of our founding local fathers, and encouraging our congregations to keep ECOL alive.
2. That the last Sunday in May be set aside each year as ECOL Missionaries Day to remind ourselves and reflect on the sacrifices of our founding SIM missionaries as well as those of other past and present local and SIM missionaries, and to appreciate and encourage the recruitment, sending and support of our own missionaries on the mission field. We believe that this will remind us that we came out of a missionary effort, and that missions must remain the heart beat of ECOL ministry at all times.
3. That churches pay their quotas as per their quarterly installments. To enable national leaders to be supported monthly.
4. That a task force be set up to visit local churches that have not paid their quotas and convention fees to collect same. Also that churches who fail to pay be declared inactive and excluded from benefitting from any ECOL project support.

5. That churches decide on a fixed amount and deadline to pay in 2017 for support to the ECOL missionary outreach in addition to individual members support.
6. That churches that cannot come to work on the ECOL farm due to distance provide financial support for towards the up keep of the farm.
7. That a 3-day pastors conference be held in May after the national convention each year to bring together all ECOL pastors for a time of equipping, fellowship and reviewing challenges and progress and finding a way forward for effective work of ministry, and that said conference rotate among the districts.

17. PRAYER REQUESTS:

1. Pray for wisdom and strength for ECOL national leaders.
2. Pray for support for the late Peter Shilling family.
3. Pray for support and success and safety of ECOL missionaries on the field.
4. Pray for the ministry of SIM as our key partner – for direction and support.
5. Pray for a stronger bond of unity and cooperation in ECOL in 2017.