



# World Church Relationships

# News Bulletin

May 2012

"I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber."

Psalm 121:1-3 (NRSV)

## PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS



Steve Pearce in Myanmar.

## Myanmar, China and Nepal

**S**teve Pearce, partnership coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, is visiting Myanmar, China and Nepal during April and May.

Steve's trip starts with a visit to the Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar, which he last visited two years ago. He will have meetings with the Myanmar Council of Churches in Yangon, and may be speaking in local churches and visiting church work in local villages.

From there, Steve then goes to China to visit the Methodist Church in Britain's partner the Amity Foundation, where staff are just discovering that the Methodist idea of 'social holiness' has a lot to say about the work that they are engaged in.

Finally, Steve will be making his regular pastoral and review visit to the five

mission partners working for MCB's partner, the United Mission to Nepal (UMN). Paul and Sarah Wright have been in Kathmandu with their two children for many years; Paul is an expert in disaster-prevention, Sarah does pastoral and young people's work. Malcolm and Cati Ramsay have recently arrived and are offering pastoral care to the expatriates at UMN and elsewhere. David Furnival is also a recent arrival (formerly a mission partner in Sri Lanka) and is just taking up a role in a peace-building project in the south of the country. As well as meeting with the mission partners, Steve will also have meetings with UMN management and with other partners such as Prison Fellowship.

Follow Steve as he blogs about his visits: [www.worldchurch.posterous.com](http://www.worldchurch.posterous.com)

## Contents

**Partner Churches and organisations**  
Cover – page 2

**Mission Parnter News**  
page 2

**National in Mission Appointments**  
page 3 – 4

**Events & Resources**  
page 5 – 6

**Prayer Points**  
page 6

## PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS

### Sri Lanka

The president of the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka, the Revd Dr AW Jebanesan, is one of a number of Christian leaders who have jointly released a statement following the publication of recommendations for the future of Sri Lanka and all its people by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Committee of the United Nations Human Rights Council (LLRC).

The LLRC was appointed by Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2010 to investigate what caused the ceasefire

agreement of 2002 to fail. The Committee aims to promote national unity and reconciliation among all communities.

"We live in a time when the attention of all Sri Lankans is focused on the events unfolding at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva," the statement says.

"We want to assure all Sri Lankans, that as a Christian community we will always be committed to safeguard the dignity and integrity of our nation and work together with secular and religious communities towards achieving a viable, permanent

and durable peace in our country, where all communities can live without fear and suspicion but with dignity and honour. Therefore as a first step towards this endeavour we recommend the implementation of the recommendations of LLRC in an effective and an expeditious manner."

You can read the full text of the statement here: <http://tinyurl.com/nccsrilanka>

For more information on Partner Churches and organisations in Asia and the Pacific, please contact Steve at [pearces@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:pearces@methodistchurch.org.uk)

### MISSION PARTNER NEWS

### Zambia

David and Rhoda Nixon recently came to the end of their time serving as mission partners in Zambia.

"As we left Zambia we are filled with gratitude to God for his provision and help," writes David in their final newsletter. "He has shown his love for us through friends who have supported us, through the container ministry, through people who have prayed for us and our colleagues and through church members who have accepted us, loved us and taught us so much since our arrival in Choma in April 1999. It is with immense sadness but at the same time deep gratitude in our hearts that we boarded the British Airways flight to head back to Ireland. Naturally we are looking forward to living in the same country as Samuel and Christopher and being stationed in North Dublin later this year.

"At our recent farewell service, the theme was TO GOD BE THE GLORY, and we want to echo this here.

"May God bless you as you continue to support his mission throughout the world."

### Kenya

Mission partner Barbara Dickinson has made an appeal for old hymn books on behalf of the Maua Methodist Hospital Chapel in Nyambene, where she works.

Morning prayers are held in the hospital's chapel every day. "On Mondays, all the staff are there together," says Barbara. "We have about 40 pews, and on each pew there are up to 6 people. We usually have one copy of *Hymns & Psalms* per pew; these were donated by a church from the Nottingham area when that church closed.

"It would be brilliant if anyone who is changing to *Singing the Faith* (the new Methodist hymn book) could ship their old copies of *Hymns & Psalms* out to us. They would be used every single day. Since we got the last donations, we've used the books every day, and some people have actually gone home with them – which is why we now haven't got enough for one per pew!"

Anyone who wishes to donate old copies of *Hymns & Psalms* should send them addressed to the WCR administrator at Methodist Church House by mid May.

## 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.

## Women in Cuba

The Methodist Church in Britain is currently funding the third year of a national in mission appointments post in the Methodist Church in Cuba.

