



...‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.”’

John 7:37-38 (NRSV)

PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS

Pakistan

The Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS) offers legal and practical help to Pakistani Christians accused under Pakistan’s widely abused Blasphemy Laws. The Methodist Church in Britain supports CLAAS, both in the UK and in Pakistan.

The CLAAS team recently celebrated a joyous victory when a Christian woman, Ruqqiya Bibi (pictured right), and her husband Munir Masih were acquitted from a blasphemy case on 17 May. Ruqqiya and Munir were convicted in March 2010, after a neighbour falsely accused Ruqqiya of desecrating the Koran following a dispute between their children.

Joseph Francis, national director of CLAAS, was present in the court for the hearing, along with other CLAAS staff members.

“After the court hearing, Munir Masih came to CLAAS’s office and extended his sincere gratitude,” says a CLAAS spokesperson. “He thanked God with tears in his eyes and said, ‘But the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them.’ (Psalm 94:22-23)



“He was very excited. He told Joseph Francis that it is only because of CLAAS’s support that his wife is free. He thanked CLAAS for visiting Ruqqiya in prison and providing all her basic needs, and for arranging for their children to visit Ruqqiya during her imprisonment.

“We trust that there were lots of prayers from our partners, friends and colleagues. We believe that you were not here in person but you were with us spiritually, through your continual prayers.

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PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS

PAKISTAN (continued from page 1)

“We are very much grateful to you for your concern and prayers for the acquittal of Ruqqiya and Munir from the fake blasphemy accusations.”

“This story illustrates how easy it is to make a false allegation that someone desecrated the Holy Koran so that they are sent to prison,” says Steve Pearce. “Judges find it very difficult to resist the public pressure to convict in such cases. Winning an appeal is very difficult and CLAAS staff suffer persecution themselves for their role in these cases.”

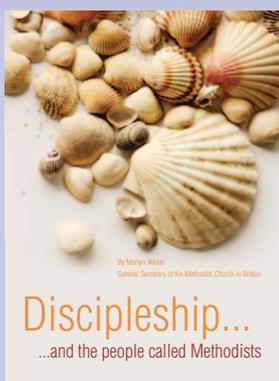


Ruqqiya Bibi's husband Munir Masih (right), with Joseph Francis, national director of CLAAS, after the verdict was announced.

Hong Kong

Martyn Atkins' book *Discipleship and the People Called Methodists* is being translated into Chinese, with the help of a grant from MCB.

The Methodist Church Hong Kong has offered a translator from their church, Pierre Tam, who has already translated a number of Christian



texts into Chinese. “*Discipleship and the People Called Methodists* has been shaping the strategy and vision of the work of the Methodist Church in Britain and is also a key theme for many of our partners around the world,” says Steve Pearce. “It will be used as a basis for the discussions during this year’s Pre-Conference Consultation, in which a representative from the China Christian Council will be participating. We also hope to

encourage the Methodist Church Hong Kong and the China Christian Council to diffuse it as widely as they see fit, and would like to offer it to Chinese language congregations in the UK.”

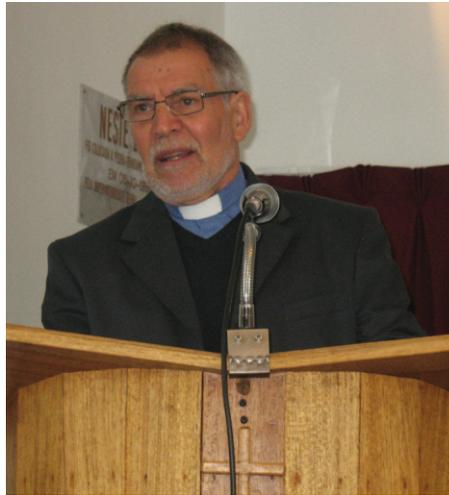
For more information please contact **Steve Pearce**, Partnership Coordinator for Asia & the Pacific, at pearces@methodistchurch.org.uk

Portugal

Peter Clark recently represented MCB at the Methodist Church in Portugal's Synod. Here are some excerpts from the sermon he gave:

As we all know, the Methodist Church in Braga is celebrating its 100th anniversary year and this happens to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Methodism's missionary activity in Africa. Whilst it was John Wesley, an Anglican, who was the founder of Methodism as a movement, it was Rev Dr Thomas Coke, another Anglican, who was the principle instigator of the Methodist movement beyond the shores of Great Britain. Following the death of John Wesley, Coke's responsibilities in developing Methodism became even greater. It was therefore Thomas Coke who received a letter from a group of devout Methodist freed slaves in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

The Methodists in Freetown which is now the capital of Sierra Leone, who had written the letter to the British Conference, had encountered Methodism and become members in South Carolina, Nova Scotia and Georgia. On arrival in Freetown as freed slaves, they began to worship



under the large and impressive cotton trees before building their churches. However, finding themselves in need of leadership, they had requested the support of the British Methodist conference. In response to this appeal, three teachers from Yorkshire, and one of Mr Wesley's itinerant preachers offered to work in Sierra Leone.

