



# World Church Relationships News Bulletin

May 2010

## Latin America and the Caribbean

Psalm 37: 3-4 "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."  
(NRSV)

### Guatemala



On the evening of May 27 the Pacaya Volcano erupted, forcing hundreds of Guatemalans to flee their homes. The eruption, 20 miles south of Guatemala City, covered the city and the surrounding areas with up to three inches of volcanic ash and sand. Approximately 1,600 people have been evacuated from towns near the volcano.

We have been in touch with the Central American Evangelical Centre of Pastoral Studies (CEDEPCA), one of the ecumenical partners we support in Latin America, and have been told that German Garcia, who is working part time with CEDEPCA's *Pastoral in Situations of Crisis*, has travelled to the shelters to see what support is needed. The eruption caused the death of one reporter who was close to the volcano and showered with large rocks.



### Belize

The Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas has just celebrated 250 years of witness and worship. A special conference was due to be held in Antigua in May and every Church School was asked to plant a tree. Special Church School lessons were planned throughout last month to teach young people about their Methodist Heritage.

Maggie Patchett, who is working in Belsize with the Youth Enhancement Service, has sent over her news.

*I have been helping to teach a parenting course to the teenage mothers who attend the centre in Belize City. It's kind of different teaching to a room full of not only teens, but also their babies and toddlers – at times I get the babies to hold while the students take part in some of the activities! Recruitment is currently under way for the next year's intake at the training centre for 'at risk' young women. The new building there is coming along great. We continue to give thanks to God for providing ways and means for this development.*

The church is now planning for the annual children and youth camp, which takes place at the end of June, where around 140 children will go away for a week of activities, fun and spiritual development. For the many Belizean Methodists who give of their time and talents to assist in this venture, the camp will mean taking time off work to become camp counsellors for a week.

## Europe

### Hungary

A £4,060 grant to fund a local pastor working among Roma people in Hungary has been granted by the Fund for World Mission. Laszlo Erdei-Nagy has been serving in the Methodist Roma congregation in Alsozsolca and in neighbouring villages. Until his work began, the Roma congregation did not have a pastor. Laszlo reported some of the highlights over the past year:

*Seeing the growth of the congregation and the poor facilities in Alsozsolca, the leadership of the Methodist Church in Hungary decided to build a new church and community center in the town. The local Government provided a building site for the Methodist Church. A plan for the new building was accepted and now we are in the process to obtain the official permissions to start the building project. A six-member leadership was elected by the congregation last year which shows the strengthening of the congregational structure.*

Through his ministry the number of people attending the worship services has grown and several people were accepted as members of the congregation last year.



Caption: After almost 15 years of marriage Laszlo and his wife Bea had a baby boy of their own born in July 2009. A few years ago they adopted a little girl so now they are a family with two children.

## Africa

### Togo

News has reached us of the progress made to the lives of women and children connected to the Methodist Church of Togo. Women have been leading training seminars and workshops with women taking responsibility for income generating activities such as making liquid soap, treating soya beans for milk and flour, making body ointment, spiritual training (teaching, prayer and Bible Study sessions) and organising of Women's Seminaries in four Church Districts.

The Fund for World Mission has granted £6,795 towards the Director of Women's and Children Department in order that the work will continue. Esperanci Wilson, who holds the post, said:

*The activities of the Department for Women and Children are developing well on the ground. We would like to give the example of one woman by the name of Mrs Beatrice Samali who is part of the Methodist Parish of Anié. She underwent the training on how to produce products that we provided. She now produces soap which she sells and also uses for her family. Thanks to this project, she now has an income generating product which provides for her family. This has helped her change her mindset and quality of life.*

### Sierra Leone

Mission partners Peter and Janice Clark have been working in Sierra Leone. They were recently visited by friends Jan and Barry Eldred who have shared their news of the visit.

*"We had accompanied Janice and Peter on their discernment visit to Sierra Leone in November 2008 and now we were able to see how well they are settling into their new home and work. It was opportune because Jan had been invited to speak at a conference on Family Learning and Literacy in Freetown, organised by the British Association for Literacy in Development and hosted by the British Council; Barry agreed to carry the bags and we extended our stay by a week in order to spend some 'quality' time with our 'old' friends.*



*The two day conference was stimulating; a great opportunity to make links and network and resulted in resolutions for action. Janice and Elizabeth from the MC Training and Skills project were able to attend too. The following week was spent in a mixture of activities meeting adult literacy and learning organisers and providers; visiting the Training and Skills project; talking with the Institute of Sierra Leonean Languages (of which there are 16); taking part in a Krio literacy class and discussing and debating how best adult literacy and adult learning could/should be provided in a context of development and many competing resource priorities.*



