



Mukono Diary

15 – 21 September 2010

Simon Tatton-Brown



Bishop Paul in retirement outside his new home

Wednesday 15 September

The Reverend Festo Kalungi was at Entebbe to meet me. Immigration had been easy – just two people ahead of me in the queue. \$50 fee, no questions asked, passport stamped.

The traffic hit us in Kampala, and we took ran-runs round the south of the city centre re-joining the main road at Nelson Mandela Stadium, and arrived at the Bishop's house in Mukono at 11am – a journey of two hours.

Bishop Paul was meeting his senior diocesan clergy. On his right was the Lay Chair of the Diocese. On his left an empty chair. Before him the archdeacons, around sat clergy. The meeting was being held in the open air meeting area. Bishop Paul stopped the meeting and invited me to the chair on his left, embracing me warmly and explaining that although he was still bishop he no longer had use of the house – renovations have to take place before his successor's family can move in. (James is currently on retreat.) The agenda was interrupted. I was formally introduced – it being explained how Chippenham Deanery was giving the new bishop his ring and pectoral cross, and how we hosted him in England the previous month. Bishop Paul held up the new pectoral cross for all to see.



After the meeting I talked with James Batte, and he and Festo finalised arrangements for the me to teach at the Readers' Bible College the next two mornings. A quick visit to the Diocesan Office to say hello to Barbara (the Bishop's secretary), and then Festo took me to where I am to stay.

En route Festo showed me his vicarage. The roof above the living quarters still lets in rain (there was a house-girl sweeping the last out of the kitchen when we arrived). But he has built an extension, with a new roof. It needs plastering, and wiring, but he hopes this stage will be complete in a month. Eventually it will comprise a garage and guest room (with en suite bathroom and toilet) but for now it will be temporary living quarters while the main house is re-roofed.



Vision Africa is a Uganda-wide venture which offers vocational training to orphans and young people, and has a huge centre at Kayunga (beyond Mpoma). One of their ventures is hotel management training and I was to stay in the hotel – a 5 star complex with swimming pool, superbly maintained gardens – and beyond numerous workshops for all sorts of projects I have not been able to see yet. I have a simple but more than adequate en suite room in one of the round 'rondavel'-style guest rooms. Meals (European menu) are taken with the other guests. Click the link: http://www.visionforafrica-intl.org/media/panoramas/pan_av_en.htm - you will get a panorama view of where I was staying!

After a solitary lunch I freshened up and took a matatu (communal taxi) back to Mpoma where I waited in Festo's vicarage for him to return from Mukono. We then walked across

the road to do some pastoral visiting, calling on half a dozen families, praying with them and in one being offered fruit and juice. This family was prosperous – with a large garden where they grew fruit and vegetables. He sold vegetables in Mukono and had a successful business. Others were less prosperous. There was one sad family of five (Aids?) orphans – their last aunt died earlier this year. The 13 year old boy was dropping out of school and Festo promised to speak to the headmaster to arrange his re-admission tomorrow. Neighbours and members of the church support the eldest sister (not present today) who cares for them, and raise money for fees. The house was spotless but sparsely furnished with nothing but a black and white television to offer any relief, but there was no life or sparkle in the boys' eyes – their childhood had been stolen and they face an uncertain future.

Then it was back to 'African Village', a meal shared with some German guests also staying and an early night.

Thursday 16 September

The students at the Bible College were waiting for my arrival and after the briefest (by Ugandan standards) of introductions I launched straight into my talk. I had been asked to give three sessions of 90 minutes over three days but only have today and tomorrow. However I was in front of the class right until 1pm (with a thirty minute break mid-morning) – and the same was to happen tomorrow.

There were about 20 students, of whom 3-4 were women. Reverend Stephen (a member of staff) translated into Luganda for me. We had plenty of time for questions (both as I went along and at the end). My subject this morning (given me by James Batte) was 'The History of the Anglican Church and its Unity. Inevitably and predictably the question of homosexuality came up fairly early on, but Stephen refused to allow them to get bogged down with the question and it never came up again (though was in the background no doubt). Three students in particular asked a lot of searching questions – good, thoughtful questions which showed that they were following my drift, for the questions took the subject further on. Were the questioners the brighter ones, or just those whose English was more fluent (though many of the questioners did ask in Luganda). I noticed the women did not ask many questions.



