**KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

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Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for all the correspondence I have received since last Christmas. This prayer letter will bring you up to date with my own main news since then, and will hopefully stimulate your further prayers, for which I am always most grateful.

The most significant event during the past 6 months for me personally was undoubtedly the death of my mother, who passed away, aged 91, on Feb. 8th, after a battle with throat cancer. I am grateful to KEMU for permitting me to return to UK for two weeks at the beginning of March to be with family members and friends for the funeral and thanksgiving services (held in Eastbourne and Salisbury respectively), and grateful also to the Methodist World Church Relationships Office in London for its generosity in covering my travelling expenses.

Another significant event, but of a very public kind, was the attack of Al-Shabab Islamist terrorists from Somalia on Garissa University early in April, in which over 140 students were shot dead, many simply because they professed to be Christians. You may recall my mention of other such attacks which took place in Kenya in 2014. Garissa is only about 150 miles away from KEMU, and some fear that Meru District may be the next target. It is not surprising therefore that armed policemen have recently been seen outside the local supermarket I use and even within the campus of KEMU itself. The peace and security of Kenya, and the cessation of Al-Shabab terrorism, continue to be matters for prayer.

Another significant event was the sudden departure of KEMU’s Vice Chancellor at the end of last year. Student enrolment had been declining and the university was beginning to face financial difficulties, so his departure, though unannounced, was not altogether surprising. For most of the time since his departure the university has been drifting without clear leadership, but at the end of May a new Vice Chancellor was appointed. He needs our prayers as he settles in to a difficult and demanding job and seeks to reverse the downward trend.

Otherwise there is plenty of good news to share:

Last time I wrote about the all-night prayer meeting held in the KEMU Chapel, which was led by the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Kenya and attended by about 600 Methodists. This April, another such meeting was held, which was attended by an even greater number. They even had to put chairs in the aisles to accommodate the late comers, and some had to sit in the porch or even outside the building altogether. The popularity of these meetings is an encouraging sign of the ongoing spiritual renewal of the MCK.

Other signs of spiritual vitality and growth have reached me though different channels:

* a report from the Tanzanian Synod of the Methodist Church spoke of an evangelistic campaign which led to 210 people receiving Christ, of whom 60 belonged to the same village, resulting in the formation of an entirely new congregation in that place;
* at our own Kaaga Synod in Meru, reports were received of about 7 new congregations being formed in different circuits of the district over the past year;
* a visit I made to the remote district of Marakwet in N.W. Kenya during the Easter vacation enabled me to meet and speak to members of four new Methodist congregations, all of which trace their origin to a KEMU mission held there only about 10 years ago.

It is enormously heartening to hear and see evidence of God’s continuing work in different parts of East Africa today. Long may it continue!

Regarding my own work, I have continued to enjoy teaching the ministerial students in the university. My courses during the past 6 months have included NT Greek, NT Introduction, NT Exegesis, Biblical Hermeneutics, Systematic Theology, Early and Medieval Church History, and Methodism. In addition I am preparing Distance Learning materials for a number of these courses. I also still have many opportunities to preach in different Methodist churches throughout the region and continue to hold ‘Going Deeper’ sessions at Kaaga Methodist Church after the morning service once a month. We have about 15 people who come to this meeting, and it seems to be meeting a need.

Finally, at the end of May we welcomed to KEMU my friends Malcolm and Janet McCall. Malcolm is a retired Methodist minister with whom I trained at Wesley House Cambridge in the 1970s, and has come to teach Reformation and Modern Church History, and Homiletics, during the current trimester. Janet will be sharing in the Homiletics course and will also help students with their English skills. They have long experience of working in Africa and, as I expected, are quickly settling in. Please pray that the couple will make a lasting impact on our theological students during their stay.

With thanks,

Yours in Christ,

Peter