

# Partnership visit to Methodist Church, Uganda 25<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017

## Aims

- To meet with Methodist Church Uganda leaders to discuss partnership issues
- To visit newest church plant
- To discuss sustainable ventures to promote self-reliance
- To meet with MCU NMA recipients
- To update MCU on changes to MCB grant processes
- To prepare for new MCU mission partners

## MC Uganda updates

I departed from Kigali late Sunday evening to arrive at Entebbe at night. The following morning I travelled by road for 3.5 hours to Jinja. There I met with Bishop William Muriuki the Synod Bishop and Betty Nairuba –the Operations Manager. They shared about the visit of MCB President –Rev Lorraine Mellor in May 2017 and how blessed they were to listen to her charismatic session on *Servant Leadership*. It was also beneficial to host the prospective MCB mission partners on their pre-placement visit to Uganda in May 2017. MCU was excited about the prospect of having MCB mission partners serving at Jinja and we discussed necessary preparations to be made by December 2017. Freddy and Dee would undergo mission training in the UK before commencing mission service for at least three years at MC Uganda.



MC Uganda Office premises

Bishop William acknowledge the receipt of the World Mission Fund emergency grant of £10,000 for drought victims sent in March 2017. He shared how MCU leaders travelled far and near to visit various badly affected communities. On few cases they embarked on over eight hours drive by road however the beneficiaries were very patient and thankful for the generosity. The report and photographs would be circulated accordingly. Having met several beneficiaries of drought relief, I am always amazed and grateful for how generous British Methodists are in promptly sending solidarity grants to our partners. Many African Church partners confirm how this makes the Church more visible and active in demonstrating the love of Jesus to all. It is not just about doing good deeds because there are many local and foreign organisations in Africa involved in relief and humanitarian responses; however many deny the relevance or significance of Jesus to



MC Uganda witnessed the graduation of its members trained by Cliff College staff in May 2017. They were trained by few UK volunteers to prepare MCU church members as evangelists, pastors or youth leaders at basic levels. Few promising students continued their personal development at Kenya Methodist University. Currently several contextual training are still ongoing to equip new church leaders, strengthen organisational flow of information through circuits and districts, increase awareness on strategic pillars and improve internal and external networking.



Green and lush roadside vegetation with the rains

their activities. However Jesus has mandated us to uphold His values and teachings as a central part of its mission.

### **Meeting with MC Uganda Synod staff**

The next morning at MCU office started with devotions led by Grace focusing on Isaiah 55: 2 – 3. She encouraged us to tune ourselves to receive from God because His word gives life and contentment. All seven MCU staff members were present and each contributed to the discussion, praying afterwards. Then each staff member introduced him or herself and spoke about their jobs and aspirations.

#### **1. Andrew Mulwany – MCU Programme Officer**

Andrew previously worked as a Credit supervisor with a microcredit group but wished to serve God. He now has peace and enjoys writing proposals for programmes. He has a Masters in Agric Ergonomic therefore is proficient in developing business plans. Andrew currently works with 20 beneficiaries in Kamuli district plus another 20 beneficiaries in Buyende district. MC Churches have been entry points for reaching out to both communities. Selected beneficiaries were either crop or pig farmers. Ten of the farmers were church members and the other ten from the communities. There is a demonstration farm owned and managed by MCU to train in crop husbandry, livestock, *composting*, pre-harvest and post-harvest management at Buyende. Andrew conducts several training to improve their agricultural practices, he regularly visits the farmers, meets with church and community leaders and liaises with Agriculture extension workers. He commented that the initiative has positively impacted the Methodist Churches since training takes place on church premises. As time progresses, more beneficiaries have been increasing their interactions with the local Methodist churches.



Andrew with Buyende Methodist minister at the farm

#### **2. Grace Ayaa – MCU Youth Coordinator**

Was recently employed on the National in Mission Programme as the Youth Co-ordinator. She was a fresh graduate of Makere University with a passion for children and youth. Grace is a member of Buyembe Methodist Church in Jinja which has a congregation of 70% youths. Her personal goals in line with MCU vision is to promote church growth by increasing youth participation, improving co-ordination of volunteers and members as well as promoting evangelism within MCU. She works closely with the Student Union Officer (with an office on MCU site) who also works with Secondary and Primary schools in the region. In summary she plans to work with MCU leaders for the youths to mature spiritually, become financially stable and better established socially across different districts.

#### **3. Aaron Tenywa – MCU Accounts Officer**

Also a young vibrant staff member that worked as a Loans Officer at a Microfinance Bank in Uganda before crossing over to MCU. He also graduated from Makere University and a former member of MCU before moving out of Jinja. His main responsibility has been to endorse proper accountability of all funds to promote transparency plus ensure value for money. He also embarks in monitoring the quality of goods and services expected and wishes more training of voluntary workers at parishes and he is develop an accounting manual for such training.





MCU new staff – Andrew, Grace and Aaron

#### 4. Geraldine Nakikareko – MCU Caretaker

Geraldine starts work very early and finishes a bit earlier when she could and a Security officer patrols the office premises at night to reduce the threats of burglars. Geraldine cleans and tidies the premises and discharges other janitorial duties. As occasion demands, she also organises meals and prepares rooms for meetings. She participates in staff devotions and she is a member of a Methodist Church in Jinja.

