

## Partnership visit to Methodist Church Kenya 20 July to 25 July 2019

### Aims:

- Visit Bio-intensive Centre in Kenya, where 2019 SALT group training is to take place
- Meet with PRCOMURA staff following recent death of the Gen Adviser
- Meet with the All African Conference of Churches leaders organisations
- Meet with World Student Christian Fellowship leaders – Africa Regional Office in Nairobi

### Bio-intensive Centre, Meru Kenya

Give us this day, our daily bread... (Matthew 6:11). That was the scripture reverberating in my mind as I woke up at Meru. Earlier the previous day, I landed at Kenya International airport just past midnight and got to the guesthouse at 2.00am. This was due to about six hours delay at the airport prior to boarding. It happens to be Sunday, therefore there were obligations to be fulfilled. By 10 am. After a short time at church, Martin and I travelled by road to Meru, it was a four-hour journey.

As we arrived at MCK Bio-intensive Centre, the board members and staff were waiting for me and immediately, the meeting commenced. We went round the premises to appreciate the significant progress made. I met with Mr Stephen Bundi, a new National in Mission Appointee (NMA) responsible for developing and climate smart initiatives. I was also introduced to Prof Njoka (the Chair of the Board) plus two other Board members of the Centre. I was impressed that they made time to meet with me on the Sunday afternoon, just as I arrived from Nairobi to Meru. They were excited at the prospect of the Bio-intensive Centre equipping pastors, youths, lay preachers and worship leaders in promoting mission and considered their contribution very significant. How can this work?

In the West, mission and development were separated, with the Church focusing more on missional duties, leaving other agencies to handle development issues. This has not been effective in Africa particularly in rural dwellings. Jesus said, 'Give us this day our daily bread'... just after he prayed for 'God's kingdom to come and his will done on earth' (Matt 6:10). It is obvious that Jesus fed his followers both spiritually and physically. I believe that for the Church in Africa to sustain itself and be effective, it needs to equip Jesus's disciples both spiritually and physically. Assisting church members at the grassroots improves their commitment and contributions to their churches. They consider themselves valuable and they are essential change agents in spreading new and effective agricultural practices within the community.

I am grateful for the recent approval by the MCB's grant panel of two group training courses scheduled to take place at the Bio-intensive centre. I visited the Centre to observe its facilities and speak with personnel for hosting participants from Methodist Church Uganda and Tanzania after the summer. It was encouraging to see a large group from the US also staying on site. They were working with communities in Meru and leaving the next day. I had the privilege of joining them in planting few trees to celebrate the visit. The centre is ready. Prof Njoka, MCK Development Secretary – Martin, the new Climate Smart Officer plus two other Trustee members met to discuss the vision of the centre and its role in upskilling peasant farmers. They were excited at the prospect and shared the vision of liaising with Kenya Methodist University



Agriculture department on recent advancements in Agriculture. I plan to visit Tanzania afterwards, where

some areas have been experiencing drought since the start of the 2019. Climate smart ideas would be beneficial.



**Visit to Programme for Christian Muslim Relations for Africa (PROCMURA) HQ in Nairobi, Kenya**

It was nice to see Joy Wandabwa– the Chief Financial Officer (& Team Leader) of PROCMURA at its Nairobi Office. Two weeks earlier, the Interim General Adviser for PROCMURA passed away suddenly during

one of its programmes and the funeral took place in Tanzania, his home country, in July 2019. Joy had been holding the fort since then in addition to liaising with PROCMURA council members and external partners. As one of its long-standing partners, I considered it appropriate to enquire about the welfare of staff and consider its future plans. Joy was very grateful for MCB's ongoing partnership and financial support. I also had the opportunity to discuss various partnership issues with Joy as summarised below:

