

# The Jubilee Centre

## *A Beacon of Hope on the Hill in Freetown*



*There is something powerful to be said about the experience of **friendship** – it breathes of loyalty, mutuality and partnership. This certainly is true of the 20+ year relationship between the NT-NL and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone. It began in the late 1980's when Dr. Jeremiah Sinnah-Yovonie returned to his native Sierra Leone, having completed studies at the University of Iowa in Des Moines. He took with him the Lutheran faith that he had grown to love in the U.S., and he shared that faith with family and others, including Tom Barnett. Together they determined to found the ELCSL.*

*When the ELCA was formed in 1988, the NT-NL was asked to be a "Companion Synod" with the Lutherans in Sierra Leone. In 1990 Pastor Rod Maeker, and in 1992 Bishop Mark Herbener, visited Sierra Leone, joining in the work of training lay evangelists to lead the Lutheran congregations that were springing up throughout Sierra Leone. Seven Sierra Leoneans entered Lutheran seminaries, including three who came to the U.S., studying at Wartburg Seminary and visiting in NT-NL: Tom and Marie Barnett and Miatta Monrovia. Through the efforts of these native Sierra Leoneans the ELCSL was born as the first African Lutheran Church begun without the presence of missionaries from the West.*

**The Jubilee Centre: A Mission Center.** Ground breaking for the Jubilee Lutheran Centre took place in 2002. It is located on Parliament Hill in downtown Freetown, visible to the entire city sprawled out below. The Centre will be the center of Lutheran outreach and evangelism in Freetown and will serve as a Mission Center for the ELCSL. Construction has been ongoing as funds have become available; the people of NT-NL have provided over \$600,000 for this project. It will take about \$300,000 more to complete construction and to make the worship center operational. This is a tithe of the \$3 million goal of *DiscipleLife Alive!* A portion of these DLA! funds has already been forwarded to the ELCSL to help them move the project into its final stages of construction.



The Center will provide worship space for nearly 1,000 – plus a school, a medical center, an outreach center, and a community center for Freetown. It will serve as a beacon to the people of Sierra Leone that Lutherans, who have only been in Sierra Leone for 20 years or so, are here to stay. We await that day of celebration when a group from the NT-NL travels to Freetown to dedicate the Jubilee Lutheran Centre, likely to happen yet in 2012.