



World Church Relationships News Bulletin

January 2012

Revelation 21:5 **“And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new...’ (NRSV)**

Partner Churches and Organisations

Fiji

In December, Methodists in Fiji were hopeful that the relationship between the Church and the Fijian Government would improve in the New Year.

The Fijian Prime Minister Commodore Voereqe Bainimarama had been reported as saying that he would be willing to talk to the Methodist Church in Fiji after relations between the Church and state deteriorated over the summer.

The Assistant General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Fiji, the Revd Tevita Nawadra, welcomed the positive turn in events. He said, *“We are indeed very glad. We have been seeking a time to talk and share our difficulties together because the Church believes that the only way forward is for us to talk. If this comes around before the year ends, it will be the best Christmas present for us in the Methodist Church.”*

In light of recent development, we therefore welcome the news (contained in the Commodore Bainimarama’s New Year message to the people of Fiji) that the Public Emergency Regulations are to be lifted as from the 7 January beginning a process of consultation on a new constitution with a view to arranging elections and a restoration of democracy in 2014.

We look forward to hearing from the Methodist Church in Fiji that the promised discussions between the Church and the Government have in fact materialized and hope that the Church will soon be allowed to return to its normal pattern of working.

The Revd Tevita Nawadra also passed his thanks through the Connexional Team for “all the solidarity letters that have come our way from all parts of the world and the promised prayers Christians around the world have been forwarding the Methodist Church in Fiji.”

For more information please contact Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, at wcr.asiapacific@methodistchurch.org.uk



Central America

During November and December, Tom Quenet visited a number of churches and mission partners across Central America.

The first stop on Tom’s tour was Belize, where he met with mission partner Maggie Patchett. *“Maggie has thoroughly got herself involved with the Church, and working alongside the Church,”* Tom says. *“And the Church has built a great deal of confidence in her, and vice versa.”*

“It was very touching and very inspirational to see how people who hadn’t known each other before Maggie was a mission partner have developed a great deal of trust for each other and built a thorough and strong relationship in the course of her work. I think Maggie has been exceptionally good at doing that, and speaks very highly of what a mission partner is about. It’s about establishing a relationship based on trust and respect and achieving God’s will in taking forward the mission of the Church, and sharing. Through Maggie, we’ve been able to serve and advance God’s mission in Belize.”

Tom’s next stop was Honduras, where he met Juan Guerrero – sent to Honduras as a missionary by the Church in Colombia.

“My experience with Juan taught me how important it is to get alongside other people,” says Tom. “He and I visited some churches – some rural churches I’d visited before and some new ones. On one occasion, Juan took me to a building plot on a hillside. It was quite high, and a chilly day in Central America; the wind was blowing and I was shivering! So I was reluctant at first to stand on a blank building plot in the cold and listen to somebody tell you what they were hoping to do with it.

“Juan launched into this conversation with me, in which he described what he hoped would be there: the church, its headquarters, and a base for the churches to operate from in Honduras. At first I couldn’t get into it. But it soon struck me that he wasn’t just describing something; he was actually standing in the building that he hoped would be there! He was actually moving through it as he was describing it! He was living a vision. That showed me how important it was sometimes – even in that difficult situation where it was uncomfortable and you’re not grasping everything that’s being said – to listen when someone’s sharing their vision with you. When someone is sharing their vision, it’s very different to when they’re merely describing what they hope will take place somewhere. And Juan is full of vision!”



Local Honduran children

Tom also visited El Salvador and Cuba during his time away. We will share some of his reflections on those visits in next month’s bulletin.

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

Fresh Expressions in Europe

The Revd Gareth Hill, Head of the Mission & Advocacy Cluster for the Methodist Church in Britain, recently attended a Fresh Expressions conference in Germany. He sends this report:

The rapid growth of new ways of being church was a thrilling subject to be able to use to introduce myself to the leaders of the European Methodist churches.

The Revd Stephen Lindridge, Connexional Missioner with the Fresh Expressions initiative and the Revd Peter Hancock, Chair of Northampton District, invited me to join them at the Extended Cabinets of the United Methodist Church in Europe to talk all things Fresh Expressions.



The whole of continental Methodism's bishops and superintendents only get together every four years or so because it's an expensive business bringing people from as far apart as Siberia, Norway, Bulgaria and southern Germany.

So it was a real privilege to be given virtually an entire day of their four-day conference to tell our stories, including for me being able to relate how the Tubestation surf church project started in Polzeath, North Cornwall (see

www.tubestation.org).

But any idea that the purpose of the visit was for us to share wisdom with them was soon blown out of the water for me even though a number of follow-up invitations came out of the event.

Hearing the stories of pastors' longings to share the Good News of Jesus in culturally-sensitive ways within their own settings was humbling and inspiring; whether we were in a formal session, sitting at the meal table or listening as we walked around the small community of Braunfels.