5. **Betty Nairuba – MCU Operations Manager** Betty was grateful for ongoing support received under the NMA programme and glad about the progress made since MC Uganda became a Synod in January 2016. She thanked MC Britain for financial and personnel support commenting on adherence to MCU strategic plans in directing its activities. She mentioned few persistent challenges still encountered knowing somethings will take time before being sorted. Betty’s aspiration is to have a self-reliant MCU by:

- Promoting unity and increase participation among MCU church members
- Improving the utilization of MCU assets to generate funds
- Promoting women empowerment especially in rural areas to improve living standard
- Organising training for better understanding of roles and responsibilities of clergy and laity

She continues to work hard and I was glad to know Betty had two weeks annual leave in September 2017 which was the first time in the post two years ago – a necessary break to improve efficiency!



MCU staff devotion

#### 6. Rev William Muruiki – MCU Synod Bishop

It is always great to meet with this kind and humble leader. Bishop William thanked God for His faithfulness through dark times and thankful for the support from MCB since he took up office. He mentioned that it has not been easy wading through tough times, however when he looks back, he marvels at the kindness of God to him.

- He commented and was grateful for the help from All We Can with regards to *Capacity Building* of MCU personnel and setting up a demonstration farm for community members
- He was grateful for resources from the World Church Relationships Office in addition to remaining a partner through difficult times
- He was very appreciative of the training of five young ministers to replace the outgoing (close to retirement) and ex-MCU ministers that resigned



MCU Synod Bishop – Rev William Muruiki

- He understands the importance of developing sustainable income generation projects and plans to develop few business proposals
- He plans to pursue MCU church growth strategy to focus more on towns and cities rather than only rural ministry that struggles to sustain itself.
- He was ecstatic that MCB mission partners were to commence service in Jinja by December 2017. Preparations for them are in advance stages and the church is eager to have Freddie and Dee serving with them as Circuit minister and MCU Sunday School Co-ordinator.

**Visited MCU newest church in Kaliro Town started in April 2017**

The church planting was started by Rev Hamis Mugendawala, a minister of MC Uganda. The town of Kaliro had no Methodist presence and it was thirty one kilometres from Iganga, the closest Methodist station. However, the residents of this town were badly affected by the drought and part of the solidarity grant sent to MC Uganda was used in purchasing food and seedling for Kaliro residents. The people were stunned and grateful for the recognition and help from MC Uganda. Each time the minister visited, the people came together singing and praising God. Not long after, even those who were not Christians joined and a place was rented for regular meetings. The church now has over thirty adults and forty kids as members.



Karoli Methodist Church – newly planted church

For now, MC Uganda has no manse, no land, nor building in this part of Uganda. Recently, the landlord of the school has given evacuation notice to enable him use the building for something else. During my visit, many of the church

members were women and children however there enthusiasm was very evident. As a result, Kaliro Methodist Church members were pleading for assistance to buy land nearby and they would rally round and build their church themselves. There is a strong Muslim presence in the region due to external agents constructing mosques in villages to attract more followers. MCU has also conducted family seminar plus few other training to empower the new members. I plan to liaise with Bishop Muruiki to follow up on the positive impact of MCB solidarity grant on partners and extend thanks to God, Methodist donors and supporters for their generosity. Thank you!



Solar panel for light supply at Buyende Methodist Church

**Visit to Nambula Methodist Preparatory and Primary Schools**

This school was at Kamuli, over sixty kilometres from Jinja. There was no electrical supply therefore St Paul’s Methodist Church Dronfield kindly sent a donation for solar panels to run the church and school. It was a delight to see how such a small initiative could make a big difference. The office and school hall (also used as crèche) had solar power. The hall is being used for other functions such as church services, bible studies, community meeting etc. Another solar panel was mounted on the manse to provide electrical supply on a newly completed manse previously damaged by fire. The restored building now has light powered by solar. The villagers were so appreciative of the supply that demand to extend the project is great. I wish to thank St Paul’s Methodist Church, Dronfield that got in contact with MC Uganda to support



Solar light bulb in house



the solar panel project that has improved lives in rural Uganda. The villagers and MCU leaders sent their gratitude for a job well done.

### Visited MCU demonstration farm at Buyende Methodist Church, Uganda



Crops and vegetables in the demonstration farm



One boar and sow in the demonstration farm

This was my third visit to Buyende. The first time was to inspect the borehole dug by Methodist Relief and Development Fund years ago. It was good to now see the demonstration farm made up of 90ft x 90ft vegetable farm plus a pig sty with two piglets – a young six month boar and a four month old sow supplied by All We Can. The pig sty was very well built and the animals were in very good and clean conditions. The design was simple and effective; also easy to maintain. Few of the beneficiaries came around and were happy with the programme. Bishop Muruiki, Betty, myself and Andrew – MCU Programme Officer visited a beneficiary at Kamuli at her household. The beneficiaries also received training on feed mix, hygiene, animal health etc. MCU works with community members to promote good agriculture practices however it will take years for this initiative to generate sufficient income to support the church in Buyende.

*Isaiah 40* <sup>31</sup> But those who wait on the LORD  
Shall renew *their* strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint.

Thank you  
Dr Bunmi Olayisade  
Africa Partnership Coordinator –MCB  
October 2017