

Partnership visit to Kenya from 8th - 18th March 2018

Aims – To meet with the British Methodist Church mission partners – CS & PE
 To visit Kenya Methodist University and officials
 To meet SALT students sponsored using the World Mission Fund
 To attend the Africa Methodist Council held in Nairobi 13 -18 March 19
 To network with various Methodist representatives from the continent

Meeting with MCB mission partner - CS



Barbara, Bunmi and Claire at Meru

I arrived at Jomo Kenyatta airport at 4.56am but eventually emerged outside the building at 6.10am due to delays at immigration and bag reclaim points. Samuel Kimaru was concerned about the delay and glad to see me even though we had to pay the penalty for overstaying at the pick up collection point.

Immediately we headed for Meru, another four hours drive to arrive at the Biointensive Agricultural training centre at noon. I spruced up before meeting with Claire and Barbara at Meru for

lunch even though they were based at Maua Methodist Hospital (MMH). I was glad I did not have to travel another 50km to Maua Hospital. Barbara is an ex-MCB mission partner visiting Maua Hospital.

It was good to see Claire in good spirits and she was excited about the various training opportunities she was encountering at MMH. She mentioned a Kenyan couple exploring job opportunities at MMH, the lady was a General Practitioner married to an Orthopaedic surgeon. Their skills would help support the oversubscribed Trauma unit caused by the daily motor bike accident patients regularly admitted at MMH. In addition, the recently appointed young lady surgeon working at MMH is helping immensely, freeing Claire to focus on palliative medicine plus starting an Adolescent Centre for youths affected by HIV later, if funding becomes available. Dr Salvador, the CEO of MMH, plans to finish his tenure in 2019; therefore his successor hoping to take over later this year has been appointed. Barbara was visiting to collate her information and images on MMH, with the hope of publishing a book for posterity.

Church service at All Saints Methodist Church, Meru

The following morning, I was to travel another 40km outside Meru for the dedication of a newly dedicated church by the Presiding Bishop. I kindly turned down the offer because I was struggling with a painful right foot. Instead, I had a strong urge to attend a nearby thriving Methodist Church in Meru. I attended the All Saints Methodist Church, only ten minutes' drive from my guesthouse. We arrived early at 8.30am with Samuel and were both warmly received by the Superintendent of the circuit– Rev Nicholas. He was surprised to see me because he had invited me to visit his church in December 2018 at the MCK's



All Saints Methodist Church in Meru



Sunday morning service at All Saints Methodist Church in Meru

shared how he started at the church about four years ago with about 100 members and focused on evangelism and mission. Today, there were two newly planted churches – St Pauls MC has 200 members and with lots of youths. Dorothy (Nicholas' wife), is a trained lay preacher who serves as the 'missioner' at the third church – St Peters. She is a teacher by profession, and recently started St Peters, which has now grown to 100 members. Repeatedly, All Saints Church shared its love for visitors and welcomed all to come again. We had refreshment afterwards and was inspired by the sermon – *Be led by the Holy Spirit*. Rev Nicholas shared from Luke 4: 1-13 and James 1:13. Encouraging us not to cooperate with the tempter like Eve did, but to reject temptation as Jesus did, quoting God's words. No one is exempt from temptation, therefore how we respond to temptation matters a lot. We should say no to sin, be equipped using God's words, and excuse ourselves or flee where possible, like Joseph. Alternatively, we engage in prayers and fasting to embrace salvation and seek God's wisdom as mentioned in Romans 12:2.

Meeting with another MCB mission partner – PE

It was already dusk at Kenya Methodist University (KeMU) when I arrived, and even though I had been there three years earlier, I had problems relocating Peter Ensor's residence. I had an appointment to meet with Peter and the Head of Theology Department (HoD), because they both lectured KeMU students during the day.

How time flies, I could not believe Peter had already spent six years at KeMU and he now plans to 'sit down' this summer. My visit was to remind the MCK Presiding Bishop and Head of Department that Peter retires this year and a replacement was not guaranteed. It was an opportune time to discuss the end of his mission service and 40 years of ministry. It has been very inspiring working with Peter Ensor these past years and he will be sorely missed.



David B, Julius, Peter Ensor, Paul, Anthony and David K at KeMU

Meetings with KeMU students and senior staff

I met with the five MC Uganda students sponsored for ministerial training at KeMU – Davis K, Julius, Anthony, Paul and David B. It was such a privilege to see them again two years after enrolment. I asked each one to share at least one good encounter as a result of their training. David K was grateful for the opportunity to be the 2017-18 Chairperson of KeMU's Christian students, leading more than 600 students on campus and acquiring leadership skills. Julius said he had improved in various aspects of life. Anthony was grateful of his practical and theoretical exposure. Paul said he had gained confidence in ministry and preaching. David B had participated in mission and

Women's Conference but I was unable to accept the offer. I brought greetings from MCB as they all knew Dr Peter Ensor who regularly preached there for the past three years and informed them about the first Africa Methodist Council taking place in Nairobi.

It was a beautiful and vibrant service with a fundraising event for its new toilets having recently completed its '800 seater' auditorium the previous year. The minister

established ecumenical links with peers. We also discussed their aspirations after graduation despite challenges encountered at KeMU. We finished with prayers and they expressed their gratitude to Peter for his support and contributions at KeMU, and they all looked forward him visiting them in Uganda if possible.