After lunch at African Village Festo and I (together with his woman Lay Reader) spent three hours or more on pastoral visits in Kayunga Parish. Many of the houses were very poor – a small front room, concrete or composition floor (with the women sitting on sisal mats), shoes often (though not invariably) left at the door. I did not feel able to ask if I could take photographs as that would have been voyeurism. Mostly (but not always) it was the women we saw (men were at work, or perhaps there was no man in a particular household). There

were some cases of illness, some pastoral issues which Festo dealt with (forthcoming marriage, baptism, or problems where the priest's advice was being sought). All the conversations were in Luganda so I was largely excluded from what was being talked about. But invariably the mzungu priest was asked to pray a blessing on the household, which I did.

After visiting a small school which had just been started in one of Festo's churches (I think he has 13 in his parish, each in the charge of a lay reader) we visited a very different type of parishioner. George (as he introduced himself to me) was until three years ago Private Secretary to President Museveni. I would guess from his conversation that he was in his early sixties. He lived in a very well-appointed house, in 16 acres of very well cultivated garden, with a large commercial chicken-rearing shed. But the compound immediately surrounding his house was topped with razor wire (although the back gate through which we let ourselves in) was unlocked.

Though unannounced we were hospitably received, and while George was fetching our sodas I glanced through his bookcase, and we talked about Barack Obama (whose *Audacity of Hope* is on the shelves). Conversation was largely small talk and generalities (he had never met me before and he certainly gave little of interest away) but I could tell he was a person with warm sympathies and he certainly took his religion seriously. Before leaving he took us to meet his 93 year-old mother for whom he cares. She was sitting contentedly in a laundry room, near the kitchens – but is largely blind and deaf. Her age (so George told us) is an estimate – there are no records. Of her eight children only two survive – George (the youngest), and the eldest (who seldom visits). George too had lost children – although not stated, the dark shadow of Aids was present in the room.

Friday 17 September



We were late arriving at the college this morning because the pick-up Festo is driving ('Yesu Afayo' 'Jesus Cares' from Besaniya) didn't start. I was left with the students all morning (till about 1pm) as Stephen was not present and Reverend Daniel (who is in day-to-day charge) was elsewhere until just before lunch when he joined us. Two of the students took turns to translate for me.

This morning my topic was 'Liturgy in the Anglican Communion' but I began much earlier with sessions on OT and NT worship – and drawing out the principles of Christian worship from biblical beginnings. Again the students were very receptive, and the questions kept coming until we broke for lunch after 1pm. I had been asked to give them three 90 minute sessions but over the two days I was speaking to them for 6 hours – quite a marathon.

Today I stayed behind for lunch with the students, which I shared with Daniel and a group of them sitting under a tree in the compound. My first proper African meal of this visit – sweet



potato, maize porridge (ugali in Swahili, posho in Luganda), cassava, green and white cabbage with ground-nut sauce. Not bad.

Again this afternoon more pastoral visiting. Festo left me in the company of Daniel, another of Festo's lay readers (Henry), and two women who were 'zone leaders' – in other words they kept a pastoral eye on the members of their congregation who lived in their particular zone or area of the town/village. No George's here. Families eking out subsistence lives, perhaps by keeping a small shop or store, if that. Houses small and dark, with almost no furniture and a few calendars or old newspapers on the walls for decoration. Quite a lot of sickness – a nursing mother with pains in her breast; a man with a cracked bone in his arm which had been giving him pain for two months (cancer?); a woman who had made a successful recovery from facial surgery with a 'plastic jaw' (the result of an accident? cancer? I wasn't told.) In this last case, her family were engaged in a small-scale workshop manufacturing ladies' slippers – a son (?) together with two other employees (?) – I was never sure because of the language barrier, and it seemed impertinent to always be asking personal questions in that situation. Again, I was always asked to pray for a blessing on the household, and they expressed their appreciation to the mzungu priest who had taken the trouble to visit them. Was I the first or only one ever to have done so?