It was a potent reminder that when you truly become a guest, everyone – the host and those they invite – are changed by the encounter.

For more information please contact Roy Crowder, Partnership Coordinator for Europe, at wcr.europe@methodistchurch.org.uk

Nationals in Mission

India

Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMAs): These appointments encourage and support local people overseas in key mission projects in their home churches. Salaries are paid by the World Mission Fund and enable new work to be developed.

Kasta Dip is a NMA (National in Mission Appointment) for the Church of North India. His post focuses on work with and for the Dalit people – a very large group within Indian society which is discriminated against in many ways.



Over the last year Kasta's work has included writing new liturgy for the Church of North India, focused on Dalit and tribal issues; increasing participation of Dalit youth in church programmes, bringing ideas and perspectives to change the design of the mission of the church; training a group of young people to perform street theatre on the issue of human trafficking, and training 80 Dalit and Adivasi youth in basic computer skills training.

Here in Britain, Loughton Methodist Church in east London has taken the Dalit people as its overseas focus over the past year. As well as learning about Dalits in India and the UK, members of Loughton Methodist

Church have linked with Kasta's work and raised money for some of his projects. When the church invited Kasta to come and visit them, they arranged a programme for him which included visiting local schools, churches and community groups and also attending some Connexional meetings, including the launch of Methodist Women in Britain.

Mission Partners

Zambia

In their latest newsletter, Keith & Ida Waddell list a few of their highlights of 2011:

This year has seen the usual round of activities: the teaching, nursing, building and coordinating. At the beginning of the year much effort was spent getting the new car on the road working in both Livingstone and Lusaka. The trips to Lusaka were combined with the procurement of milk formula, reagents, medicines and other Mission business. We appreciate the support we have for the Formula Programme. There are 46 babies at present receiving milk.

The new vehicle has been a real blessing for us and for the local Church. Between Epiphany and Easter we were able to visit, using the Church of Scotland vehicle, all 14 rural congregations in the Consistory. Boxes of clothes, footwear and blankets and toys from the container were also left for the congregations to distribute according to need.

We continue helping to roof rural Churches and Clinics with zinc sheets. Mabumbu Church was the latest to renovate. The sheets for Luanja were bought today. Two local clinics at Kangugu and Simungoma too have been roofed using funds from supporting Churches so that health facilities can be brought closer to people.

A major achievement is that the UCZ Sikuzu Community School will open on 6 January. Now Primary School-aged children no longer need to walk to school at Mwandi.

In all creation and in our lives around us we see God, God the Gift and the Giver of New Life and that is the beginning of the good news with this sense of his overwhelmingly real presence through our faith. We know and remember at this time that God's greatest gift was given and accepted. In the beginning - the word of life.

Zimbabwe

Shelley Cooling started her appointment as a mission partner in Zimbabwe earlier this year. In a recent update, she shared about how she is settling into her role.



"I was able to visit some of the other projects that I will be supporting in Gweru and Masvingo," Shelley writes. "As you can see they are just beginning, but plans for community outreach projects, market gardening and a residential unit are all underway. MRCH is a national project which means that my role eventually will involve spending time supporting staff and volunteers across the country.

"I was lucky enough to be able to see some of this beautiful country by elephant at Antelope Park, where 'Lion Country' is filmed, and to visit Great Zimbabwe, a place of great historical importance in Zimbabwe.

For more information please contact Bunmi Olayisade, Partnership Coordinator for Africa, at wcr.africa@methodistchurch.org.uk

"I have also been accompanying our choir to various Methodist churches. This has given me the opportunity to experience a whole range of worship styles."

COULD GOD BE CALLING YOU TO BECOME A MISSION PARTNER?

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

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.



WORLD CHURCH BLOG

Don't forget to regularly check the [world church blog](#) for updates on visits to partner churches and more!

Prayer Points

- ⊗ Thank God for the developments in the current situation in Fiji. Pray that God will continue to heal and restore the relationship between the Fijian government and the Church there.
- ⊗ Pray for Maggie Patchett as she continues to work with the Belize/ Honduras District of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA). Pray also for the Methodist Church in Honduras, that its vision for a central headquarters will become a reality.
- ⊗ Thank God for fresh expressions of church in continental Europe. Pray that God will continue to manifest his presence in new ways throughout this region of the world.
- ⊗ Pray for Kasta Dip's work among Dalits in India and pray that God will bless and use the church link with Loughton Methodist Church to improve the situation of Dalits.
- ⊗ Pray for Keith and Ida as they continue the projects they are managing in Zambia, such as the baby feeding programme, into 2012.
- ⊗ Pray for all the projects that Shelly is planning with the church in Zimbabwe, that God may open the right doors for these.