

“All of the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God”

## Mission in Uganda and Kenya

### For the Consolidation of the Orthodox Witness in Africa

**W**ith the blessing and guidance of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methoni accomplished, with God’s help, yet another missionary journey to the African continent, in order to visit the Old Calendar Orthodox communities in Uganda and Kenya which are under the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod in Resistance and the direct spiritual responsibility of its President, Metropolitan Cyprian. Our brother in Christ, Anastasios Vasilopoulos, a spiritual child of our Church, once again took part in this difficult missionary venture.

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### I. Uganda

**On the afternoon** of Thursday, 21 January 2005 (Old Style), the mission team departed by air for Entebbe, Uganda, the first stop on the itinerary, which they finally reached on Friday morning, after a tiring journey via Amsterdam and Nairobi.



- Bishop Ambrose headed directly for the country’s capital, Kampala, and, together with the local clergy who were awaiting

him—Protopresbyter Joachim Kiyimba, the Priests, Fathers George Lutaya and Cyprian Kahigwa, as well as Deacon Father Joachim Walusimbi—visited the Mission’s headquarters in the spacious Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna.

On the Church grounds, there is also a building with an office, teaching hall, living quarters for orphaned children, living quarters for young student nurses, and a kitchen. Plans have been made for extensions to the buildings, because they are insufficient. Sister Euphrosyne, who for a good number of years lived at the Convent of the Holy Angels in Aphidnai, Attika, where she received the monastic Tonsure, is also being given temporary accommodation here.

• **On Sunday**, 24 January 2005, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anna in Kampala. Bishop Ambrose served with the local clergy, with many of the Faithful in attendance. Also present was Father Christopher Walusimbi, a Ugandan Priest who belongs to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and who has been active for a fifteen-year period in the Uganda region.

After the Divine Liturgy, a lunch was set out in the Church’s courtyard and a program of local traditional hymns, songs, and dances by the parish’s children and young people was presented.

On this occasion, there was also a simple ceremony for the awarding of diplomas, recognized by the State, to the Parish’s nursing students by the Rector, Father Joachim, who is also a physician.



• **On Monday**, 25 January 2005, on the Feast of St. Gregory the Theologian, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated in Nakabaale, in the makeshift temporary Church (a hut) of the Dormition of the *Theotokos*, on the building site where a proper

Church will be constructed in the future. The same clergymen and quite a number of the Faithful took part.

Visits were then made to the parish's clinic and to the orphanage, which houses eighteen small children. The country's government granted the parish a corn mill, so that now there is hope for it to acquire a small, yet steady, income to cover the cost of its activities.

• **On the next day**, Bishop Ambrose headed to the region of Koumi in Eastern Uganda in order to visit our other Priest in that country, Father Charalambos Ocen. Owing, however, to a problem in communication, they were not able to make the necessary advance arrangements. Thus, after a laborious five-hour journey, His Grace learned, when he reached the region where Father Charalambos resides, that the latter had already departed for Kampala, in order to meet with the Bishop from Greece!

On the next day, in Kampala, Father Charalambos informed His Grace that his modest missionary activity was developing smoothly. With the help of our Metropolis, he has bought a plot of land on which to build a permanent Church, while, for the present, he officiates in a temporary Chapel in his house.

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## II. Kenya

**On the same day**, Wednesday, 27 January 2005, the mission team departed by air for Kenya and arrived in the capital city of Nairobi, where they were awaited by Protopresbyter James Waruinge and Hieromonk Elias (Palmos) from South Africa, who, having received a blessing to do so, was also visiting the Mission in Kenya at that





time, for the purpose of mutual friendship and mutual edification.

• **On the afternoon** of Thursday, 28 January 2005, at the Convent of the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer in the Embu region of Mount Kenya,



Bishop Ambrose tonsured two of the convent's Novices Rasophore-Nuns.

The eight-member Sisterhood of the Convent under the venerable Mother Christonymphe offers a vibrant Orthodox witness in the region and is an ornament of our Mission in Kenya.

• **On the next day**, visits were made to distant parishes in the Meru area: to those of the Holy Apostle Luke, in Buri, and of St. James, in Michimikuru, where the Bishop was given a warm reception by the parishioners. The fatigue of the drive and the discomfort from the constant shocks of the car along primitive roads were compensated for many times over by the love of the Faithful and the indescribable natural beauty of the area.

• **On Saturday** morning, 30 January 2005, on the Feast of the Holy Three Hierarchs, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Convent of St. George. Bishop Ambrose served with the Mission's Kenyan clergy and Father Elias and Ordained Deacon Father Symeon Kariyuki to the Priesthood for the Makengi parish; as well, he Ordained Daniel Kanuamou-Kirera (who has six children) to the Diaconate for the parish in Buri.



After the Divine Liturgy, Mother Christonymphe showed those present the plans for building extensions to the Convent, which are essential, since new cells are urgently required. The construction materials have already been gathered. There followed a conversation concerning the progress of the Convent in general.

A visit was then made to an area where there are plans to found a men's monastery in the future, in a lovely landscape with a view of the peak of Mount Kenya.

Visits were also made to other of the region's missionary parishes, such as that of the Archangel Michael in Kathangiriri, Holy Wisdom in Embu—which Church needs a roof to complete its construction—, as well as St. James in Makengi, where interior work (plastering and installation of a floor) remains to be done.

• **On Sunday**, 31 January 2005, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the large stone Church of the Holy Apostle Paul in Kaanja. Bishop Ambrose Ordained another Deacon, Father



Zachariah Mbaniki, who also has many children (five), so that he can serve the parish of which he is an active member of long standing. The newly-Ordained Deacon is one of the co-workers of the enterprising parish Priest, Protopresbyter John Njue Njagi.

Afterwards, an *agape* meal was served with the care and attention of the Sisterhood of the Convent of St. George, followed by a meeting of the clergy, during which Church matters of concern were discussed.

• **On Monday**, 1 February 2005, during the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Convent of St. George, Bishop Ambrose Ordained Stephen Mukindu, who is married (with three children), a Deacon and tonsured two other of the convent's Novices Rasophore-Nuns.



• **On Tuesday**, 2 February 2005, on the Feast Day of the Meeting of the Lord, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Church of the Holy Protection of the *Theotokos* in Karuri, in the capital city of Nairobi, where Father James Waruinge is the parish Priest. Here, too, the Ordination of a Deacon was performed—that of the Michael Kinoti-Mugambi, who is married (with three children), son of our very elderly Priest, Father John (eighty-four years old), so that he will be able to aid his father in his parish duties in the distant Church of St. Nicholas in Timan

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### **III. Return**

**After the final** meetings, discussions, and gatherings with the region's clergy and Faithful, His Grace, Bishop Ambrose and his traveling companion, Anastasios, departed by air for Greece, which they reached, by way of Amsterdam, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 3 February 2005 (Old Style).

For all the wondrous results and the Divine gifts of this assuredly difficult, but truly very edifying and significant missionary journey, glory and honor and thanksgiving are due to the Divine Builder of the Church, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, the Savior of all of mankind. Amen!