Martiza Proenza Ortega is the president of National Women's Federation, whose primary job is to develop mission work among women in Cuba. In her NMA post, she coordinates, promotes and expands women's work in the Church, and the fruit of her work is that there are now 15,000 women who are members of the Methodist Church in Cuba. She encourages women to become involved in every part of the life of the church, including leadership, working with young people, working with elderly women and the elderly in general, evangelism



in hospitals, supporting poor single mothers and also giving women the opportunities they need for financial self-sustainability. Through skills-based workshops, women acquire decorating, hairdressing, sewing, cooking skills and much more. She reports that many of the women have opened their own small business, taking advantage of the Cuban government's relaxation of business law. Martiza reports that, "As they

start small businesses in tailoring, cloth stores, small-scale grocery stores, etc, these skills will help them financially support their families."

Their skills are also a great practical blessing for local churches. When couples wish to get married but don't have the necessary means, the women support them by tailoring the bride's dress and the groom's suit, as well as beautifully decorating the church for the wedding. In this way, the women in Cuba form a vital part of the Church's mission, both for members of the Church and for the benefit of Cuban society.

For more information on the work of the Methodist Church in Cuba please contact the Revd Thomas Quenett on [quenett@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:quenett@methodistchurch.org.uk).

## E-Academy in Switzerland and Europe

Many prospective Methodist ministers are benefiting from training provided by the Methodist e-Academy in Switzerland.

"The programme has become what it was intended to be: a programme providing supplementary education for pastors across Europe," says Dr David N Field, the NMA post holder who serves as coordinator for the Methodist e-Academy. "It is now providing a unique opportunity for students from different countries not only to learn together what it means to be Methodists but also to learn from each other what it means to bear witness to God's reign in diverse contexts."

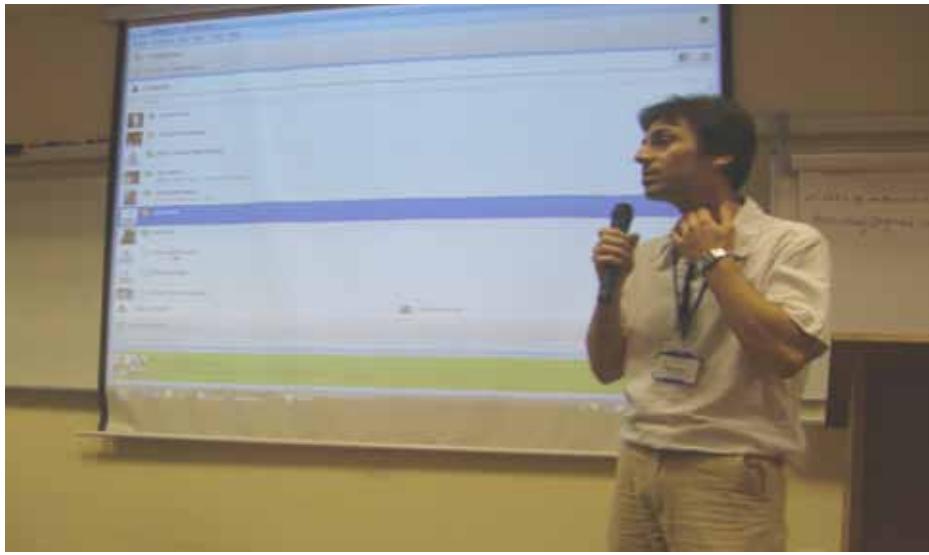


Jori Brander, a student from Finland who completed the course in June, says, "The e-Academy has been the most valuable link to getting a proper understanding of Methodism in general. In Finland we don't get the chance to study Methodism. So after two and a half years of studying with the e-Academy, I finally understand

my roots and identity as a Methodist better. I'm grateful to our Lord and the academy for making this kind of education possible. I have a wonderful wife and five kids so it would normally be impossible to do 'extra studies' abroad for a year or two, for example.

"I think the proper understanding of our Methodist identity has also provided a solid ground to our local church, because now I as minister I have been able to strengthen our roots and identity as Methodists. Methodism is a tiny denomination in the Finnish context, so it is very important for us to know who we are and what our uniqueness and historical position among other denominations is."

# NMA postholder at the World Mission Forum in Leeds



Vladimir Zhelezov

**A**t the end of March, the World Mission Forum (comprising of World Church district representatives from all over the country) gathered to listen and learn about the latest news on nationals in mission appointment posts that the World Mission Fund sponsors.

The forum had invited Vladimir Zhelezov, an NMA from the United Methodist Church in Bulgaria, to talk about the work he is doing in the Svishtov Circuit. Under the communists the Church was virtually destroyed but since 1994 there has been some growth, this has not been easy and the Church remains weak. The Church in Bulgaria has 35 churches, 10 pastors (some

retired), 15 lay preachers and 1,500 members. After the fall of communism there was a rapid growth in church building but not enough building of communities to sustain them. However he sees his role to preach the pure gospel to old and young, and to develop a sacramental role. He is doing pioneer work at the university, and building on a small group of believers and is seeing their enthusiasm grow and he knows the mission work has a future.