*We visited an HIV-AIDS support group – approximately 130 people, organised by the MCSL, heard moving testimonies about living positively and stimulated interest in possible adult or family literacy learning (30 people immediately put up their hands to express interest and we estimated 80 per cent of attendees signed in with a thumb print. We talked with health workers and learned of the realities of child mortality and maternal health but also how the opportunities for training can have a huge impact, such as through the introduction of triage in a hospital. We took gifts and letters from Mary Jefferson and have a bag of tie-dye products as well as letters to return to her.*



*However, we were constantly reminded of the abject material poverty of this country; the unmade roads, the rubbish, the unclean water and the daily challenges of simply surviving in a context of massive unemployment and no welfare support. This is the setting in which Janice and Peter are living, teaching at the Theological College and working with and alongside the Methodist Church, as well as other faith communities, to have the greatest possible influence on change. We were impressed by how they have created a welcoming home, with good food, laughter and their inimitable hospitality, in spite of non-drinkable water and intermittent power supplies, endless dust, unremitting heat and the nightly calls of the dogs and the goats which roam the compound. They are relaxed, energised and clearly in their 'zone'. We are delighted that our joint discernment visit of 2008 seems to have resulted in the potential for great rewards and satisfaction for all in the mission partnership."*



## Methodists for World Mission

### Photography Competition

Methodists for World Mission (MWM) are inviting Methodist churches around Great Britain to present illustrated stories about their contact with overseas projects linked to partner churches. The aim is to celebrate worldwide partnership through the Methodist Connexion. Photo stories are invited, set out either as a magazine, page or a slide presentation.

Winners will benefit from a grant, from MWM, to the overseas partner and to the local church for activity promoting world church relationships. MWM will benefit from well presented stories which it, or partners, may publish to encourage other churches.

The deadline for entries is 2nd September 2010.

More information about the competition is available [here](#). Entries and any queries should be sent to [mwmphotostory@googlemail.com](mailto:mwmphotostory@googlemail.com).

# All-Partners Consultation & Methodist Conference

London 20 – 23 June 2010

The Methodist Church in Britain is thrilled to be welcoming around 200 representatives from our partner churches to a very special all-partners meeting in London.

The consultation will weave together various work styles and subject themes. Both British and international reps will make presentations at various points. Consultation members will work throughout in nationally mixed groups of about 10 members. The groups will discuss key questions arising from presentations and make proposals to plenary sessions. Raporteurs will reflect each day's work back to the consultation and it will be captured by a writing group. Worship and singing will provide a strong thread of reflection and spiritual focus through the proceedings.

A public celebration service at Central Hall Westminster will begin the event on Sunday 20 June at 6 pm. The consultation will hear and consider the current position of the British Methodist Church. There will be both presented and experiential Bible studies on key mission passages. There will be a perspective on the wider world context and scenarios of the church in 2020 will be shared. All of these will enable presenters and discussants to consider questions of mission development in terms of money, people exchange and church to church relationships. In conclusion the consultation will produce a summary document which representatives will present to the Conference.

Some of the international representatives will stay on following the Consultation to attend the Methodist Conference in Portsmouth, 24 June – 1 July. Hot topics for debate at the British Church's annual Conference include racism, nuclear weapons and Israel-Palestine. Conference will also celebrate 150 years of the Methodist chaplaincy to the armed forces. On Tuesday 29 June, the Conference will be addressed by the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury.

## Prayer and Praise

- ⊗ Please pray for the people who have had to leave their homes following the Pacaya Volcano and for CEDEPCA as it co-ordinates support for them.
- ⊗ Please pray for Maggie Patchett in her work at the Training Centre for 'at risk' young women, and for all the children and young people who will be going on the camp at the end of June.
- ⊗ Please praise God for the growth of the Methodist Roma congregation and pray for Laszlo Erdei-Nagy as he leads them forward; pray that official permission will be granted for the start of the building project.
- ⊗ Praise God for the increasingly diverse leadership responsibilities being undertaken by women in Togo and pray for Esperanci Wilson as she directs the work of the Women's and Children's Department.
- ⊗ Give thanks that Peter and Janice Clark are settling well into life in Sierra Leone and pray for them in their daily life and work.
- ⊗ Please pray for all aspects of the All Partners Consultation and that the outcomes would enhance the mission of the whole Church. Pray also for all the participants in the Methodist Conference that follows it, for wisdom, understanding and unity as important matters are debated and decisions taken.