

# The Methodist Church

WORLD CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS NEWS BULLETIN

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Isaiah 43:19 *"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."* (NRSV)

## ASIA-PACIFIC

### Experience Exchange Partner in India

Tricia Hamilton, former Director of buying for a very well known department store in the UK, decided that she wanted to 'give something back' to the world by becoming an Experience Exchange volunteer in India at the end of 2009. In her latest newsletter, she writes about her experiences in Tamil Nadu:

*"I am based in Arulagam (Madurai), a Christian home, with a motto of "Accepted/Enabled", that has offered shelter and care to destitute women in Tamil Nadu for over 30 years. Having spent four months in the slums of Mumbai earlier this year with Tearfund/Oasis, I have found that poverty is less acute and cruel in this verdant, banana, jasmine, bougainvillea, coconut filled state of South India....but life is no less of a struggle, especially for women, nor the climate less hostile.*

*I have worked in India for periods of 10 days over many years and one of the reasons which pulled me back as a volunteer is that, having been so blessed in life, I wanted somehow to try and help the people of India who struggle to simply survive, yet with great dignity, courage and acceptance. I have always loved the sheer exuberance of colour and dynamism of India and the inter mingling of so many faiths and traditions. I feel very privileged, therefore, to be able to slip into another culture as a volunteer and learn so much about myself (even at 65!!) and make new friends in this very joyful and friendly part of a very different world."*

The full article can be read at: [www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=1448](http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=1448)

For more information on becoming an Experience Exchange volunteer please contact Jane Cullen at [CullenJ@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:CullenJ@methodistchurch.org.uk).

## Fiji

At the beginning of December 2009, Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia-Pacific in the World Church Relationships Office, visited the Methodist Church in Fiji to express the solidarity of the Methodist Church in Britain as they continue to feel the consequences of the country's political upheaval. The military coup in 2009 and subsequent political events lead to nine prominent Church Leaders being arrested, accused of attending an unauthorized meeting of the Conference's Standing Committee. The following is an extract from Steve's visit report:

*"I was able to speak at morning worship at the main Methodist Church in the capital, Suva on the Sunday when those ministers retiring this year were celebrated – it was good to be able to make such a very public expression of our solidarity. In welcoming me, the Revd Tuikilakila Waqairatu, General Secretary of MCF, expressed warm appreciation of the visit and the care and compassion behind it, 'The link between Fiji and UK is self-evident, you can see it in our road names and on our flag, but a visit makes it real and we welcome the friendship and commitment it represents. We can now see the reality of Paul's idea that when one part of the body suffers all the body suffers, and when one part rejoices then it all rejoices.' In reply I passed on greetings and concerns expressed to me by the President of the Conference, the Revd David*

*Gamble, and the Vice-President, Richard Vautrey, and also the love and care expressed by many Methodists who have responded to previous news items with emails and telephone calls to World Church Relationships staff in London...*

*... As ever in Fiji, a lasting impression is the sight and sound of prayer at all times and in all places – always before meals, snacks, meetings or journeys and whenever you pass a church there are usually two or three people at prayer. At Methodist headquarters many of the local women have been taking part in midnight prayer vigils since the arrest of their leaders. The Revd Tuikilakila sent this message, 'Tell the Methodists in Britain we are spiritually strong in this difficulty. Tell them we are ok!'"*

**For more information on Steve Pearce's visit to Fiji, please contact Steve at [PearceS@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:PearceS@methodistchurch.org.uk).**

## **AFRICA**

### **Benin**

Reverend Dr Simon Kossi Dossou, President of the Protestant Methodist Church of Benin, was involved in a serious car accident in Benin in September 2009. So serious were his injuries, a medical evacuation was even considered. He has since been recovering in hospital and at home. This has obviously put a heavy financial burden on the EPMB. In order to support the Methodist Church in Benin and show solidarity with an important partner in Africa, it was decided that the Methodist Church in Britain would offer the Church a grant of £1,000 from the World Mission Fund towards expensive hospital bills, daily inpatient treatment costs, outpatient consultations, prescription costs and subsequent physiotherapy treatment for one injured arm.

For information please contact the World Church Relationships office at Methodist Church House.