Yesterday we heard reports of the expansion of the Methodist Church in Portugal, especially in the south with people arriving from sub Saharan Africa, with people with Christian and Methodist roots from their own countries. Their ancestors would have encountered Christ and the Methodist church from such people as pioneering missionaries as George Warren and the three teachers who went out with him. It reminds us once again that Methodism is a movement of

people, and not always from north to south.

The 200th anniversary of the Methodist Missionary Society will occur next year. It is a society which has long been committed to assisting the IEMP up to and including the present day. It often unrecognised that though it is society all British and Irish Methodists belong to it by their membership to the Methodist Church. In Britain you do not sign up to become a member of the society, it is not an option, or a choice, it is obligatory, it is part of who we are as Methodists. Mission is the outcome of being a member. "Choose you today who you are going to serve." In Britain there is no choice as to whether you want to be involved in mission.

You can read the full text of the sermon online at www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/wcr-clark-sermon-braga-april2012.pdf

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

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NATIONALS IN MISSION APPOINTMENTS

Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMAs): The World Mission Fund enables Partner Churches to employ local members of their Church to work in new, key mission projects in their home churches, by paying for the salary costs of an NMA post.

France



The Revd Jean-Philippe Waechter is a NMA postholder working as pastor of international ministry for the UMC in Paris with his wife Joseline-Miélissa.

One of the aims of the Paris UMC is to form one Methodist community in Paris with a single place of worship in the centre of the city. The local congregations in Paris are either Haitian or from the Ivory Coast. The Ivorian community in Paris consists of several hundred members who find themselves in different churches all over the city. Some unfortunately do not have a place to go. For several years, many

Ivorian Methodists chose to be part of the Reformed Church in Batignolles. Some of the musically gifted ones founded a choir there.

Under the leadership of Bishop Benjamin Boni (presiding Bishop of the United Methodist Church in the Côte d'Ivoire), a number of these Ivorian Methodists founded a local church. After some promising times, tensions occurred that led to a church split. As a result, two Ivorian churches grew; Colombes and Laumière. Colombes was housed by the Catholic Church in St Bernard whereas Laumière was housed by Notre Dame of Ascension des Büttes-Chaumont (another

Catholic Church). Some members of the original Ivorian Church have steadfastly worked to see the two congregations reconciled. This eventually happened on New Year's Eve 2011.

Bishop Boni was one of many ministers who sent the newly reunified church their best wishes.

"It is with joy that we have learned about the celebration of uniting the Laumière and Colombes Churches on New Year's eve 2011/2012," he said. "May the Lord bless this new start for the life of our UMC Paris under the leadership of Joseline-Miélissa and Jean-Philippe Waechter."

Brazil

Tom Quenet, partnerships coordinator for Latin America & the Caribbean, recently returned from a visit to Brazil greatly enthused by the work he saw the Church there involved in.

“The Methodist Church in Brazil is growing,” Tom says. “The experience of the Church in Brazil has many similarities to that of the Methodist Church in Britain. Both Churches focus on discipleship. In Brazil, the emphasis is on church growth through small groups. The Brazilian Church has adopted a national missionary plan, and they tell us in Britain that we have a lot to offer them.”

One of the Methodist Church in Brazil’s flagship projects is its children and youth project called Shade & Fresh Water. This project has been on the frontline of taking Jesus’ teachings to children and teenagers who often do not have the experience of participating in a faith community.

Shade & Fresh Water was started in response to the terrible situation in which many children were living, particularly those living on the streets and involved in drugs, prostitution and crime. The project’s name originates from the popular Brazilian expression that shade and water provide protection from life’s harsh realities: Shade, which offers respite represents the care the church offers; and fresh water which quenches our thirst and



The celebration of ten years of Shade and Fresh Water Project.



carries the Biblical image of God’s cleansing.