Likewise, I visited the library for an update on 38,000 books shipped from Wesley College in Bristol to KeMU about three years ago. I met with temporary library staff who had registered each book in a computerised database for easy access. However, more shelf spaces for more books would be appreciated and Professor Kinoti assured us that he would pursue the case even after Peter leaves to make the books accessible to students and staff on library shelves. I thanked him plus the library staff for their hard work. I also seized the opportunity to meet KeMU Chief Accountant and Deputy VC who thanked MC



Donated books from former Wesley College, Bristol at KeMU library

Britain for their generosity and partnership. We discussed our existing partnerships with KeMU in supporting Methodists across the Eastern region of Africa. Later in the week, I met with Rev Amos Ndhumbi of MC Zimbabwe – a recipient of the SALT scholarship pursuing his PhD in Nairobi.



Bunmi and Rev Amos Ndhumbi – MC Zimbabwe SALT student in Nairobi

Attendance at the Africa Methodist Council Conference held at Nairobi, Kenya. 13 – 18 March 2019

It was an early departure from Meru back to Nairobi, to beat the traffic in Meru and Nairobi to attend the opening ceremony of the first Africa Methodist Council. Archbishop Michael Stephens, the interim chairperson from Nigeria, gave the historical background titled **Africa Methodist Council, the Vision and the Journey so Far**. The Presiding Bishop of MC Kenya – Rev Joseph Mwaine, welcomed delegates and the next day presented a paper titled **Political and Economic Instability in Africa. A Wesleyan Response**.

The Presiding Bishop of MC Ghana gave the keynote address. Also, present on the platform with them were Bishop Ivan Abrahams – President of World Methodist Council and Bishop Hounsa of Eglise Protestante Methodiste du Benin. The attendance was very encouraging with participants hailing from South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya. I was given the opportunity to bring greetings from MC Britain as an external and longstanding partner. I addressed the heads of Methodist Churches in Africa, mentioned the few ongoing changes taking place within MC Britain Conference and requested their consent to explore a MCB regional office based in Nigeria; the support was unanimous and much valued. Below is the communique issued afterwards.

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CLOSING OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE AFRICA METHODIST COUNCIL, HOSTED BY THE METHODIST CHURCH OF KENYA AND HELD AT THE METHODIST CONFERENCE CENTRE, LAVINGTON GREEN, NAIROBI, FROM 13-18 MARCH 2019

PREAMBLE: The Africa Methodist Council meeting for the first time in Nairobi, Kenya and comprising of delegates from all the Wesleyan strands in Central, East, South and West Africa arrived at the following responses in line with its theme: **Wesleyans Shaping the Future of Africa.**

The meeting gathered in the surrounding context of the Addis Ababa air-crash, the devastating floods, damage and loss of DRC and Algeria. life by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, the collapse of the building in Nigeria housing a Primary School and the mass shootings at the two Mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The Conference expressed its sincere condolences to all the bereaved in these tragic events. There were also difficult periods of political transition ahead in in Zimbabwe, DRC and Algeria.



1. The Council affirmed Scripture as the supreme basis of our belief and that the Great Commission made clear our core-business is evangelism and making disciples, who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and lives out their faith.
2. The Council believed, as Wesleyans, the continued need to combine evangelism with personal and social holiness. This is to love God and our neighbour; which required a service-centred ministry in social action in order to reform the world, continent, nation, Church and individual believer with a transforming of mind, heart and spirit.



Africa Methodist Church leaders at the AMC Conference

3. As salt and light in the world the Conference encouraged the Church to maintain its prophetic voice and speak into areas of political, economic, social, moral and environmental injustice as issues integral to our faith in Jesus Christ. In this way the Church would remain relevant to its flock. Wherever possible the Church should cooperate with the African Union in relationship to the NEPAD instrument and other UN & Sub-Regional endorsed programmes and agenda in achieving compatible goals.

4. The Conference was heartened by the attempts of member Churches in Zimbabwe and Zambia to lend support to the process of national dialogue and political reconciliation in a neutral, even-handed and non-partisan manner, counselling, advising and warning both Government and opposition, to bring the reconciliation that only Christ may bring. It appreciated too the continuing work being with the Church in Cote D'Ivoire.

5. The Conference commended the work of the Church in the fields of Health, Education, Community Development and Social Justice and that these missional social ministries be intensified to meet the growing

needs of surrounding communities as a Church without walls. Information Technology is an area too which could be used to greater effect for Church growth.

6. The Conference acknowledged the need for youth to be more fully involved at all levels in the Church and that a much greater proportion of resources needed to be spent to revive and renew youth and young people's ministries.



Archbishop Michael Stephens presenting the historical background of AMC

7. The Conference expressed concern over the lack of gender equity in the Church at present, where women's giftings especially, were greatly underutilised in the development of the Church and applauded the increased capacity-building measures being made available to them for both clerical and lay leadership.



EPM Benin delegates at the first Africa Methodist Council in Nairobi

8. The Conference lamented the on-going realities of gender-based violence, rape, child abuse, human trafficking and the dangerous migration of young people seeking greater economic opportunities elsewhere. It denounced the present unjust economic system that irreparably damages creation, furthers climate change, increases suffering and is supported by a callous political industrial and military elite.

9. While Conference noted the challenge posed by the growing strength and influence of Islam, it was confident in the message contained in the Gospel to meet it and any other faith. Conference also fully supported the continuing constructive interfaith dialogue taking place through bodies such as NIREC in Nigeria.
10. The Conference thanked the Methodist Church in Kenya for their generous hospitality in hosting the first Council Meeting and the Interim Chairman and Coordinating Secretariat for their efforts to ensure the First Meeting of the AMC became a reality. Appreciation too was accorded to the Speakers, Devotion Leaders, Moderators and Interpreters. Lastly but not least to the Heads of the Council's Member Churches and their delegates for their attendance and participation.