

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BURUNDI

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Celebrating God's Faithfulness



2010 is a special year in the life of the Anglican Church of Burundi.



Dr. Leonard Sharp
1890 - 1976

It is 75 years since the first Anglican missionary pioneers, under the auspices of the Rwanda Mission, crossed over from Rwanda into Burundi. Among them were two medical doctors, Dr. Len Sharp and Dr. Algie Stanley Smith, and an evangelist and church planter, Rev. Kosiya Shalita.



Dr Algie Stanley Smith
1890 - 1978

Mission stations were set up at Matana and Buhiga initially, and then at Buye. In each place a church, a hospital, and a school were built reflecting the three-fold vision of evangelism, ministry to the sick and needy, and provision of education. In 1936 the first Christians were baptized.



Rev. Kosiya Shalita

Anglican structures, familiar in other parts of the world, were put in place over time. By the end of the 1930s a theological college had been built in Buye where clergy were trained for ordination. Parishes were formed, and dioceses created. In 1965 the Rt. Rev. John Nkuzumwami was consecrated as the first Burundian bishop responsible for the diocese of Burundi that was part of the Province of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Boga-Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). Eventually, after being part of the Francophone Province of Rwanda, Burundi, and Boga-Zaire the autonomous Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi came

into being in 1992.

Three Burundian Archbishops have held office; the Most Rev. Samuel Sindamuka, the Most Rev. Samuel Ndayisenga, and currently the Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi. Six dioceses now make up the Province.

Throughout the difficult periods of crisis since Independence in 1962 the Church has continued to focus on the original three-fold vision. Issues pertinent to the present day such as conflict resolution, peace building and reconciliation, HIV/AIDS and malaria, conservation and care of the environment, the status and protection of women along with other matters relating to gender have been addressed. Effective communication and use of modern technology have enhanced the ongoing work of the Church.

The weekend of the 14th-15th August 2010 marked the 25th anniversary of Gitega diocese along with its bishop, the Rt. Rev. John Nduwayo, as well as the beginning of the celebration of God's faithfulness to the Anglican Church in Burundi over 75 years.





A service of thanksgiving and prayer was held at St Luke's Cathedral in Gitega on the Saturday evening and was followed on the Sunday with a service of Holy Communion and ceremonies that took place in Buhiga at St. Peter's Church that dates back to 1946 and was erected by Rev. Dr. Harold Adeney.

Throughout the weekend the Church was called, as were the Israelites of old, to remember what God had done for them in the past and to tell it to their children, the future generation.

During his sermon in Gitega, the Rt. Rev. Geoffrey Rwubusisi, Bishop of Cyangugu diocese, Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda, asked the congregation to stand for a moment's silent prayer of thanksgiving for the early pioneers who sacrificed much to bring the Gospel of God's saving and reconciling love to Burundi. Such love and unity should characterize the Church of the future.



At Buhiga the Rt. Rev. Nathan Kamusiime Gasatura, Bishop of Butare diocese, Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda, reminded the congregation that there was cause for celebration because of the dedication, commitment, and witness based on the Word of God of the first Christians. They set an example for future generations to follow.

The Archbishop, the Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi, spoke of the original missionary pioneers' call and vision as they crossed into Burundi looking for suitable mission sites with a longing in their hearts to see its people reached with the Gospel. He called on the Church to look to the future. He said that there would be many challenges, not least in raising the next generation in God's ways. To this end the Church must focus on nurturing the faith of young people so that, inspired by Christian values, they are equipped to become the leaders of the future in both church and society. He encouraged all members of the Church to be fully committed to knowing Christ better, to discerning His will and purpose, to having a passion for the Gospel, and to a lively involvement in the life and work of the Anglican Church of Burundi.



Bishop John Nduwayo recalled the beginnings of the diocese, expressing gratitude to those who had worked hard over the years especially in the areas of evangelism, health, and education, and to partners from around the world who had given their support. Gifts were presented to members of parishes in the diocese who were aged 75 years or more.

Various messages of congratulations were brought to the Bishop and his wife and tributes made to the diocese for its work and witness especially through the difficult years of civil war.

Among guests attending the ceremonies were the Minister of Good Governance representing the President of Burundi, the Archbishop of the Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda, the Most Rev. Emmanuel Kolini, accompanied by a delegation, the President of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda, and representatives from the National Council of Churches in Burundi, Christian Aid, Scripture Union, Church Mission Society UK (CMS), CMS Africa, CMS Ireland, and Anglican Churches in the UK and France.



Events to be held in the dioceses of the Province during the next months will be occasions to reflect further on God's faithfulness.

As Psalm 126 verse 3 says: "The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy".