



World Church Relationships News Bulletin

February 2012

1 John 1: 5-7 "...God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."
(NRSV)

Partner Churches and Organisations

Myanmar

With the help of a grant from the Methodist Church in Britain, the Tahan Institute of Theology in Upper Myanmar has been able to purchase some land for a rice farm.

The institute's Board of Governors successfully purchased the 9 acre farm on 9 November 2011. MCB contributed £15,000 towards the cost. The institute will now be able to generate an income by selling the rice grown on the farm.

"We thank you very much and we thank God for such blessings," said the Revd Dr James Ngun Hlei, Principal and Board Secretary of the Tahan Institute of Theology. "We should be cultivating the first crop from the farm sometime in 2012."

Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia & the Pacific, said: "We are always delighted when we can help partners who are doing valuable mission work in economically poor areas. When our support enables income to be generated locally, it is very satisfying. Myanmar continues to be a priority partner for MCB, not least in this time of fragile political development."

Nigeria

A grant of £10,000 from the World Mission Fund has been sent in solidarity to the Methodist Church Nigeria for the reconstruction of buildings destroyed in northern Nigeria. The money will be used to rebuild a manse, church, clinic and school belonging to the Kaduna archdiocese.

Bunmi Olayisade, Partnerships Coordinator for Africa, visited Nigeria last year. "During my visit, the socio-political situation in northern Nigeria was tense," she said. "There was a curfew in Jos following outbursts of violence. Earlier in the year – after the election announcement – disturbances erupted in northern Nigeria. A few months later, a bomb exploded at the UN office in Abuja, followed by a string of attacks on Churches in Northern Nigeria. On Christmas Day, there were five bomb attacks in northern Nigeria."

For more information please
contact Bunmi Olayisade,
Partnership Coordinator for
Africa, at
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The 'Boko Haram' Islamic group claimed responsibility, demanding the abolition of Western education and the implementation of Sharia law in northern Nigeria – a ridiculous request in a nation with 50% - 50% Christian/Muslim population ratio. Recently there has been a nationwide strike in protest of removal of the oil subsidy. This has been a welcome distraction from the religious attacks as the people unite speaking to their political leaders.

"We pray for peace and tolerance in Nigeria. May God grant the political leaders wisdom to make good and prompt decisions that will alleviate poverty and prevent further destruction of lives, livelihoods, communities and infrastructure. May the religious leaders promote tolerance and unity in the country."

The Methodist Church in Nigeria hopes to encourage those who lost properties, businesses, homes and lives in the recent violence. The reconstructed church is to serve as a community centre; a place of refuge, prayer and healing.



Latin America & the Caribbean

Tom Quenet continues his account of what he experienced during his visit to churches and mission partners across Central America last November and December:

After Belize and Honduras (*see last month's World Church bulletin*) Tom's next stop was El Salvador. "The church there is an interesting one," he says. "It has about 1200 members – 12 congregations with about 100 people in each one – and they are mostly based around Ahuachapan, which is about 2 ½ hours from San Salvador, the capital. The leader, Juan de Dios Peña, is a young man just turned 30. He's head of the church, and he's gathered a church that is largely young around him. The leadership of the church is very young, but the energy with which this young church is engaging in partnership with others is tremendous.

"Juan with his energy has provided, in El Salvador, a base where people from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and hopefully Belize and Honduras can come and receive training from a partner church in the US – the Theological Department and the Biblical department of Duke University in North Carolina. They expected about 40 people, but about 60 turned up! It was amazing how these 60-odd people sat and listened to lectures which were delivered in English and had to be translated into Spanish. The people were listening so attentively and so keenly and enthusiastically to what was being delivered to them. I found it a very moving experience to watch people listen so attentively."

After a night's stopover in Jamaica, Tom then went on to Cuba. This leg of his trip was a joint visit with the Church of Scotland, for which Tom acted as guide and translator for his Church of Scotland colleague.

For more information please contact Thomas Quenet, Partnership Coordinator for the Americas and the Caribbean, at quenett@methodistchurch.org.uk

"The good thing was that it gave us an opportunity not just to visit the enthusiastic and growing Methodist Church in Cuba, but also how it enabled us to see the Presbyterian side, which in the past it had been difficult for me to see in the Church," Tom says. "I was able to share and I was able to see the situation of the Church from both sides with a better understanding than I had before, and really appreciate that."

Mission Partner News

Kenya

In 2011, the Horn of Africa experienced its worst drought for 60 years. The drought has had a terrible knock-on effect in Kenya, where mission partners Helen Moorehead, Barbara Dickinson and Claire Smithson are based. Somali refugees poured across the Kenyan border in huge numbers, leading to overcrowding at Dadaab – the world’s largest refugee camp. Two Spanish doctors working at the camp were kidnapped.

“Inflation in Kenya has soared over the year due to the drought, war expenses, and global economic instability,” say Claire and Barbara. “Peasant farmers and pastoralists, who make up most of the population, have been worst affected as drought ruined many crops and took the lives of huge numbers of cattle. This forced these normally self-sufficient people to now buy the food they normally provide for themselves, but they lacked money to do so as they had nothing to sell, leading many to near or actual starvation.”



“At the end of October the landscape in Tharaka was dry and barren,” says Helen. “The cows were dying due to lack of fodder. However, at the beginning of November the rain came! Everyone gave thanks to God and started planting their crops.”

“Relief food is still coming into Tharaka but we are all looking forward to a good harvest in February. We would like to say a very sincere thank you to everyone who helped us during the long period of drought. We truly appreciate your support.”

Grenada

In his latest update, mission partner Andy Dye shares a recent musical experience of his...

The band that I am part of at Bethel Church were heavily involved when the Rev. Dwane Samm, superintendent of the Tobago Circuit, came to preach at each Methodist Church in Grenada, night by night, over a week.

For the church on the sister island of Carriacou it was impossible to take all our instruments over for the services there. So in a new experience for the band, we were able to get some technical help and record the songs and hymns required as mp3 recordings. It took a bit of 'messing around' with wires and levels and microphone placements on drums, but eventually we managed to make some recordings that sounded OK (ish!).



It was great to get feedback later on about how the songs had been used and how it added a different dimension to the worship in Carriacou, which is usually done without any accompaniment. In my opinion nothing beats a live

band or organist but if technology can help us enhance worship and connect us together then that has got to be good!

Why not invite a Mission Partner to speak at your church?

Click [here](#) for a list of Mission Partners who are expected home on leave in 2012. If you would like to invite anyone on this list to speak at your church, please contact Jan Deakin at deakinj@methodistchurch.org.uk and at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5 JR, Tel: 020 7467 5109.

Mission partners often have PowerPoint presentations, music and stories to share that lend themselves to a wide range of events such as coffee mornings, international evenings or after Sunday lunch meetings as well as informal small groups and midweek meetings. Lay mission partners are happy to be interviewed during a service if they cannot preach.

COULD GOD BE CALLING YOU TO BECOME A MISSION PARTNER?

Please click [here](#) for more information on how you could become one.

Scholarship and Leadership Training Grants

Benin

Revd Valentin Dedji, a Beninese Methodist Minister based in Tottenham, recently went back to his home country of Benin to teach a group of students from *the l'Université Protestante de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (the Protestant University of West Africa) on Missiology and Methodism, the title of this course being 'Mission Concepts: History and Conceptualisation'. 28 students from the Faculty of Theology of Religious Sciences benefited from this short group study, as well as a few lecturers from the faculty.

The Protestant Methodist Church in Benin hopes to now send these students onto the mission field with a view to supporting lay preachers, young people's groups and the men and women committed to spreading the Gospel in Benin.



The Scholarship and Leadership Training programme (SALT) is funded by the World Mission Fund. Students from Partner Churches are given Scholarships to study in a different cultural setting, in order to gain skills that they will use for the benefit of their home church once they have completed their studies and returned home. For more information on this programme please click [here](#)

You are invited to the third European Methodist Festival!



What is the European Methodist Council ([EMC](#))?

The EMC gathers Methodist Church leaders from across Europe to consult with one another, share experiences and wisdom and coordinate together on the issues, challenges and joys of the church. The EMC also supports the work of the [Fund for Mission in Europe](#).

What is the European Methodist Festival?

It is a chance to listen and learn from one another, talk and debate with one another, sing and play, celebrate Jesus, confess and affirm our faith. The Festival will take place through workshops, small groups, prayer groups, morning worship, in night cafés, Gospel workshops and relaxed coffee groups. There will also be sports and games as well as city tours and excursions in the area (for example to Auschwitz Memorial).

Who is it for?

Everyone! Young and old, children and youth, singles and families.

When and where?

Wednesday 8 August to Sunday 12 August 2012 in Krakow, Poland

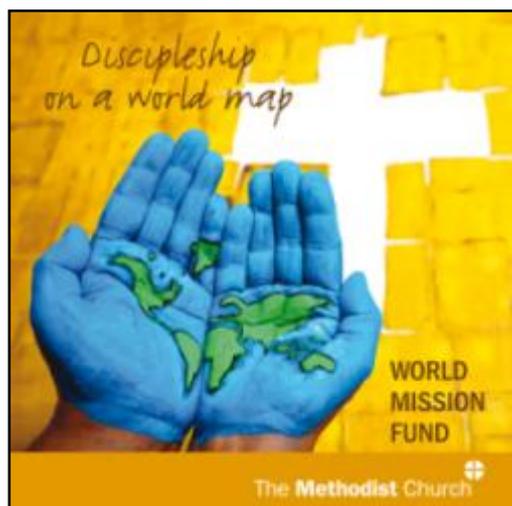
Where can I get more information from?

[Download the Methodist Festival Flyer](#)

For all information and to register go to the website: <http://www.methodistfestival.eu/>

Speak to [Roy Crowder](#), Partnership Coordinator for Europe and a Festival organizer:

RESOURCES



Discipleship on a World Map

The new World Mission Fund DVD has now arrived! For your free copy, please email wcr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk, giving your full name and address and the number of copies you would like to receive, and the World Church Relationships Team will gladly put them in the post for you.

Women's World Day of Prayer, 2 March 2012

In preparation for this year's Women's World Day of Prayer focusing on Malaysia, our long-serving Mission Partners there, David and Rhona Burfield, have produced a DVD packed with material. The DVD introduces us to Malaysia, the various justice issues and some focus for prayer. This DVD was produced with the support of a World Mission Fund grant. For copies please contact wcr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk or



call the World Church Relationships Office on 0207 467 3795.



World Church Blog

In February, the Partnership Coordinators and others will be travelling to New Zealand, Central America and India. Don't forget to regularly check the [world church blog](#) for updates on these visits, and more.

How you can donate to the World Mission Fund



The Methodist Church **World Mission Fund** exists to support the work of the British Methodist Church with its partner churches and organisations overseas, through the sharing of both resources and personnel. You can donate online [here](#) or send a cheque to: **The Methodist Church World Mission Fund, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR**. Please make cheques payable to 'Methodist Church World Mission Fund'. Click here for more information on the [work that the World Mission Fund supports](#) through the Methodist Church's partner churches and ecumenical organisations

Prayer Points

- ⊗ Please pray for the peaceful and lasting end to the situation in Nigeria.
- ⊗ Praise God for the rice farm the Tahan Institute of Theology have been able to purchase. Pray for a good harvest, so that the Institute is able to support itself from the rice grown there.
- ⊗ Pray for everyone involved in organising the European Methodist Festival this year.
- ⊗ Pray for our Partner Churches and mission partners across Central America and the Caribbean
- ⊗ Pray for Revd Valentin Dedji, the Protestant Church in Benin and the students taught by Rev Dedji.