

## Partnership visit to Methodist Church Tanzania (MCT) from 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Aims – To meet with MC Tanzania church leaders - a young Synod of Methodist Church Kenya  
To enquire about SALT scholarship recipients  
To discuss various partnership issues between MC Britain & Ireland and MC Tanzania

I arrived in Nairobi airport and left for Mwanza airport in the morning. I was picked up by Bishop Leopold Ndaki and the Synod Secretary – Rev Emmanuel and Pastor Peter Andrew of MC Kenya to be our interpreter throughout my visit. Even though I had no overnight rest, my African friends hit the road running. From the airport, we branched for a meal and over 80 km to the shores of Lake Victoria. We then travelled on a dinghy to Ijinga – an island of 4,500 residents and within the Magu district of Tanzania. The residents expecting us and we had a very warm welcome to their beautiful quaint cathedral – a newly built church on the hill.

Why on the hill? It was the only church on the island and the youths love to play loud music, sing and dance during praise and worship. The hill was perfect because Lake Victoria was



Rev Leah in the dinghy to Ijinga Methodist Church on the island



House of prayer on the hill – Methodist Church Ijinga

and evangelist living on the island. It was a growing church and they were very grateful for our visit. Even though I was tired, I could not but admire the faith and commitment of these dear Christians! In closing I remembered the psalm that read ...I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord. May this beautiful church be a house of prayer where people will find rest for their souls and salvation in Christ alone? I eventually checked into my accommodation much later that night. *Bona asifiwe...*

### Methodist Church Tanzania Secondary school, Busenge District

Three years ago, I visited Tanzania with MC Kenya's Presiding Bishop – Rev Ntombura. It was my first time at Magu. Bishop Ndaki shared that the church's mission priority as education. This was due to high



First secondary school in Nyashimo village funded by the annual grant and community members





Land purchased by Methodist Women in Tanzania for primary health care

illiteracy rate in the district and there was no secondary school for in Nyashimo village in Busege District. This time around, the school structures were standing tall with the community members providing cement blocks and the church offering support. Even though it is early stages yet, the Bishop prays for provision of science laboratories and ICT suite for incoming students. The church is working closely with the government to meet school requirement standards and evidence of development around the school premises is advancing steadily because it is the first secondary school in this rural area. The Bishop asked for the possibility of short or long term mission personnel serving at the school in various capacities when it eventually opens.

**Methodist Women programme, Tanzania**

We then travelled another few kilometres to Chumve village in Busega village. Here some

Methodist women jointly purchased a plot and asked the MC Tanzania to help provide a dispensary for midwifery, child care and primary health care. This is because the women have to travel over 30 km to the nearest dispensary and public transportation is very unreliable. Bishop Ndaki said he was very moved by the women’s sacrifice and MCB’s support for this mission initiative would encourage other women to be proactive.

**Wesley Methodist Church, Ramad**

We then travelled to Ramad, a village on the way to one of the national parks in Tanzania. The church members were waiting and they were very delighted to see us. The youths presented lovely choreographies in their unfinished church building which was impressively big. The church minister, who was responsible for eleven other churches was grateful for the growth encountered since the new road to the park was constructed by the government. The Synod secretary asked for support to promote *youth engagement*. He said having basic musical equipment increases youth participation in church



activities. The church members were about 120, however there was potential for further growth. The location and size of the church when completed would be impressive and I prayed with them that God would supply their needs and grant them their requests as they put their trust in Him.

We hit the road again and we were on our way to a newly planted church about 97 km away. About 75km into the journey, the vehicle was overheating and I advised against us continuing the journey because it would be night on our return journey. We detoured however Bishop Ndaki was not going to miss the opportunity for another visit so we went the Methodist Church leaders at Bunda Circuit. The congregation was



Meeting with Bunda Methodist Church leaders with problem vehicle at the back



renting a shed from the government for its worship service and I was told that it was more expensive to purchase a land at Bunda being the Municipal’s headquarters. Options for a permanent church site were being considered by the church leaders.

**Meeting at MC Tanzania headquarters, Magu on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

Since the bishop’s vehicle developed a problem the previous day and it was not fully repaired by Wednesday morning, our journeys for the day was cancelled. We resorted to visiting Methodist facilities near Magu. Below is the summary of our meeting held in his office:-

- Bishop Ndaki thanked MCB for its partnership and appreciated the immense progress experienced since 2013 when I last visited Tanzania.
- MCT has applied for 2016-17 annual grant but still awaiting approval and disbursement
- It was agreed that MCB should pay annual grant to MCK as it would show in the audited accounts. However MC Tanzania would send details of income and expenditure breakdown in its annual reports
- MCT asked if MCB & Ireland could kindly provide a drought relief support to assist affected farmers and households in its synod. During all our journeys, there was marked evidence of drought and very little water supplies



Methodist primary school, Magu built by MC Ireland



Magu Methodist primary pupils

- MCT was very grateful for support with funding Peter and Anne’s scholarships as 2016-17 SALT recipients. The Grant office is expected to remit their fees soon
- After explaining the concept of how National in Mission Appointment works, MCT plans to apply in 2017
- Bishop Ndaki asked for help with youth empowerment and church youth engagement programmes to alleviate youth unemployment and retain youths in churches especially in the villages
- There was request for networking between MCB & Ireland schools and Methodist primary schools in Tanzania

We later visited the school premises and its dispensary unit. There was no healthcare professional on site due to wages concern.

There were 135 pupils on site in preschool

up till P7. There were ten teachers including a headmaster, one security officer, two support workers, three cooks and a school manager. The school infrastructure was built by MC Ireland in 2006 and the first set of pupils graduated in 2014. The school took the 72<sup>nd</sup> position among 16,000 primary schools in Tanzania. In 2015, its position improved to 64<sup>th</sup> position and by 2016 it was 35<sup>th</sup>. Its improved performance has increased interest from parents nationally and there is a high demand for boarding facilities by parents.

### Meeting with MC Tanzania ministerial group

MC Tanzania has eight ministers and ten evangelists. Also present were two Men's Fellowship representatives, the leader of the Women's Fellowship and a Youth Fellowship leader. Also present was the Synod treasurer. After a short exhortation by the Bishop, I asked for an open discussion. Concern was raised about the drought situation and that over 75% of Tanzania was affected. I did not promise anything but advised the Synod Bishop to gather necessary information and discuss methods of how to assist the various communities. I told the Bishop I would be in touch after consulting with the grant committee in the UK.



Leader of the Women's Fellowship at MCT church leaders meeting at Magu

The leader of the Women's Fellowship requested assistance for group visit with other Methodist women or have a leadership training conducted for Tanzania Methodist women. I plan to discuss with MC Kenya for a regional meeting for East African Methodist women as they were not represented at the World Federation Women's conference held at Houston Texas in September 2016. Lastly one of the ministers asked for resources for the disabled especially for the visually impaired. He current assist ten of them at Ramad, about two hours from Magu and any assistance would be welcome. I plan to follow up this request because disability receive very little support in Tanzania. It was an enriching though very tiring visit.

Psalm 64<sup>10</sup>: *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord and trust in Him.  
And all the upright in heart shall glory.*

Thank you

*Dr Bunmi Olayisade  
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MCB - Jan 2017*