Vladimir is currently studying with the Methodist e-Academy, which supports the theological training of pastors across Europe. The Methodist e-Academy is coordinated by David Field, also an NMA supported by the MCB.

While in Britain, Vladimir met with the Revd Caroline Ryder, one of Leeds University's chaplains. "I learned a lot about her work as a chaplain," he says. "University chaplaincy as a concept, however, is not applicable in Bulgaria for now. Nobody will allow you to be university minister here, and if there is an opportunity, it would only work for the Orthodox Church. There is clear separation between state and Church here, and you are not allowed directly to preach or propagate religious ideas in a state institution like a university. What I gained though were ideas about brochures and cards for advertising different youth events."

For more information on these NMA post please contact Roy Crowder at [wcr.europe@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:wcr.europe@methodistchurch.org.uk).

To find out who your World Church district representative is, please contact Frances Hopwood, secretary of the World Mission Forum on [francesh16@waitrose.com](mailto:francesh16@waitrose.com).

**FOR EVEN MORE UP-TO-DATE STORIES FROM OUR PARTNERS, PLEASE SEE OUR NEWS WEB PAGES:**  
<http://tinyurl.com/worldchurchnews>

## EVENTS AND RESOURCES

**C**hina's growing influence in the world is the subject of a major conference taking place this summer. *A New World Order? China Today and Our Response* is the 34th annual conference of the National Justice & Peace Network, organised in conjunction with Cultural Exchange with China (CEC) and the Leeds Justice & Peace Commission.

Speakers include Xinran, author of the books *the Good Women of China* and *Message From an Unknown Chinese Mother*; John Baptist Zhang, a diocesan priest from China's Hebei Province, and Martin Palmer, secretary-general of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation.

The conference takes place at the Hayes Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire, from 20-22 July. For information on booking places, send an email to [admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk](mailto:admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk) before Friday 18 May.

For more information please see the National Justice & Peace Network website:  
[www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)

Having just returned from serving in Malaysia for over 30 years, David and Rhona Burfield recently visited Methodist Church House to share their experience of working in a Muslim majority country with members of the Connexional Team. They gave insights into Malaysian culture, the relationships between the churches in Malaysia and the

state and spoke to the Team about the various mission works God had called them to do in Malaysia, which had now been handed over to indigenous leaders. If you would like to find out more about their experiences and about God's mission in Malaysia, you can invite them to speak at our church. They have a vast array of resources from Malaysia they can share with you, including ethnic Malaysian clothing, beadwork, photos and a DVD that highlights their work over their many years of service. Visit [tinyurl.com/burfields](http://tinyurl.com/burfields) to see a short clip from this DVD.

You can request a free copy of the full version of this DVD from the World Church Relationships Office, by writing to Simon Bennett at [wcr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:wcr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk) or calling on 0207 486 5502.

**Graham and Jenny Longbottom** are mission partners who have been serving as doctors in the Helena Goldie Hospital in the Solomon Islands, since 2009. They will be in the UK until December, and are available to speak in churches. Please take advantage of this great resource!



Jenny Longbottom at work

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.

Visit [tinyurl.com/bnhjjq7](http://tinyurl.com/bnhjjq7) 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](mailto:deakinj@methodistchurch.org.uk) and at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5 JR, Tel: 020 7467 5109.

### COULD GOD BE CALLING YOU TO BECOME A MISSION PARTNER?

Visit [tinyurl.com/beamissionpartner](http://tinyurl.com/beamissionpartner) for more information on how you could become one.

## DONATE TO THE WORLD MISSION FUND

*Children in a partner church in Penco, Chile  
(picture taken by Thomas Quenet)*



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/](http://www.justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/donate/)

[justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/  
donate/](http://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](http://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.

## PRAYER POINTS

**Pray for the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka and the work of the United Nationals committee, the LLRC, that the recommendations will be implemented for the benefit of the nation.**

**Thank God for David and Rhoda Nixon's time of service in Zambia. Pray that they will readjust to life in the UK and that the Holy Spirit will guide them into the next season of their lives.**

**Thank God for the Methodist women in Cuba, and for Martiza Ortega, the NMA who helps coordinate them. Pray that they will continue to grow in confidence in the gifts God has given them to serve the Church.**

**Pray for Revd Vladimir Zhelezov, NMA for the Methodist Church in Bulgaria, as he seeks to reach out to the large student population in the Svishtov Circuit.**

**Pray for David and Rhona Burfield as they readjust to life in the UK, and thank God for their many years of service in Malaysia.**

**Thank God for the blessing the Methodist E-academy has been to many ministers all over Europe in helping them learn about their Methodists roots. Pray for Dr. David Field, the NMA who coordinates the programme, as he continues this excellent work.**

**Pray for Steve Pearce as he visits partners in Asia.**