Saturday 18 September

Tomorrow is the date of the Consecration, and today was the day to prepare. Festo and I were at the Cathedral for 9.30am. The Cathedral Office had been transformed into a food store. The yard at the back was a makeshift butcher's shop – the carcass of one cow being butchered, and another cow tied to a tree (presumably awaiting its fate). Maama Margaret's grave before the Cathedral was still covered with flowers (all rotting inside their plastic wrappings – why do we adulterate so many pretty things with plastic?).



The first task was to shift the Bishop's Cathedra from the Cathedral sanctuary to the temporary stage in the large field in front of the Christian University of Mukono where tomorrow's ceremony is to be held. On entering the Cathedral who should I meet but Joyce, the retired Secretary to the Bishop who had so generously hosted the Chippenham visitors last December.

Festo, Cathedral staff and some small boys (with me lending a hand) manhandled the unruly bishop's throne onto the back of Festo's pick-up truck and we took it to the field. Then to the Mothers' Union offices to load the truck with plastic chairs destined for the bishop's house (they were to be used to seat the visiting bishops for the meal after the rehearsal). Then to the MU offices again to collect the awning and its supports, and while we were there I received a phone message from Chris Dobson to authorise paying the £100 gift aided donation to Bishop James from the well wisher he had met in Swindon last month when he was on the way to Rochdale. So it was to Barclays Bank to ascertain the current rate of exchange and draw the cash from an ATM. Then back to the Cathedral to ferry the dais on which the bishop's throne is to stand, lashing it precariously to the vehicle, and driving with small boys holding on tight!



The call from Chris came at an opportune moment, because I had been given exceptional permission to interrupt Bishop James' retreat to present him with his pectoral cross and the Bristol blue glass plate from the Diocese of Bristol. James retreat was being conducted by Bishop Evans of Luweero Diocese and we had fifteen happy minutes together. Maddeningly the batteries on my camera had just run down so I was only able to take a picture on my mobile phone. It was also agreed that I should present the Bristol blue glass gift at the Consecration tomorrow.

Festo and I went to lunch at the Crane Restaurant on the Jinja Road in Mukono, having first dashed back to his vicarage in Mpoma to pick up a *kanzu*. I had been invited to accompany Festo to a marriage introduction in Seeta that afternoon, and was not properly dressed for the occasion (I was wearing my Mukono Cathedral T shirt). The bride was a friend of Festo's from student days and although most guests had arrived and the marquee in the host's garden was full space was made for us to sit in upholstered chairs right in the front row!

I wasn't able to follow everything that happened by any means. The proceedings were almost entirely in Luganda, and it would have been tiresome for Festo to have translated it all.

Anyway the music was very loud and I doubt whether I would have heard everything. I gathered that the guests seated under the marquee in front of the house were the bride's guests (her father was on the other side of the aisle from us). Opposite was a small marquee for the groom's guests, who arrived shortly after we had all taken our places. Each side had an MC with a microphone, and the repartee between them was fast furious and often very funny. Over the next three hours or so various members of each family was brought forth, to



the accompaniment of music and dancing (and often led, surprisingly given Uganda's reputation, by an extremely camp drag-artist in full female rig – and beard! He was outrageous, suggestive, quite over the top.) Eventually the bride and groom were (separately) presented. He was presented to her father. Then his family retired to come back bearing gifts – and they weren't token gifts either. A three-piece suite, copious baskets of food, 50kg sacks of rice, wheat, salt, huge branches of bananas, even the full leg of a cow!

Half way through Ronald appeared. I'd last seen him at St Dunstan's in December, but he was now assigned to Seeta parish – and he looked well, in white cassock, cincture, and pectoral cross! (I told him I thought I'd seen him on TV in England today, for all he needed was a white skull-cap to look every inch the Pontiff.)

At 530 we had to leave the Introduction to return to the grounds of the Christian University. The Dean of Bishops was half way through the rehearsal for tomorrow's ceremony. I was amused to see the Archbishop's car has the number plate 'His Grace' – Festo told me it was the gift of the government, and that the RC archbishop has one with the legend 'His Eminence'! All diocesan bishops are presented



with an official car by the President, and the number plate is red to tell the police that they are VIPs. Bishops are not supposed to drive themselves, as the Government believes they are too distracted by their responsibilities to concentrate on the roads – and if a bishop drives and has an accident, he will be punished more severely for that reason. (Bishop Paul always enjoyed driving and often drove me – and Festo says was often criticised for driving on official business. He can revert to legality tomorrow!)

