

## Partnership visit to Methodist Church Tanzania 25 July to 31 July 2019

### Aims:

- Meet with Bishop Ndaki and MC Tanzania leadership team
- Travel to Tarime to see EAC College where two SALT students attend

### Geita Methodist Church, Tanzania

As the amended saying goes, no rest for the saint! I departed from the guesthouse at 5.30am to beat the early morning traffic in Nairobi, but eventually arrived at Mwanza at noon because the flight was routed through Kilimanjaro airport. After the usual immigration palaver, I was glad to get to the Arrival hall. Despite looking around, there was no one I recognised in the area. I then called Bishop Ndaki on my phone and he showed up immediately. Himself, Rev Emmanuel and Pastor Sam were all at the Airport Café, about to have lunch before our journey. I was invited to join them, but declined because I had had some snacks on the plane. Little did I know that our journey would last another five hours. We drove straight from Mwanza airport to the port on Lake Victoria.



After about two hours' drive by road, we went by ferry across Lake Victoria and continued for another three hours inland. We arrived at the hotel at 5.00pm, rested a bit before meeting our host with his family at 7.30pm. He was a Methodist and a major donor of MC Tanzania. It was kind for him to invite us all for dinner. A nice ending to a long day. We shared pleasantries and discussed a few issues affecting MC Tanzania. Afterwards, I was glad to retire into bed later that night. At

9.30am, we visited Geita Methodist Church, where few members were waiting for us. This Methodist Church started four years ago and its evangelist reported that the church membership had grown to 57. Many members could not attend, because it was a weekday. Nevertheless, we met those who could make it to the church. Together we sang and prayed in the newly built wooden church on the land they recently purchased. Cool!

The place of worship was well roofed and made up of sliced wood logs. Their church growth plan was simple and effective. They had started a mud-brick making venture on the newly purchased plot of land. They reckon if they can make and sell 3000 mud bricks, they would accrue sufficient funds to buy some musical equipment. The equipment should attract more new church members and hopefully increase its resources eventually. Then they could embark on building a permanent church structure on the same premises. Quite impressive for the rural church ministry, with many children, youths and women as church members.

Afterwards, by noon we visited a newly planted Methodist Church at Magenge. This was more than ten miles far inside the villages. The church was to serve the community of miners drilling for gold. This new church started three month prior to the visit and they were fifteen when we visited. Many were away to work when we visited. The premises was leased and membership had grown to 15 during our visit. Two men, two women and four children were in attendance. We introduced ourselves, before MCT Church



leaders encouraged the evangelist for his hard work. We later left for our return journey, arriving in Magu at 7.00pm. it was a typical African experience. Lots to be thankful for, though it could be exhausting.

**Meeting with MC Tanzania leaders**

Our departure was delayed due to a flat tyre; nonetheless, we departed at 10.00am for Methodist Church Kabita. On our way, we branched to see the Women’s Clinic under construction. Part of the funding was donated by the Methodist World Mission grant. Immense progress was made, however the Project Manager was down with malaria. We proceeded to the meeting venue on the church premises. Twenty five

leaders (including me) were present and Bishop Ndaki shared from 2 Timothy 3:14-17, telling all to beware of false teachings. Afterwards various subjects were discussed as listed below:

Bishop Ndaki with Pastor Sam interpreting at the meetings



- Thirty people were invited from MC Tanzania to participate in Sunday School Teachers training at Kaaga, Kenya. The training was funded by the World Mission Mission. MC Kenya selected participants across its conference to promote cross-culture exposure
- MC Tanzania members were also invited to a two-month intensive

course at Bio-intensive Agricultural Centre. This was also a SALT group training funded by the World Mission Fund. Tanzania participants were reminded to arrange for their passports as and when required

- We discussed the importance of discerning and developing projects which promote self-sustainability. Each circuit or church was motivated to consider an income generating initiative to support its priorities .

- After much discussion with AACC, MC Kenya and MC Tanzania leaders, it was agreed to consider a Leadership training at the East Africa Christian College at Taribe. Two or three AACC consultants will be invited for the week long course to be delivered in Swahili. Prolonged coaching will be provided by AACC afterwards. Course details to be agreed with all stakeholders
- I met with two SALT students sponsored using World Mission Fund at the East Africa Christian College. Study was progressing well and I emphasised the importance of serving MCT after graduation
- One prospective student was offered admission after having English classes. Unfortunately he could not obtain a scholarship due to the school calendar year. I explored alternate methods of funding with MCT leaders. I met with the two NMA personnel –Michael Ameck (Disability Officer) plus the Missions Coordinator. Support for the disabled was explored and links will be made to liaise with necessary stakeholders.

We left in the evening, offering time for me to prepare for next day's preaching.

### Trip to MC Kabita and Lamadi

Bunmi and Pastor Sam with a young church member at MC Lamadi



It was a slightly relaxed morning even though we had to be ready by 8.30am. The Bishop was slightly delayed as he took the vehicle for a check-up before the three hours journey to Taribe. We eventually left for MC Kabita, with people waiting for our arrival. The music started, members showed up out of the woodwork and service started. I am yet to witness a people that can beat the Tanzanians in beautiful choreography. Both young and old, male and females, active and fragile stand up and praise God. Something similar to line-dancing in the West, though with more variety. This style of worship appeals to youngsters and the young males often administer the music

equipment while the females are into singing and dancing. As usual, there were more females than males in attendance at the Sunday morning church service along with many children.

I had the privilege of preaching from 2 Thessalonians 3: 1-5 the significance of forgiving unreasonable and difficult people and expressing God's love around us. Hardship either makes us better or bitter, it is up to us. However the Lord is faithful, who establishes us and guards us from the evil one. In addition he directs our hearts into the love of God and the patience of Christ. In this, may the word of God be glorified in the Church as we seek to pursue and uphold His upside-down kingdom values? I shared the different legacies of Nelson and Winnie Mandela. What will be our legacy?

We left after noon, and drove to MC Lamadi where they were patiently waiting for use. After singing a few choruses, we shared greetings and prayed together. I saw the previous church building damaged by strong wind in 2018. Vertical and horizontal lintels as advised by the Architect had fortified the existing block work. According to Bishop Ndaki, this new approach was costlier than anticipated but ensured a sturdier building against strong winds at the start of the rainy season. Though the building work has progressed, it had still not reached the roofing stage as previously anticipated. MC Lamadi members plan to fundraise to continue the building construction in the near future.

We journeyed on to Tarime, arriving later in the evening. I was invited to meet with church and circuit leaders of MC Tarime at the Bishop's residence and seized the opportunity to meet with his young family too. It was a lovely evening and I was glad to retire after 10pm.

### **Visit to East Africa Christian College (EACC) at Tarime, Tanzania**

Monday morning of 29 July 2019, at 10.00am, I met with the EACC Board members at its premises. It is an ecumenical college with five Board members in attendance. The denominations represented were Baptist, African Inland Church, Calvary Assemblies, Pentecostal and Independent Churches. The aim of the college is to train and equip Pastors for 21<sup>st</sup> century mission and offer practical skills.

The College started in 2016 and there have been 39 graduates to date. The courses on offer were:

1. Certificate in Theology and English Language course – for lay leaders and ministers
2. Diploma in Theology – Open to laity and ministers proficient in English
3. Certificate in Christian Leadership – Enrol twelve students per year
4. Diploma in Christian Leadership – Enrol 36 students over three years (Year 1, 2 & 3)
5. Preaching practice

Pastor Peter Kasululu was the Overseer of the Baptist Church in the District, but currently

the Director of the College. There had been close partnership with some American mission partners invited as visiting lecturers for three years, but that arrangement ended in February 2019. I encouraged EACC to work closely with existing Bible Colleges in the regions in order to attract interns and develop its 'unique selling points' rather than duplicate courses. Having a good web-presence should provide a platform for better communication with local and global partners. Also networking with local non-government organisations at Tarime should positively influence the delivery of Community Development courses. There are currently two Methodists enrolled at the school and a possibility of future training of some church members with low level of education if required. We dispersed with prayers and I saw both the residential and teaching facilities provided on its rented premises.

I departed the next day to Mwanza, a journey of more than five hours on the road. After much prayer, it was delightful to encounter the rain during my journey from Tarime. There were places encountering drought for prolonged periods of the year with the rivulets and waterholes dry. I pray the showers of blessings would enrich the country both spiritually and physically. I travelled back to Nairobi airport via Mwanza airport, en-route to Heathrow.



Drought at Tanzania



The rains fell for the first time after a protracted period on my way back



Deuteronomy 28:12 - The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand.

Thank you.

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