



World Church Relationships News Bulletin

29 October 2010

Latin America & the Caribbean

Ezekiel 36: 26-27 "A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances". (NRSV)

Trinidad & Tobago

Every four years, young Methodists from across the Caribbean gather for the Youth Encuentro conference. This was first held in Barbados in 1998, then in Antigua in 2002 and then in Jamaica in 2006.

The fourth Encuentro was held in Trinidad and Tobago in July this year. 19-year-old medical student Ayanna Rocke was there; here's an excerpt from an article she wrote for the MCCA's newsletter:

In May I was told that my job in Encuentro 2010 was that of a Liaison Officer. Honestly, at first I was not too pleased with the idea of working everyday during my vacation from school. However, once the journey began I did not look back, nor have I regretted it.

The Encuentro experience did not start for me when the delegates arrived, but the weekend before when we met in the hall of residence for our tour. As I reached the hall, I heard singing coming from the common room, praises unto God. From that moment I knew that the following week would be something magnificent. Everyone who attended the Encuentro or volunteered, each has an unbelievable story to tell.



God works in mysterious ways, and he led me to be a volunteer in the conference. While helping, I was taught patience, discipline, faith and most of all how to love. Many days the volunteers would sit and wait to be called upon. Some days it felt as though we were there wasting our time just sitting and waiting, but it is this task that I believe helped each one of us to gain patience.

Arriving every morning to meet the delegates at 7am was not as easy as a walk in the garden with Jesus. This took discipline and dedication beyond measure. My faith grew beyond the norm. Some of the delegates became ill, or had different issues along the way. The faith that everything is well in the name of Jesus, I believe, is what got each one of them through whatever trial or tribulation they faced while they were in Trinidad.

Encuentro 2010 was an overall success. I met some of the most amazing people, worked alongside the most dedicated people and learnt some of the best life lessons. Without a doubt, all of the delegates left with a sense of purpose and renewed vigour for the Lord. Encuentro has set me on fire, on fire for Jesus and I know for a fact that that same fire is burning throughout the Caribbean and the Americas.

Colombia/Haiti

Tom Quenet, World Church Partnerships Coordinator for the Caribbean & the Americas, has spent the second half of October visiting countries in the region.

From 13-18 October, Tom was in Medellin, Colombia, attending the Conference of the Methodist Church in Colombia. Tom says, *“With this support of the Methodist Church in Britain and other international partners, this church has become firmly established and respected by other churches in the country as a Church that works ecumenically, only starting new work where there is no other Christian presence. It has grown from a group of self supporting students in a seminary in Cali and a small congregation in Bogota to a reasonably well managed organisation with 36 congregations throughout the country.”* During his time there, Tom met with the head of Church, spoke at their Conference, and met with a number of nationals in mission appointments that the MCB supports in the country. He also met with colleagues from the United Methodist Church, United Church of Canada and the Council of Latin America Methodist Churches.

From Colombia, Tom then travelled to Haiti (19-25 October) to visit the Haiti District of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA). Here he met with the head of church, the Methodist Disaster group of the church, representatives of the Methodist and other international relief agencies and members of the church. Together with the Revd George Mulrain (President of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas), Tom participated in the celebration of 50 years of education given to Haitians by the Methodist New College Bird. Tom says, *“Remembering that this flagship school of 1400 students was destroyed by the earthquake in January and that they have managed to rebuild most of the system in temporary classrooms, this is a major achievement in which the Methodist Church in Britain has played a very significant part.”*

For more information on how the World Mission Fund is being used in Latin American and the Caribbean, please contact Revd Thomas Quenet, Partnership Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean:
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Tom will also be visiting Antigua during his time away.

Grenada

Here's an excerpt from the latest prayer letter from Andy Dye, a mission partner in Grenada.

The new school year has begun at Wesley College and it is not without its challenges. The school Principal is currently in the US with family health issue; there have been some issues with finding enough staff to teach lessons and certain courses have been difficult to begin. In one case, the teachers have had to teach a subject when the syllabus has not yet been published. However, in the face of these challenges, the staff of Wesley College have come together well. The acting principal, school manager and all staff have been working hard to fill the gaps, support each other and help the children at the school.

September is one of the peak months for hurricane formation. During September there have been reports in the region of hurricanes and storms hitting Mexico, Bermuda, Belize and Jamaica. Some areas have also had huge rainfall causing landslides. Here in Grenada we have had a few very large thunderstorms and a wave of rain that lasted about a week, but nothing serious.



One of the things I most enjoy in my week are band practices. Over the last month we have got these going again after the summer break. The regular practices are helping the band to gel together and improve the quality of what we play. Having a band is encouraging young people to be more involved in the worship, as you might expect.

However it is also encouraging to hear the feedback from older members of the congregation who were delighted when the steel pan was introduced in to some of the worship songs. 'It gives a real life and lift to the worship', was the comment of one of the older ladies in the congregation. For me the sound of a steel pan being played in worship added a whole new dimension and culturally relevant Caribbean feel to our worship time.

Asia/Pacific

Hong Kong

Siew Mei is executive director of Christian Action, the Methodist Church in Britain's partner in Hong Kong. The testimony below appeared in her weekly blog recently:

Three months ago, we were asked by a Buddhist organisation to help Zhuo Ma, an eighteen-year-old Tibetan girl who was not in one of the orphanages co-managed by Christian Action. I asked for prayer for this very sick girl from Yushu County, who had been given, at the age of eight, to be the sole carer of an old and poverty-stricken herdsman and his daughter, both with mental disabilities.

When she arrived, Zhuo Ma had an abdominal mass and a perforated appendix. The doctors discovered she also had abdominal tuberculosis and an intestinal fistula. She was severely malnourished, so every effort was made to build up her strength before further surgery. At first she could only lie on her bed but by August Zhuo Ma was able to walk around freely. Amy, our social worker from Xining, and several of our staff and volunteers spent many hours with Zhuo Ma during those months of recovery. Her ward mates said she brought fun and joy to them all.

Miraculously, Zhuo Ma has recovered without surgery! Her adoptive brother, who came to take her home last week, has helped Zhuo Ma successfully submit earthquake victim documentation and apply for basic living allowances. She previously knew nothing of these allowances. They were both very grateful to CA for our care and said they'd keep in touch.

In the 2009-2010 Connexional year, the Methodist Church in Britain sent Christian Action a grant of £3,000 from the **World Mission Fund** to support their work in Hong Kong.

Bangladesh

Arsenic poisoning is a big issue in Bangladesh, where millions of people are at risk from arsenic dissolved in the groundwater. For many years, the Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme (CBSDP) has been running an Arsenic Mitigation Project to combat the problem. David Hall, a mission partner in Bangladesh, gave us this report.

A few months after my visit to Kanainagor I visited a few of the villages in the west of Bangladesh affected by arsenic contamination. The situation is different than that in Kanainagor, as there is no physical clue in the landscape that anything is untoward. The fields are green with rice paddy and people collect water from tubewells taking water from deep in the ground. However, this hides a deadly secret, as many wells are contaminated with naturally occurring arsenic, which if consumed over time will lead to skin lesions, cancers and often death.

I knew this of course when I visited the villages. I've spoken of this horrible situation in previous link letters. The problem of arsenic has been known about for over 10 years, and CBSDP has done a lot of work to address the issue, providing alternative water supplies so people no longer have to consume arsenic water and encouraging people to eat the right foods that will help their bodies get rid of the arsenic that has already built up.



So what shocked me in these villages were reports of people dying in the last year as a result of arsenic poisoning. And many people came to me to show me the dark marks on their hands (pictured, left) – the first signs of arsenicosis (arsenic poisoning). Clearly, despite our work, there are people still suffering as a result of consuming arsenic. The reasons for this are unclear. It may be that they still consume arsenic, either from occasional use of contaminated wells or perhaps through food (there is some evidence that rice grown in water from contaminated irrigation wells can contain arsenic). Or it may be simply that these people consumed so much water earlier in their lives and are too poor to be able to eat a nutritious enough diet of pulses, eggs, milk that their body has not been able to remove the arsenic that was consumed.