- PROCMURA Executive Council is to meet in few weeks' time to select the next Gen Adviser at the end of its recruitment process. He or she should initiate its strategic thinking and provide strategic direction along with the Council members for the next few years.
- PROCMURA confirmed recruitment of the recent NMA position approved by the Grant panel. PROCMURA intends to appoint an undergraduate as an intern to offer on the job training on part-time basis. The Youth Co-ordinator's post involves networking with undergraduates at Universities and other tertiary Colleges to promote tolerance and peace. Flexibility exist to appoint the intern probably annually.
- I saw Lydia, the Women & Youth NMA post holder. She was content with her duties and working closely with Area representatives across Africa
- We discussed MCB sponsorship support for prospective PROCMURA students. However, co-funding with other European partners was encouraged as done in the past
- PROCMURA has no safeguarding policy for now

### **Meeting with All African Council of Churches (AACC) leaders at Nairobi**

It was such a great opportunity to meet Dr Fidon Mwonbeki, the new Gen Secretary of AACC and Dr Bright Mawudor, his assistant at its Secretariat at Waiyaki Way in Nairobi. Dr Fidon had recently started this job the previous week and was still settling into his new post. He was glad to meet me and expressed gratitude for the existing partnership between AACC and MC Britain. Dr Bright thanked MCB for ongoing financial support. He noticed a drop in the funds approved for annual grants. However, I said we could initiate various ways of collaboration to serve African churches and promote God's kingdom despite reduced funding. AACC offers several training courses to its members in addition to special activities such as mediation, coaching, mentoring plus other services. Its understanding of the African contexts, access to church networks and supply of specialists on certain subjects, presents the opportunities for improved cooperation on the continent. AACC mentioned two new areas of interest we could work together on – widows support and youth engagement. There is the possibility for Methodist partners to join in a existing training courses carried out across Africa by AACC professionals. AACC shared several success stories with existing members including Methodist Church Ghana. It is well- placed to mediate and assist with intra- and inter-church conflicts, minimising legal wrangles.



Dr Fidon Mwonbeki (AACC Gen Sec) and Dr Bright Mawudor (Assist Gen Sec)

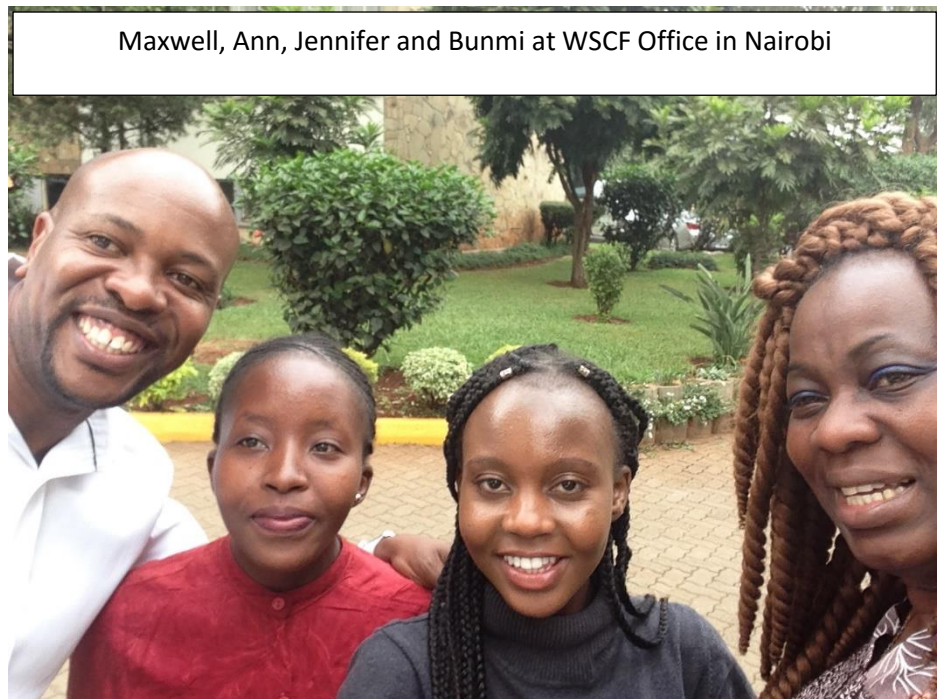
### **World Student Christian Fellowship (WSCF) Africa office visit in Nairobi - Kenya**

