

Partnership visit to Kenya 12 - 18/2/15

I met with MC Kenya's Presiding Bishop - Rev Ntombura to discuss partnership issues such as mission partner serving in Kenya - Barbara Dickson finishes at Maua Hospital this August. She has already handed over to her Kenyan colleague by initiating her succession plan before leaving. I also got an update on MC Uganda and a separate report will be submitted and a hardcopy of MC Kenya's 2013-14 audited financial report submitted to show its mission priorities and activities.



Ribe Methodist Girls Secondary School Choir

Visit to Mombasa - Kenya

I was privilege to visit Ribe in Mombasa where Methodism started in Kenya. The new church building was officially opened in memory of Reverend Thomas Wakefield -the first Methodist missionary in 1862. The first church building was constructed by Rev Wakefield in 1863 and by 1873 Methodism had spread to Mazeras. Unfortunately both his wife and his son died and were buried that same year, what a sacrifice for the furtherance of the gospel! By 1878 Methodism had spread further to the Jomvu at the coast and eventually to Meru at Kaaga on mainland Kenya. Under the leadership of subsequent Methodist Church leaders, the mission centre made great progress such as:

- Roads constructed to Railway station and Hospital
- Built a boarding school for boys in 1940
- Built another for girls in 1944
- Started a Teacher Training Centre

To date Methodism has spread to Uganda, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

At Ribe in Mombasa I seized the opportunity to meet with ex-SALT student - Rev Eunice Indangasi. She serves as a Methodist Superintendent in the circuit as well as a chaplain at several Methodist schools. Eunice then introduced me to Madam Rose Juma, a well respected woman who worked closely with the early mission partners and was a past President of the Women's Fellowship.



Ribe Methodist Boys Secondary School Choir



Thomas Wakefield Memorial Methodist Church, Ribe, Mombasa



Eunice Indagasi – ex scholarship student with Bunmi (Africa Partnership Coordinator)

The new church hall was packed full of members as well as guests sitting both inside and outside under the marquee. The service started just before 11.00am until after 3.00pm. Rev Ntombura focused his message on 2 Chronicles 29 verses 1 - 16: the consecration of the temple at Solomon's time. The temple became a place of prayer, a place for the people, a place of power and a place of praise and worship. Everyone that stayed behind was fed including students from the various Methodist schools. Students of the Ribe Methodist Boys Secondary School and Girl's

Secondary Schools plus other choral groups sang. There were also drama displays and celebrations of over 150 years of Methodism in Kenya.



Madam Rose Juma



Rev Amos Mushendira – WCSF Africa Secretary with Bunmi

Meeting with Rev Amos Mushendira - the Africa Region Secretary for World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)

I visited the WCSF Office in Nairobi, Kenya and we discussed WCSF mission priorities. Amongst other issues, Amos highlighted the need for leadership training among its national staff, the need for peace-building initiatives on the continent and the importance of delivering civil education/ good governance workshops particularly in nations preparing for elections in 2015-16 to minimise post election conflicts. The aim was to encourage people to vote for good leaders based on performance or

policies rather than ethnicity.



PROCMURA office, Westland - Nairobi

Meeting with PROCMURA (Programme for Christian Muslims Relations in Africa) Staff



PROCMURA partners in Nairobi

I visited the newly opened PROCMURA office at Westland in Nairobi. I also saw the newly installed security system at the residential premise after the armed robbers attack in March 2014. Dr Mbillah and family were very grateful for the support, concern and quick response from PROCMURA partners. MCB kindly sent some funds particularly after the Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks in Kenya and particularly with PROCMURA being an interfaith organisation. I also met with Joy - the accountant to discuss NMA recipient and grant issues. £10,000 was also contributed from the World Mission Fund towards the construction of this building which should help generate funds from rents to encourage self-sustainability. The revenue realised should help support PROCMURA’s mission priorities and further promote peaceful relations in Africa.

encourage self-sustainability. The revenue realised should help support PROCMURA’s mission priorities and further promote peaceful relations in Africa.



