

KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY, P.O. BOX 267-60200, MERU, KENYA

June 2018

Dear Friends,

Many thanks for whatever prayers you have been able to offer up for Kenya and my work here since I last wrote. This letter will bring you up to date with my news and will hopefully inform and stimulate your continuing prayers.

First, we can thank the Lord that the political violence which marked the general election period towards the end of last year is now well and truly over and the country has moved into a much calmer and more settled state, as we prayed. Nevertheless, there have been moments of tension along the way, including the moment when the leader of the opposition coalition, Raila Odinga, had himself formally inducted as 'the People's President' before 4000 of his followers in the central park in Nairobi. The government wisely took this event as a piece of political theatre rather than as an act of treason, and not long after Raila Odinga was pictured in the newspapers shaking hands with President Kenyatta in the grounds of State House. This act of reconciliation not only signified an end to Odinga's opposition towards the government, but also triggered the disintegration of the coalition itself because he took this momentous step without consulting, or even informing, his coalition partners beforehand.

Regarding Kenya Methodist University, little has changed since I last wrote. We are still being led by the acting Vice Chancellor I mentioned last time, Prof. Maurice Okoth, and he continues to need our prayers as he seeks to lead the university out of the financial difficulties which he inherited. One encouraging fact is that the government is still sending us state-sponsored students in large numbers, thereby boosting KEMU's income, but a policy of austerity over spending is nevertheless still in place.

One example of the effects of this policy relates to the Wesley College books which I have mentioned in previous letters. Last year KEMU employed 4 temporary library workers to process the 38,000 theological books generously donated by the British Methodist Church, but their employment was terminated at the end of April, mainly, I was told, because of a shortage of funds to pay for them. We need to pray, therefore, that money may be found to bring this task to completion. On a happier note, I am pleased to be able to report that a room in our departmental building has been set aside as an extension of the main library, and that the room has now been furnished with shelves paid for from the legacy of the former mission partner I mentioned in my last letter.

Spiritually, the university community remains in good heart. Though worship is entirely optional for our students, the large galleried Chapel on the campus, which seats about 600 people, is virtually full for Sunday morning worship during term time. Moreover, the student Christian Fellowship is flourishing and highly respected, and the teaching programmes are running smoothly. For all these blessings, we praise the Lord.

Outside the university, I still get invitations to preach from time to time. I also frequently hear stories of church growth around the region. One of my former students, for example, who is now a minister in a circuit about 10 miles south of KEMU, told me of a recent service in his circuit in which about 50 adults were admitted into membership, and in the Kinoru circuit on the outskirts of Meru Town, to which I am attached when not preaching elsewhere, the new church planted at

Gatobora last year, which in my last prayer letter I said already had about 40 adults and 20 children, is now said to have about 70 adults and 48 children! More widely, the Methodist Church in Kenya, which historically was concentrated almost entirely on the coast of Kenya, in the Meru region and in the city of Nairobi, now has congregations in almost every county. However, encouraging though these statistics are, we still need to pray that all those who are entering into church membership, whether in the Methodist Church or in other churches in Kenya, may be effectively nurtured in their faith and consistently live it out in their daily lives.

Finally, I would be grateful for your prayers as I prepare for retirement. Next year I will be completing 6 years of service with the MCK at KEMU and will also reach the age of 68. After much thought and prayer, I feel that that this will be the right time for me finally to return to the UK and become a 'supernumerary' minister. There will be many decisions to make in this process, as you can imagine, and I will need God's guidance in making them.

With many thanks and best wishes,

Yours in Christ,

Peter