Meanwhile, the Methodist Church in Brazil is now collaborating with the Methodist Church in Mozambique to develop a Shade & Fresh Water project there.

For more information please contact **Tom Quenet**, Partnership Coordinator Latin America and the Caribbean, at quenett@methodistchurch.org.uk

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Togo

Sheila Holland's work with Dieu n'Oublie Personne (God forgets no one, or DNOP) continues to provide many opportunities to engage with people in need. The project continues to provide support for disadvantaged children in difficult conditions, such as Adjovi (pictured with her mother) through a weekly delivery of food. The project has also been able to offer micro credit loans to enable some of the mothers to set up mini businesses to generate some extra income to aid their family.

Sheila's work with the church's development department has taken her to the rural town of Vogan. The church has been developing a market gardening project to help with food production, income generation and improvements in nutrition. With the help of supporters in the UK,



a well has been dug and a water pump installed enabling the area for cultivation to be irrigated. "People were delighted to see the water flowing so freely and this has

the power to make a difference in people's life," Sheila says. "The allusions to the living water in Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well were striking."

WHY NOT INVITE A MISSION PARTNER TO SPEAK AT YOUR CHURCH?

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.

Click here (www.methodist.org.uk/missionpartnersonleave) 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 5JR, Tel: 020 7467 5109.

COULD GOD BE CALLING YOU TO BECOME A MISSION PARTNER?

Visit tinyurl.com/beamissionpartner for more information on how you could become one.

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South Africa

At the end of February, Shelley Cooling had to leave Zimbabwe for the UK as her visa had expired. She was invited back by the country's presiding bishop in March.

"Sadly, I was only able to spend a week in Zimbabwe saying 'Goodbye' to my children, my project and Baboon (*Shelley's pet dog*) as well as packing up my home," says Shelley. "God was very good; he helped me to keep my promise to the children that I would return, even if it was for such a brief time. I was then temporarily placed with the Methodist Church of South Africa whilst awaiting appropriate documentation.

I trust that this is a 'pause' in my time of service to the people of Zimbabwe, not an ending as the Methodist Church of Zimbabwe are very keen to continue with the partnership with the Methodist Church in Britain.

"While I have been in South Africa I have been based with the MCSA Childcare desk. This position has responsibility for coordinating and raising the profile of children and young people across southern Africa. I worked alongside the Childcare desk co-coordinator



to support the team organising an international conference called *Celebrating Children*. It was attended by 30 delegates and 6 international trainers and inspired the delegates to begin the journey of raising the profile of children and young people in their communities via church projects."



Shelley Cooling

For more information please contact Bunmi Olayaisade, partnership coordinator for Africa, at wcr.africa@methodistchurch.org.uk

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Did you know that it takes about £20,000 a year from the Methodist Church World Mission Fund to fund a Mission Partner

DONATE TO THE WORLD MISSION FUND



All the Partner Churches, partner organisations, NMA postholders, scholarship students and mission partners that you regularly read about in this news bulletin are supported by the Methodist

Church **World Mission Fund**, through the sharing of both resources and personnel. You can donate online by going to www.justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/donate/

Alternately, 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**'. Go to tinyurl.com/wmfund for more information on the work that the World Mission Fund supports through the Methodist Church's Partner Churches and ecumenical organisations.

Photo: Nishantha Guneratne, from Sri Lanka, is learning farming techniques at the Asian Rural Institute in Japan, with the help of a SALT scholarship from MCB.

PRAYER POINTS

Praise God for Ruqqiya's and Munir's victory in the Pakistan courts, and pray for CLAAS as they champion other persecuted Pakistani Christians.

Pray for the newly unified Ivorian Methodist Church in Paris, and for Jean-Philippe and Joseline-Miélissa Waechter as they lead it.

Pray for the Shade and Fresh Water project caring for children in Brazil, and for the Church in Mozambique trying to start the project there.

Pray that *Discipleship and the People Called Methodists* will continue to be a benefit and blessing to Methodists in other non-English speaking countries, as it now is in Hong Kong.

Pray for a speedy resolution to Shelley Cooling's visa issues, so she will be able to return to Zimbabwe and continue the work she was doing there... and be reunited with Baboon again!

Pray for Sheila Holland's work with DNOP; that the project will be able to continue providing support for needy children in Togo.

Pray for Tom Quenet as he travels to the Turks & Caicos Islands for the MCCA's annual conference and the induction of Otto Wade as connexional president.