There was no attempt to walk through the service. The Dean of Bishops read it through, telling participants what to do and when. Occasionally the Archbishop made a comment, or a change in the proceedings (specifically ordering that to save time the Litany was to be read in English – even though the Cathedral choir has spent a long time rehearsing it in Luganda. It's likely there will be bad feelings about this change tomorrow when the choir finds out.) Archbishop Henry obviously likes to keep a tight grip on proceedings. He told everyone that they must have their mobile phones silenced, and that they were not to be seen sleeping! Festo, this morning (when we interrupted James' retreat) was asked to translate the Bishop of Luweero's sermon.

At the end of the rehearsal we were all invited back to Bishop Paul's former house for a meal in the grounds on the chairs we'd moved this morning. The house is bare – the builders are in doing necessary repairs (which are much needed – I do hope the bathroom gets a makeover before James and Tezirah move in). I sat among the bishops (all facing the same way as ever, like we're in church!) and made small talk over matoke, posho, and the usual fare – perhaps even part of the cow I'd seen being butchered that morning. An early night, because tomorrow will be an early start.

Sunday 19 September

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/732494?highlight&q=Ssebagala>

A bad start for Festo. When he arrived nearly 45 minutes late he told me that he had been wakened by the phone at 1am (somebody with a query about today's ceremony) and had not been able to get back to sleep until 5am. When he did he slept deep, and therefore overslept. Even worse was to follow. 500 yards after leaving he ran out of diesel – he'd not had time to re-fill on his way here. He had to jump a boda-boda with a small jerry can in his hand (and a twist of paper for a stopper). He returned fifteen minutes later, and using a banana leaf for a funnel got us on the road. Breakfast at his home (Victoria had prepared spaghetti – I was terrified of getting it down my white suit) was a hurried affair.

The Cathedral and University were crawling with armed riot police, and as Festo and I made a recce of the platform we first had to pass through security and be (not very efficiently) frisked. I walked (as last December) with the Diocesan clergy – all made me feel very much at home and several said how pleased they were that I had come all this way for today. But I was among the privileged, with a seat just three rows from the Bishop's Cathedra, next to a retired bishop, immediately behind the Monsignor



representing the RC Diocese of Lugazi. Festo sat next to me. It was his job to translate the sermon from Luganda into English, and to run countless errands for bishops, archdeacons, and generally oil the wheels of ceremony and ceremonial. On several occasions Festo had more idea of what needed to happen next than the bishops taking the ceremony.

Well, I've never had a liturgical body search before! The procession lined up, and then stopped. The reason was the police then scanned and frisked every choirboy server and priest, and it took an age. Bishop Paul tried to fast track the archdeacons and area deans (with only moderate success) but he did persuade the police to allow him to personally vouch for the visiting bishops and archdeacons who were let through with just a nod. Once through the procession (now led by the Mothers' Union) moved at a slow and stately speed, so two more bishops were dispatched to the front to hurry us all along, literally shepherding their flock through the large congregations.



What can I say of the service? It was to be nearly six hours before we left the field. The Archbishop nominally presided (and never lost control, occasionally shouting commands for this choir to be allowed to sing or not as time allowed). The service was divvied up among the many bishops – rather like a school assembly when all the senior children are given a turn at the microphone each. No lay people did anything liturgical (not even a lesson to read), nor on the whole any of the local clergy. It was the non-liturgical elements – the taking

of oaths, the running commentary from the Bishop of Mityana (who was effectively MC), and the real sense that there was a transfer of authority going on that seemed to engage the congregation the most.



But I was very touched. I was one of the people mentioned by name in the new Bishop's charge (copies of which were distributed to the people in Luganda and English, and which took three quarters of an hour to deliver). And (apart from the speeches by politicians at the end – of which more later – I was the only visitor who was invited to greet the new Bishop and present him with the Bristol Blue glass commemorative plate from the Diocese of Bristol - which I did at the offertory and not in the space given over to notices and announcements.

I had hoped to get a photo of Bishop James in his new robes but cameras were banned (because of the presence of the President) and anyway my camera wasn't suffering from a flat battery – it really seems to have died. So the best I could do was surreptitiously capture a few bad views on my mobile phone.