It was amazing to witness the progress made by WSCF Africa over past years. During my visit in 2015 its Regional Executive Secretary had resigned for personal reasons and returned to Tanzania. Maxwell, the accountant was left alone to lead the Secretariat with minimal resources. After much discussions and prayers with him, God intervened. MCB approved a National in Mission grant for its Secretariat and an internship programme commenced. This had blossomed and become the envy of many Non-Government-Organisations in Kenya. Jennifer Mutua was recruited and she has since grown in confidence, knowledge and various communication skills. Today during my visit, Jenny expressed wishes to pursue a Master's degree in Project Management and there is a short term placement student working at the office.

Below is a summary of many positive stories shared by WSCF since its NMA programme started:

1. WSCF just completed its global members meeting held in Kenya on 23 July 2019, a day prior to our scheduled meeting. Thirty participants from around the world converged in Nairobi for two weeks. WSCF members, few resource persons plus SCM (Student Christian Movement) Kenya members attended a Conference with the theme 'Identity, Diversity and Dialogue'. The meeting was sponsored by its global office; however, it provided the platform for African youths to voice their opinions on sexuality and the church. WSCF disagreed with criminalising homosexuality. It believed that discussions should be made in God's love, embracing difference, without compromising personal convictions in biblical truths about homosexuality. There should be further discussions on 'sexuality and the church', tackling polygamy and homosexuality in Africa. A discussion for Africans, with Africans and by African youths.
2. The newly appointed Regional Executive is Mr Chris Chimangini. He is based in Malawi, and should visit Kenya periodically

3. WSCF consulted with vulnerable adolescent girls from poor backgrounds with the view of seeking how best to empower them. Girls under age nineteen living just outside Nairobi were the focus group for the study. Findings showed that many of the girls had been exploited of by 'local bike cabs' men who always had cash on them. Consequently, it was also reported that the incidence of HIV-AIDS among this group was not reducing, instead fresh cases among young naïve girls could be on the rise. Gender based violence was also reported among these girls especially when they become unmarried mothers with little support from the perpetrators. More work is required to raise awareness.
4. WSCF engages with its policy makers and the government to provide a forum for youths to enquire about job creation and address youth unemployment. It bridges the gap between youths and government officials and encourages continued consultation with youths e.g. WSCF seeks support from investors to start a 'Girl's car wash' business as gender equality initiative.
5. WSCF collaborated with the National Campaign against Drug Abuse to facilitate engagement with youths and developed an effective campaign for the slums in Nairobi. The partnership was successful and WSCF 'champions' were being trained to become Trainer of Trainers. The champions made great presentations to various audiences and WSCF hopes this translates into better job prospects for them.
6. They are now considered as 'Ambassadors', responsible for supporting and upskilling rehabilitated recovered addicts. In addition to this, they assist both poor and rich parents in recognising symptoms of drug addiction.
7. WSCF revived the 'Religions for Peace' programme and 'Student Christian Movement' Kenya Chapter
8. WSCF was approached by agencies and secondary schools to offer students short-term internship (<3 months) to boost their administrative and communication skills. WSCF hopes this scheme offers better job opportunities for youths.



It was an enriching meeting as WSCF has now grown to three staff members – Maxwell, Jennifer and Ann. Ann is on a three-month attachment programme. She only started few weeks back and commented on how her confidence is growing. They were all so grateful to the Methodists for standing with them in difficult times and offering support when no one else believed in them. We prayed together, believing God for greater things ahead. I left for Tanzania early the next day.

Thanks

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