KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

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Dear Friends,

A number of you have been enquiring after my well-being in recent weeks, which has prompted me to return to the habit I had when I was last working in Africa of sending out two newsletters each year, one at Christmas time and the other around the middle of the year. This newsletter comes, as always, with thanks for whatever prayers you have been able to offer on my behalf. Certainly I have much for which to thank the Lord.

Firstly, I am thankful for good health and a secure place to live. Many of you will have heard of the recent terrorist attacks in Kenya, which have been carried out, it is believed, by the Al-Shabab Islamist group in neighbouring Somalia which is seeking retaliation for Kenya’s role in the international effort to defend the current government of Somalia from such groups as their own. All these attacks have taken place in Nairobi, Mombasa, or the areas close to the Somali border, and thankfully the Meru District has been unaffected, but we need to pray for the cessation of this threat and for the restoration of peace in Somalia itself.

Secondly, I am thankful for the tasks I have been given to do here at KEMU. Since Christmas I have taught courses in Hebrew, Greek and Systematic Theology, and have also written up learning materials for five New Testament courses for the benefit of our Distance Learners. In our Department, I have also participated in the development of new curricula for the B.Th. programme and the M.A. and Ph.D. programmes in Religious Studies. With respect to these programmes, and others which are contemplated, I think we need to pray that resources may be found to enable our library to acquire the reading materials recommended in the new curricula. Apart from the lack of an adequate library, I have encountered many other shortcomings in KEMU’s operations during the 9 months I have been here, and therefore would also appreciate your prayers for wisdom in knowing which ones to point out, to whom, how and when. Having said this, I am still inclined to believe that, all things considered, KEMU probably deserves its reputation of being one of the best universities in Kenya today.

Thirdly, I am thankful for the vibrant church life I have continued to experience since the beginning of the year. Preaching opportunities have been increasing recently, and it has been a particular joy to share in services in several rural areas, where small temporary church buildings, made of wooden frames and corrugated iron, and with mud floors, are packed with worshippers for services lasting three or more hours, in which different singing groups participate, 40 minute sermons are listened to with rapt attention, and there is no hurry to go home at the end. At my own local church, Kaaga Methodist Church, where I go when I am not preaching, I have begun to lead some after-service meetings in the church hall which are called ‘Going Deeper’. In these sessions I am seeking to give some deeper Bible teaching than is normally given in the sermons. I would be grateful for your prayers that these meetings may flourish and may meet the needs of those who come.

There are many other blessings outside my work of teaching and preaching for which I am thankful, not least: (i) the publication, in April, of an article I wrote while I was at Cliff College on ‘Tertullian and Penal Substitutionary Atonement’ in the Evangelical Quarterly, and, around the same time, the acceptance for publication of an article on ‘The Meaning of “We ... died to sin” in Rom. 6.2’ in the Expository Times; (ii) the acquisition of a piano, bought from a missionary couple in Nairobi who are returning to USA, which enables me practise at home; and (iii) the opportunity to continue exploring the beautiful countryside of the Meru region, including the two game parks which are close by, in which I have spent a few days ‘on safari’ viewing a wide range of wildlife.

Finally, I would ask you prayers for a training week for leaders in Uganda in which I have been asked to give some talks at the end of July and beginning of August. It is being organised by one of my former Ugandan students who is currently working in Scotland and has felt a burden for the development of a new generation of leaders in the Methodist Church in Uganda. I would be grateful if you would pray for the safe travelling of all the facilitators and participants, and for a spiritually fruitful week which will have a lasting impact on the Methodist Church in Uganda as a whole.

With many thanks,

Yours in Christ,

Peter