

Where Two or Three Are Gathered

Examples from Africa

References to slides relate to the PowerPoint available at methodist.org.uk/GlobalRelationshipsResources, with slide 1 opening your service

If children are present at the service, begin by showing slide 2, examples of different churches, and asking the children to point out the differences they see in each one, for example the instruments they play, the stained-glass windows, how big or small the church is.



Slide 2: Examples of churches around the world (Left: South Korea, Centre and right: Sri Lanka)

If children are not present, start here.

So often, when one thinks of churches in Africa, one imagines huge congregations worshipping in services characterised by vibrant singing and dancing. And this is true, but there is also another side to African Christianity that is often not seen. Here are three brief examples of how modest gatherings of Methodist Christians are making a difference in their local context.

In Kampala, [slide 3] the capital city of Uganda, a Methodist Church was recently planted in the headquarters of the Scripture Union. It was established as a place of worship for young Methodists who have come to the city to study or work.



Slide 3: A new Student congregation in Kampala with Mission Partner, Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman

Each Sunday, they gather in one of the meeting rooms – a small but growing band of young people who travel across the city to praise God and reflect on the Bible and what it means for their lives. They are led by Andrew, a young lay preacher, [slide 4] who has also started an increasingly popular weekly online Bible-study ministry. It was inspiring to worship with them and to hear the testimonies of the young people thirsty to grow in knowledge and love of God and to discern the call on their lives.

On Inhaca, [slide 5] a tropical island in the Indian Ocean, an hour by boat from Maputo in Mozambique, a growing number of villagers, mostly fishermen, are joining the small Methodist Church that was planted on the island in 2016 [slide 6]. As well as offering worship and education to the islanders, they are hoping to develop an income-generating tourism initiative for the growing number of people who are visiting the island [slide 7].



Slide 4: Andrew

In a field on the edge of an isolated village in North Western Tanzania Andrew Ashdown, Partnership Coordinator for Africa, sat and prayed with 15 Methodist villagers under a tree [slide 8]. For 20 years, the group has gathered and worshipped under this tree as they have no church building. A rock serves as their table and lectern.

Despite having almost no financial resources, the members use their agricultural skills and love of God to help and care for the poorest among their community. As they sang, read the Scriptures and praised God, Andrew reminded them that they were very close to Jesus, who often prayed with and taught his disciples in isolated places in the hills of Galilee.



Slide 5: Arriving on Inhaca Island

These are just a few examples of the life and worship of the Methodist Church in different parts of the African continent. They stand as a witness and example to us all when we struggle as a Christian community, or feel that we lack resources or lack people. Let us thank God for the faith of our fellow Methodist sisters and brothers around the world who remind us of our calling and that none of us are without gifts, and that by God's grace, we can achieve great things, as we seek to do God's will and witness to God's love.



Slide 6: Methodist members on Inhaca Island

Questions for reflection

- Do you feel Christ's presence more strongly in large or small gatherings? Why?
- Does a church building help or hinder worship?

Bible verses

Matthew 18:20 Acts 1:14