

Partnership visit to Jinja, Uganda 15th - 20th January 2016

- Aims** – To attend the inauguration of MC Uganda (MCU) as a Synod of MC Kenya (MCK)
 To meet with the new Synod Bishop of MCU – Bishop William Muriuki
 To meet ex-SALT student now working as the Operations Manager of MCU



Five buses hired by Kenyan Methodists for the event

On Sunday 17 January 2016, Jinja witnessed a historical day. Five full buses of Kenya Methodists from all synods of Kenya came to usher in their newest synod. Every synod of MCK was represented with over 400 Kenya Methodists in attendance in the company of Uganda government dignitaries and friends. MC Uganda members streamed in from nearby villages as well as international well wishers and supporters. In spite of the deluge of rain, guests patiently sat through a seven hour service held at the one of MCU's primary school premises. The local government official praised the leadership of the school and commented on its good reputation and

school results despite being a relatively new school in Jinja. He further mentioned that it was a privilege to partner with MC Uganda in providing good primary education to its pupils.

After the inauguration service, Bishop William Muriuki was inducted as the new Synod Bishop. His good reputation as the Mission's Bishop attracted supporters from all over Kenya. Guests sponsored themselves for the ten hour overnight journey. Their accommodation was organised by MC Uganda members. MCU did a great job arranging this wonderful inauguration service.

As from about 10.00am just after the service started, it poured! It was windy, wet and cold. The dusty roads and grounds became very muddy, yet people waited until after the Holy Communion service in the evening. In appreciation of their patience, everyone was fed. Guests gave generously to offset the debt incurred in putting up such a wonderful programme.



Methodist Primary School ground before the rain started



Methodist youths in traditional attire at the celebration



Uganda Methodist Women in traditional attire celebrating



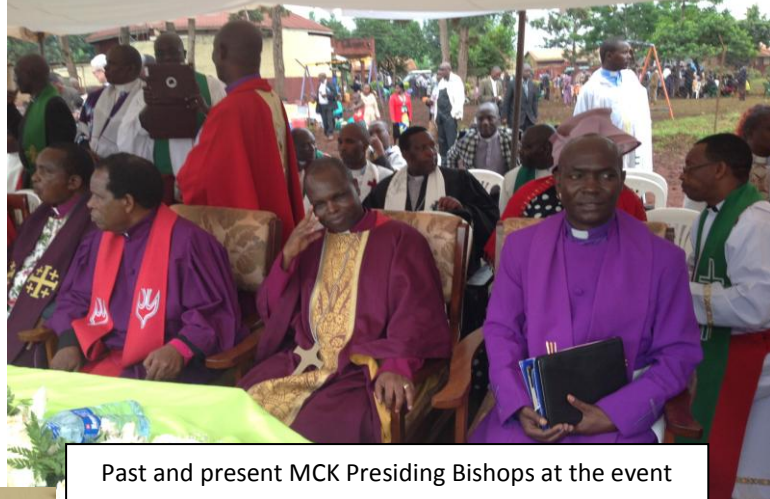
Alice Muyama – Widow of Rev Muyama

The youths and women gave amazing presentations in spite of the rain, thanking God for the showers of blessing. Members of MC Uganda magnificently hosted the event even though there were only about seven Methodist ministers in this former District. The outgoing superintendent minister, Rev Amooti Bagambi was also present but had to leave in the afternoon due to ill health as he had to travel the next day for chemotherapy at Kampala Hospital. It was nice to hear of how MC Uganda started its ministry in Jinja. A promising Methodist minister, Rev Muyama,



Muyama young adults – children of the pioneer MCU minister with Moses St Paul's Methodist Church rep

trained at KeMU in the nineties under Rev Prof Nthamburi's ministry. He was posted to St Paul's Methodist Church in Meru where he served as a probationer. His passion for mission was evident and contagious and he inspired many during his term there. Even though the church was keen to retain him, he shared his vision to return home to Jinja in 1998 and continue his ministry there. St Paul's Methodist Church, Meru in Kenya then fundraised for MCU mission and purchased land for the first Methodist church building in Jinja. Rev Muyama returned to Uganda and started a vibrant ministry. Unfortunately at the peak of his career as a church planter in Jinja, he was involved in an accident and died; leaving behind his widow – Alice Muyama and their children. It was heartening to know that his family were still committed Methodists, as the widow had had to struggle all these years to raise the children. His abrupt death left the Methodist mission in Uganda in disarray with lots of power tussles after his death. Many of the churches were still located around Jinja where the mission started however it is hoped this is a new day and a new season! it was good to recognise the widow and the children as pioneers of Methodism in Jinja. Perhaps it is naive to think mission



Past and present MCK Presiding Bishops at the event



Rev Amooti (MCU), Andrew Edwards (All We Can) and Rev Sheen –a mission partner from South Korea Methodist

is never messy, however glory be to God who specialises in making all things beautiful in His time. In addition to other dignitaries, former and present MCK presiding bishops were present and they led the services. Rev Joseph Ntombura preached and led the service, Rev Prof Zablon Nthamburi led the Communion service and he assisted by other synod bishops. The international guests and other dignitaries were invited to give greetings and prayers as well as blessings were shared openly. Rev Sheen, a missionary from Korean Methodist Church and resident in Uganda was present. Andrew Edwards from All We Can and I as well wishers from

the UK were also present. Congratulatory messages poured from US where Bishop Muriuki completed his Masters degree at Dakota Wesleyan University.

Meeting with Bishop Muriuki – MCU Synod Bishop

Bishop William is a humble man with passion for mission. He has a background in education and his priority is capacity building of MC Uganda ministers and leaders. He said even though it has been very challenging to take up this post, he believes God can turn things around for good in MC Uganda. His breadth of knowledge and experience as well as strong faith in God assures him that the ministry in Uganda could flourish with the commitment and support of promising members and leaders of MC Uganda. The last few weeks have been very challenging as the whole event was organised by very few people and little resources, yet God proved Himself faithful and fed the multitude again from little provisions – what a mighty God we serve! In weeks to come, Bishop Muriuki plans to spell out his strategy and mission priority though he told me that his uphill tasks were conducting leadership training, ministerial training, church planting and seeking out potential leaders for the new synod – so help Him God.



Bishop William Muriuki with Catherine at the inauguration service



Betty Nairuba and Sarah as organising members of MC

Meeting with Betty Nairuba – ex- SALT student now MC Uganda's Operations Manager

It was good to meet up with Betty again! She recently completed her Masters degree in International Studies and Human Resources at the University of Westminster, London after which she did a four-month internship with All-We-Can at Methodist Church House. Betty was a joy to work with and very committed to serve God. She immediately returned to Jinja to take up the post of Operations Manager and she is

currently the only staff member of the new Synod. With next to nothing, she has had to tirelessly handle administrative duties, communicate with internal and external partners, organise meetings and venue; arrange accommodation and meals for guests, plan logistics for the induction and inauguration service. My visit was to offer her support in her new role and discuss ways of mentoring and assisting her practically in future. I hope and pray the new Synod takes off seamlessly with God upholding both her and the Bishop Muriuki in their journey of faith! Whosoever God calls, He equips! God is still in the business of *building His Church*.



Prof Zablun Nthamburi with Bunmi at the event

Thank you
Dr Bunmi Olayisade
Africa Partnership Coordinator