

**Genesis 1:1-3**

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.

**Colossians 1:24-29**

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.

**Matthew 28:16-20**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

**"Members of a Global Parish"****Rev. Dr. Peter Mukuccia****June 8, 2008**

I bring you greetings from Africa, from Kenya: Praise the Lord! Bwana Asifiwe! That makes me feel at home when I greet you in Swahili, then you tell me Bwana Asifiwe Hallelujah! Bwana Asifiwe! Hallelujah! Asante Sana! Asante is "Thank you very much." So it's my great joy and I'm real excited to be here in the name of Jesus and in the name of the church, and in the name of friendship, to share myself and to share my faith, and to share who I am. I was telling myself that even if I stood here and sat down, I've said enough. Bwana Asifiwe! You have forgotten. Bwana Asifiwe means "Praise the Lord!" Then you told me, Bwana Asifiwe Hallelujah! Thank you for being good students.

Although I was told that my English is not real English, it's African English, and I was told Americans don't speak English, they speak American. I come from the tradition of the British Empire. Kenya was a British colony, and we were taught English English, and we speak African English, so my English is tempered with \_\_\_\_\_ which is my mother tongue language, and with Swahili, which is our national language, so we are taught English from very early stages. But what is important, and what makes me happy today is to know we are members of the global parish. Bwana Asifiwe! So I feel at home, because I'm in the parish. I feel at home because I'm a Methodist, among other Methodists, and when you come to Kenya, we receive you in the village, and in fact I wanted my sharing

to be members of the global village. You don't believe we are in a global village? Are they understanding my English? I think I should have sought out an interpreter.

So, God created the world. God created the world, so this world belongs to God. And then he put human beings there. God did not create tribes, God did not create races, he created the world. That is what my Bible tells me. If I'm wrong, it is the mistake of the Bible, not me. Because he created the world, and that is what I was taught. And then he loved the world, and gave his only son because he loved the world. You give a gift to what you love. You don't give gifts to enemies. You give gifts to your loved ones. May it be Christmas, may it be an Easter gift, may it be a birthday gift, you give to those whom you love. And God loved us so much, and he gave the gift of Jesus. That is what has transformed me \_\_\_\_\_ That is what has transformed Africa.

Now, I come from a village, and our parishes in Kenya, we call them circuits, although my history teachers tell me that even here you are the circuit riders, in America there were circuit riders. Because I talk my history professor is here, who taught me at Iliff School of Theology. And in the village, people take care of the common things that make them survive and live together in peace and harmony. They take care of the water, because the water serves the whole village, people and animals. They take care of the security of the village, because they must stand together or perish together. They take care of the food in the village, because they know if one member is sleeping angry, he won't let the others be in peace. So they take care of the health of the village.

So when we say we are members of the global village, global parish, Jesus recruited the people and sent them to the village, to the parish called world. And our founder of the Methodist Church, John Wesley, declared that "The world is my parish." So he was so broad-minded, he acted locally and he thought globally. And I think that is what we are called to. And Jesus said, "Go into the world", not "Go to your village," not "Go to your home, to your family," but "Go to the world." He did not send them to their races, or to their tribes, he sent them to the world. To the village world. To do what? Because you must have a mission. He said one thing, "I will be with you, to give you power. I'll be the engine behind your movement. But go, and spread the gospel, the gospel of love, the gospel of reconciliation, the gospel of peace, the gospel of health, the gospel of wholeness, the gospel of knowledge, because my people perish for lack of knowledge, the gospel of understanding, the gospel of unity. And when we forget is when we have problems. Never should we think of other people as "Them" and "We," or as enemies and friends. No. God loves. God has no vocabulary for hatred. It is all love, in the Bible. He loved the world.

In Kenya, we almost went to war last year, last December, because of politics, and many people died, and churches were burned. That is a taboo. You can't burn a house of God. In Africa, that is a taboo, is a curse. But actually people burned churches, and they burned priests, like me, because they thought he was from "them" and not from us. So we are thinking, we are now thinking about the presentation of our Gospel. Do we have a vocabulary in the church, we don't have a vocabulary. I think if we have one we should give it, a vocabulary of them and us. Let me ask you, Church, who is your enemy? Do

you know who your enemy is? Who is your enemy? Jesus asked the man, “Who is your neighbor?” That is a simple question, because you know who your neighbors are, but who is your enemy? Terrorism came to Kenya, and they bombed embassies and hotels, and our people died. Whom are they killing? Who is your enemy? So brothers and sisters, I come here as an ambassador of God’s love. We should not let others suffer if we can share.

A village, again, in our context, we see it as a boat in the sea. You know, if you’re in a boat, and you find a crazy person, a person who is confused, trying to put a hole, trying to destroy the boat so that water can come in, you cannot let them do that, can you? If this is a boat and I’ve got a drill and I start drilling holes in the middle of the ocean, surely I would be the first person to arrest that person, because I know once the boat starts sinking I’m to be saved. But some of us may say, “Mind your own business. Mind your own business.” But when the boat goes down, there will be no “your business” or “my business.” It will be you going into the water. So the village won’t let a terrorist bore a hole and destroy water, destroy trees, destroy its well, destroy air, because we are in a small world parish, to spread God’s peace, God’s love, God’s wholeness, God’s unity, and understanding, the Gospel of reconciliation. And I’m here because I think I’m a testimony that the fact that you accept me and the village, am I not, I’m the parish, I’m your pastor today, I’m with the parish. When you come to Africa, you’re in the parish. Praise the Lord! Bwana Asifiwe! You are a partner in the parish. That’s what we do in Africa, tell the person next to you you’re in the parish. Am I communicating?

We have a lot of movement, you know in churches, I’m sorry. I feel a constraint. Because when you are in the village, you are happy, you are with the neighbors, you are with the familiar faces. You are free to love, to jump, to smile, to dance, to celebrate life in the village. So I think when we are in the presence of God, we celebrate our salvation. Because some people complain, they say we sing a lot, we make noise a lot. Yes, because when you are at home you make noise in your house. It is only home where you can put your feet on the table. And when we’re in the church, our church, the home of God, we can do anything. You remove your coat, you remove your socks, you feel free at home because you are at home. That is how we see it, in Africa. And I come here to share that joy and that love and that friendship, and may God bless us.

One time, it was raining and a squirrel went to hide in the hole, and unfortunately the hole was very small, and the tail was left outside. So it rained, and the tail was very wet, and it started of course shivering it told the tail “Don’t disturb me.” But the fact is that the tail belonged to the squirrel. So sometimes we hide our face thinking \_\_\_\_\_ when the world is suffering, but we are in the same parish \_\_\_\_\_ to thinking globally and acting locally. In the name of Jesus, let us pray. I will pray in Swahili. \_\_\_\_\_ In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.