## **LATINAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

### **Cuba**



On 30<sup>th</sup> December 2009, the Methodist Church in Cuba inaugurated a new "temple" where Church members in Consolación del Sur in the Cuban province of Pinar del Rio will meet from now on. The Head of Church, Bishop Ricardo Pereira Díaz was present, and led the inauguration service alongside the main Pastor of the Church, Pastor Onay Lopez.

Below is a photo of the Consolación del Sur congregation and of how the building used to be...



...and another of the new building.



The Methodist Church in Britain has donated £7,000 from the World Mission Fund as an annual grant to the Methodist Church in Cuba. For more information on how we are supporting the work of the Methodist Church in Cuba please contact Revd Thomas Quenet, Partnership Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean at [Wcr.AmericasCaribb@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Wcr.AmericasCaribb@methodistchurch.org.uk).

## MISSION PARTNER NEWS

### Grenada

Andy Dye, teacher of science and lay preacher in the Cornwall District, left the UK on 1 January 2010 to become a Mission Partner in the MMCA South Caribbean District in Grenada. He will be leading teacher training and youth work.

For more information on Mission Partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, please contact Rev Thomas Quenet, at [Wcr.AmericasCaribb@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Wcr.AmericasCaribb@methodistchurch.org.uk), or refer to [www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=1484](http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=1484).

*It costs approximately £20,000 per year for Mission Partners to serve in different parts of the world. Thank you for your giving to the World Mission Fund which enables this essential work to continue.*

## EUROPE

### Conference of European Churches

The Methodist Church in Britain (MCB) is part of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), an ecumenical gathering of churches across Europe who participate and act on joint decisions. More specifically, the World Mission Fund supports the MCB's membership and participation in the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), which seeks to assist member churches in their efforts to serve migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities in Europe.

The year 2010 has been chosen by CCME as the "Year of European Churches Responding to Migration". The CCME met in November 2009 to outline its aims for 2010. The following is an extract from a Press Release on 26<sup>th</sup> November ([www.migration.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=627](http://www.migration.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=627)):

*"Tonight's official launch is hosted by the Reformed Church in Hungary and "marks the beginning of activities by which churches in Europe seek to make visible the churches' commitment to strangers, responding to the message of the Bible, which insists on the dignity of every human being throughout the year 2010", the General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches, the Ven. Colin Williams, stated. "Churches shall be encouraged to strengthen and enhance their work with and for migrants, refugees and ethnic minority people." At the same time, the activities aim at improving the situation of migrants in Europe very concretely – through joint advocacy for migrants' and refugees' right to a long-term residence status after five years of legal stay, irrespective of the grounds of stay."*

For more information on the Methodist Church in Britain's involvement with CEC and CCME, please contact Roy Crowder, Partnership Coordinator for Europe, at [Wcr.Europe@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Wcr.Europe@methodistchurch.org.uk). You can also refer to the CEC and CCME websites, [www.ceceurope.org](http://www.ceceurope.org) and [www.ccme.ceceurope.org](http://www.ccme.ceceurope.org).

### PRAYER POINTS:

- Please pray for all Experience Exchange Partners currently volunteering around the world. Pray that God will use their skills, passion and love of people to bless those they meet and serve, and that by serving others they will demonstrate what it means to also serve Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Please pray for an end to the continued political unrest in Fiji. Pray particularly for the release of the nine leaders of the Methodist Church in Fiji and that God will bring about justice for His Church and continue to use them to expand his Kingdom, despite the difficult situation they face.
- Please pray for Reverend Simon Dossou's full recovery from his injuries. Pray that God will provide for his every medical need in the coming months and that the Church will be able to cover Reverend Dossou's responsibilities while he makes a full recovery.
- Please pray for the new "temple" at Consolación del Sur in the Cuban province of Pinar el Río. Pray that this new beginning for the congregation will be one of blessing, spiritual prosperity and one where they will be able to reach out to the community around them more effectively.

- Please remember Andy Dye in your prayers, as he gets accustomed to a new culture, way of life and ministry. Please pray that God will use him mightily as he dedicates his time and gifts to the MCCA South Caribbean District.
- Please pray for the work of the CEC and CCME. Pray that the Churches involved in the Migration 2010 project will be able seek practical ways of showing the love of Jesus Christ to migrants in and around their community, and that they will challenge existing misconceptions or negative attitudes towards migrants.