Joy – PROCMURA accountant with Owe of EMW

Meeting with John Shettima – MCB SALT student studying in Nairobi

I also met with John Shettima - a SALT student sponsored by MC Britain through PROCMURA. John was at St Paul's University defending his Master’s thesis on Interfaith. His topic was on the activities of Boko Haram in North Eastern Nigeria and the role of interfaith in managing the crisis. He gave an update on the menace in Nigeria and spoke of how he is the only surviving son of his of his blind mother plus three of his sisters were widowed by Boko Haram terrorist attacks.



John with Bunmi in Nairobi

All African Council of Churches partners' meeting

All African Council of Churches partners' meeting held in Nairobi More than twenty AACC partners from Africa, Europe and America attended the meeting bringing greetings, sharing ideas and networking among ourselves. Each morning started with devotions and main AACC's 2014-2018 strategic plans discussed. There were five main divisions namely -

- Office of the General Secretary - Leadership, Partnerships, Communication Theology,
- Ecumenical and Interfaith relations
- Empowerment, Diaconal and Development
- Family life and Gender Justice Peace and Advocacy
- Finance, Administration and Resource mobilisation

Professor Lumumba spoke on the Political, social and ecclesiological context analysis of Africa. He challenged Africans to critically analyse its activities for the past 50 years with the view of optimising its resources so it can be global player. He mentioned the need to promote Pan-Africanism, intra and inter African trade and seek to support and improve local produce. He mentioned the challenge of training professionals e.g. in construction yet depend solely on external consultants. However the biggest problem he thinks Africa grapples with is the issue of ethnicity in selecting incompetent leaders! He commended the Church for its great contributions in years past however if Africa's main resource - youths, are not planned for, they will be the real problem to contend with and the Church is not exempted.



AACC members with Professor Lumumba



AACC staff and AACC partner in Nairobi

On the second day the devotion was based on Acts 8 - Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. The challenge was role reversals- the Eunuch even though he travelled to Jerusalem, there was no guarantee that he was accepted by Jewish Community in Jerusalem as stated in Deuteronomy 23:1. Being the treasurer and an African meant he was probably older than Philip. It was also more common to travel on donkeys therefore he must have been wealthy to ride in a chariot. Philip on the other hand was trekking, he was a newly appointed leader, serving in his committee. The text Phillip interpreted for the Eunuch i.e. Isaiah 53: 7-8 might have struck a cord with the Eunuch; possibly it reflected his past experiences and could relate with it. However, God changed the fortune of the eunuch, he was accepted for who he was, baptised into the family of God and embraced by Jesus in the wilderness! Salvation came to him where he was. It was a story of inclusion - all can be saved! Therefore AACC aims at bringing all churches under one umbrella where faith in Christ as saviour becomes paramount.

The last day's devotion was based on Acts 17: 16 - 39. Saul was an intolerant man killing Christians before he knew and accepted Jesus. Later when he became Paul, he was distressed by the idolatry in Athens. By now he was a more tolerant man and he did not impose his ideas on others rather he started from where they were - serving an unknown God whom he called Jesus! Interfaith is about accepting difference but not forgetting difference. It is respecting and understanding our differences to live in peace. We relate for peace from our Christian Faith not in spite of it!

There was focus on the ongoing Ebola crisis, envisaging long term implications on affected countries and how best to assist. The ongoing problems of terrorism particularly by Boko Haram in West Africa, Al Shabaab in East Africa and ISIS in Northern Africa. Discussions surrounded how to work with political and religious leaders to reduce conflicts and religious intolerance. Then the issue of human trafficking was raised and how best to encourage leaders to provide better opportunities in Africa to mitigate against mass migration as well as discourage the exploitation of Africans by human traffickers. AACC's vision is that African Churches should work together for Life, Truth, Justice and Peace. So help us God!

Thank you

Dr Bunmi Olayisade
Africa Partnership Coordinator
March 2015