The service was over. But the President and his entourage had still not arrived. (By now it was past 2pm, and the service had started pretty well on time at 10.) So the Archbishop called for various choirs to come and sing and fill the time – one performance of *Lord, for thy tender mercies' sake* was particularly well sung by the combined choirs of the Baptist School (where James had been chaplain) and St Luke's School. Then the President arrived. We stood to sing the National and Buganda Anthems. There were speeches (the introductions of those present taking as much time if not more than the speeches themselves), and the much anticipated presentation of a new car to the new bishop. And then it was over. The President's convoy (with soldiers, an ambulance and goodness knows what else



in the motorcade) departed, and without procession or a final hymn (the Blessing had been pronounced long before the President's arrival) everyone just got down from the platform and walked away – as if we were leaving a football match where the home team had won. And the atmosphere, joyous, happy, with the Boys Brigade Band playing their loudest best, was much the same.

Festo said that he had heard there were about 7,000 people on the field, and I don't suppose he is far wrong. The Diocese then provided a hot (and very Ugandan) meal to all the clergy, choirs, and people who had been helping – I wouldn't be surprised if it wasn't nearly a

thousand people because there were several kitchens and feeding stations over the campus. I couldn't imagine such hospitality in England! For me there were more meetings and reunions with friends: James and Robinah Kato, Joshua, Ronald (again), Edward Balamaaze, Barbara from the diocesan office (whom I hope to see again tomorrow) and many more. The Deanery link, and the visits in both ways over the last six years, have created a real bond at all levels.

Another disappointment for Festo. When we got back to the car we found it had been entered. (The locks are easily passed by skeleton keys and the security police said that it was possible someone had gone in making themselves look as if they were the owner.) What was missing was a bag with legal documents relating to some of Bishop Paul's land titles. So after he had dropped me off he had to go to the Police Station to report it, and his day-off tomorrow will be spent at the Land Registry entering a caveat on the deeds. This is Africa.



Monday 20 September

The Venerable Samuel Kawuma, Archdeacon of Nakabizzi, arrived at African Village at 8.30am. (Samuel had been my guest in Chippenham three or four years ago, and had asked for the opportunity to show hospitality in return.)

We first called on Barbara in the Diocesan Offices (as I'd promised), and she allowed me to go on-line and check-in with British Airways for tomorrow's flight – something for which I would be very grateful the next morning. Then to Bishop Paul's retirement home on the Jinja Road on the east of Mukono to deliver letters and gifts to his daughter Victoria (who is to be married on 22 January 2011). A final conversation with Paul, in which he expressed his satisfaction that the Mukono-Chippenham link would be safe in the hands of his successor, and that he had been determined from the moment of James' election on 2 June that this would be so. (He had telephoned me on 3 June to ask me to invite him and Tezirah to England.)



Thence to Nakabizzi, through the beautiful Mabira Forest (for now reprieved from the greed of the sugar cane producers, but for how long?) Samuel wanted to show me some of his archdeaconry. We started with his school (which I had visited last December, when it

was closed for the holidays). I was introduced to each of his nursery classes, and then the whole Primary School were summoned in their bright red uniforms for an informal assembly on the field in front of the school, where I was asked to give them a 'word' and pray with them.

Next we drove towards Jinja, and to a diocesan health clinic (run rather on the lines of the Mukono Health Clinic). The director was away, but I was shown round the clean facilities – male and female wards (only one child in-patient), the maternity suite (empty), the dispensary (where the pharmacist proudly displayed her meagre store of drugs), the laboratory (where the technician asked to look at bacteria under the microscope and a recently removed tape worm in a glass bottle), and the treasurer who collected the fees.

Then to the St Moses Centre, part of African Evangelistic Enterprises founded by Bishop Festo Kivengere, and largely supported by German and Swiss donors. They house 70-90 orphans, some bereaved because of Aids, some from families too poor to look after them (these go home in the holidays). They live in segregated houses, each with a resident house-mother, and all attend local schools (which explained why the compound was so quiet). We were shown the houses, the kitchens, the farm and a weaving/sewing workshop.

