

Some Information on our Companion Synod

THE JUBILEE CENTRE IN FREETOWN

Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Synod
Web Site Resource Information
Updated: September, 2005



The Jubilee Lutheran Centre The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sierra Leone

When rebels invaded Freetown, the small group of buildings that had housed the offices of the ELCSL was destroyed. Precious materials – computers, files, records, not to mention equipment intended to raise the lives of Sierra Leoneans – were lost. Not losing hope, however, the church established a temporary office on the 8th floor of one of the downtown buildings that had escaped complete destruction. From this office, President Barnett heads the church program together with programs for the assistance of refugees and amputees. There is no operating elevator in the building and all visitors to the office – including amputees missing feet and legs – must climb the stairs to the office.

Rev. Marie Barnett, meanwhile, stepped out of her position as a member of Parliament, returning to her office of Pastor in order to establish a program for women to aid them economically through job skills training. Many had been brutalized, had had arms or feet amputated. There were few opportunities for employment. A cottage industry creating tie-dyed cloth and sewing clothing has been developed to help these women become self-supporting and to restore some sense of self worth.

Before the rebel incursion into Freetown, an architect had drawn plans for a large church complex in Freetown, now named the *Jubilee Lutheran Centre*. The center will

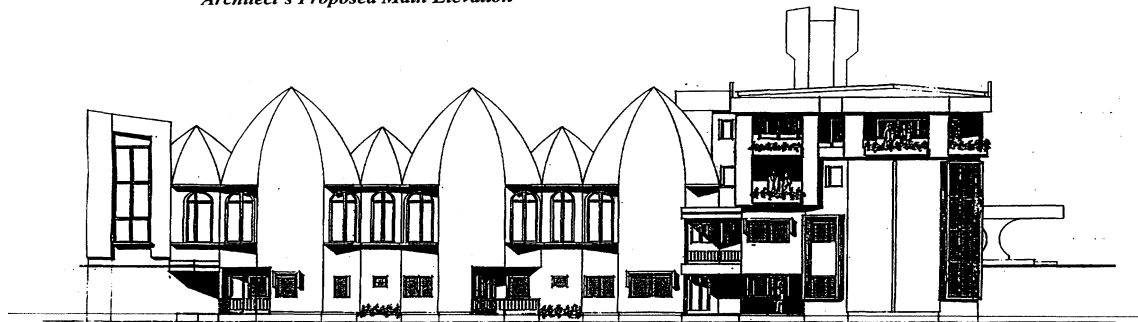
house offices, classrooms and work space for the various projects and programs of the ELCSL, including offices for Lutheran World Relief, for counseling services, for the Women's Project, as well as for the routine work of the church.

The proposed building will cost an estimated \$500,000 when fully completed. Because the government has given the church a time limit in which to build, and because Sierra Leone and the ELCSL have so few resources, the church has projected the possible construction of a 'first unit' costing approximately \$150,000 to be built before July 2003 through the help and support of friends. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is assisting the church and the Northern Texas- Northern Louisiana (NTNL) synod of the ELCA is working to raise money to build the Jubilee Centre. In February of 2002 Bishop Kevin Kanouse of the NTNL synod together with leaders of that synod and of the ELCSL broke ground and dedicated it for the building of the center.

Since plans for the building were drawn prior to the terrible rebel invasion, many of the rooms in the building which were designated for offices, library, etc., are now being set aside as workrooms, dormitories, additional classrooms, etc. A large gathering space suitable as temporary worship space is also planned.

This facility in the heart of Freetown will serve as the material and visible presence of the ELCSL in a place where so many churches were completely destroyed.

*Jubilee Lutheran Centre in Freetown, Sierra Leone
Architect's Proposed Main Elevation*



*This represents the final completed project.
Phase I currently under construction includes multi-purpose space for
*classrooms *workrooms * daycare * temporary office and worship space*