Samuel needed to change the oil in his smart Toyota so we drove into the centre of Jinja, crossing the Nile, down to the shores of Lake Victoria to the garage he uses, and then back to Nakabizzi where Deborah (his wife) gave us a traditional hot lunch of Matoke and all the trimmings. Samuel had arranged for us to meet a Lay Reader and members of one the congregations in his parish for devotions at 3pm – but none had arrived and we had to be back at Bishop James' in Mukono by 5pm, so after waiting fruitlessly we had to leave (no doubt disappointing those who arrived late to find us gone). En route we diverted to Samuel's retirement home (under construction) where he asked me to plant a new mango tree to mark my visit. (Samuel is not due to retire for another ten years, but preparing a place for retirement is his on the agenda of many clergy, especially those with the means to do so.)

The new Bishop's See House is still being renovated so we went to James and Tezirah's home on the hill to the west of Mukono (beyond the Christian University). When in Bristol James had talked with the Cathedral Precentor about reviving traditional Anglican music in his diocese, and he had made it a high priority in the charge he read out yesterday. I had undertaken that Chippenham Deanery would pay for his diocese to affiliate to the RSCM, and the RSCM staff had kindly sent me out with a modest selection of anthems and other music from 16th century to the present day.

James' idea is to create a choir drawn from pupils at the primary and secondary schools near his Cathedral to sing some of this music, in time affiliate to the RSCM, and in time encourage the revival of choral singing across his diocese. To this end he had invite about a dozen people from the Cathedral, the schools, and one or two musicians (one who sings at Namirembe Cathedral and is a qualified music teacher) to his house to talk his proposal through.

In sharing his vision with them I was impressed at the way he showed concern for working within existing diocesan structures and committees. He not only has the heart and vision of a

pastor but the eye of an administrator and the instincts of a politician. I had imagined that I would just be handing over the RSCM books and encouraging a teacher at one of the schools to try and form a choir and see how they got on – but this was something far more ambitious, with a clear strategy beginning to shape up. The ad hoc meeting was minuted. Tasks were assigned to a number of people. A deadline for reporting back was agreed (Friday, next week). I was told I would be kept informed of developments, and I promised that Chippenham Deanery would do all we could to support the plans that were forming. I hope that they don't try to be too ambitious at the beginning and fall over trying to run.

Then it was all over. The visit was complete. We had a final meal in the semi-darkness of the Bishop's garden, served by Tezirah for all fourteen or more of us there that evening. James lent Festo the See Car (not the new one given by the President yesterday, but Bishop Paul's official vehicle which James is currently using) because the pick-up must have its locks repaired after yesterday's break-in before it can be parked safely again. We said our farewells, called at a shop to buy a newspaper with the story of yesterday's Consecration (and a picture of James in his new cope!), and it was back to Vision Africa.

Postscript: Tuesday 21 September

I am writing this as we fly over the Saharan desert 32,000 feet below. I almost didn't make it. Festo had assured me that we would have plenty of time if we left for the airport at 6am, which we did. He had confidently expected the traffic to be lighter on a Tuesday than a Monday, but was wrong. Kampala was, as ever, a nightmare. Festo again used his rat runs round the south, and judging by the stationary traffic we encountered coming into the centre having negotiate the jams he was probably right, though at the time I had my anxious doubts. We arrived at the airport at 8am, an hour later than I had planned, with just fifteen minutes for the very last bag-drop. The police had set up a security check-point on the dual carriageway 2km from the airport. There were just two lanes. Every passenger had to get out and be frisked. Police inspected the inside and underneath of every vehicle. I eventually got to the airport at 8.45pm – just twenty minutes before scheduled take-off at 9.05.

Not being the only delayed passenger my bag was accepted. (This is when I gave thanks for having checked in yesterday.) Festo had said a hurried goodbye at the drop-off point and I had asked him to wait in case I had missed my flight, so it was with great relief that I phoned him from the emigration queue to say that I was on time after all!

The reason for the police check was soon apparent. At 9.15 I was in my seat. A black car with two flags, and no number plate (apart from the arms of Uganda) drew up, and if I saw aright, the President of Uganda climbed the steps into the first class section of the plane. We took off only twenty minutes behind schedule. I hope my bag is in the hold below! (It was.)

SCTB

21 September 2010

See Simon's photos on <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/SimonTattonBrown/Mukono2010#>