Talking to these people, it becomes irrelevant how they have come to develop arsenicosis. My heart breaks as I listen to them asking for help, their voices showing a hint of desperation as they recount the people who have died. I am humbled as they look at me, the westerner, the rich man who in their eyes can save them. But apart from reminding them to avoid the arsenic contaminated wells I can do little for them. I remind them to eat the right foods, but I know deep down that their poverty prohibits them from doing so in a meaningful way. The discussion takes place beside a new well and I am reminded of Jesus' discussion with the women at the well, where he says he is the water of LIFE. That is what they need – this new well provides safe water now and in future, but they need water that will clear up the contamination of the past.

Later that same day, back at the office a number of arsenic patients came to collect their monthly supply of vitamin treatment. This can alleviate some symptoms, but unfortunately once arsenicosis develops, it is very difficult to reverse it. But as I was helping the distribution, I realised that this assistance goes far beyond the physical treatment. By providing help, however small, we are showing we care, and we give a measure of dignity to people who are suffering for no other reason than drinking water.

The unfairness of it all again strikes me. Everyone in these areas drink water from tubewells, yet it is predominantly the poor we see with arsenicosis. I can only assume that the more wealthy eat a more nutritious diet, and thus rid their bodies of arsenic before it builds up. Once again, it is the poor people who are worst affected and who suffer most.

Fiji

Fiji celebrated its National Day – and its 40th birthday – on 10 October this year. *“Major celebrations were planned for the weekend, including an outdoor military parade at Albert Park in Suva,”* says Dr Julia Edwards, who recently arrived in Fiji as a mission partner.



“But also this year worldwide the 10th October was declared a global day of activism to raise awareness of the need to reduce global carbon emissions to combat climate change. The environmental campaign group 350 (www.350.org), promoted the idea and coordinated the day. 188 countries around the world took part in a chain of climate change awareness activities

and events.

For more information on how the World Mission Fund is being used in Asia-Pacific, please contact Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia-Pacific:

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“The Pacific Conference of Churches (along with the other environmental groups Suva Environment Group, IndyACT and WWF) kick started the ‘day’ with a candle-lit, midnight vigil ‘Celebrating Fiji, Celebrating God’s Good Creation’. Geographically-favoured (being close to the International Date Line) and time-mindful (starting before midnight), this PCC vigil was the very first event of over 7,000 events held, according to 350, on the largest day of climate activism ever. The General Secretary of PCC, Mr. Fei’ Tevi, therefore, declared this Fiji contribution ‘unique among all the events’.

“While mostly conducted in silence, part of the two-hour long vigil consisted of a time of reflection on the impacts of climate change, when 10 traditional Pacific symbols were brought forward accompanied by the narration of appropriate prayers.”

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.

Africa

Benin

On 6 October, the Rev Nicodeme Alagbada made a formal visit to Methodist Church House in London as the head of the Methodist Church in Benin. He was accompanied by Rev Valentin Dedji, a Methodist minister serving in London, who also acted as his interpreter.



Martyn Atkins, Nicodeme Alagbada
and Chris Elliot

Rev Alagbada was appointed into office in February 2010, and one of his key aims is to strengthen existing partnership with the British Methodist Church. During his visit to MCH, Rev Alagbada had the privilege of speaking to MCB staff during our monthly staff gathering. He was also interviewed by an MCB communications officer. Rev Alagbada thanked the British Methodist Church for its continued friendship, its past intervention in preventing a church spilt 12 years ago and spoke of EPMB's vision to provide medical services for the underprivileged in Benin as part of its diaconal tasks.

Zambia

Mission partners Keith & Ida Waddell recently returned to Zambia after a few months of home leave.

'We have moved temporarily into a small house while we wait for our house to be completed,' they tell us. 'We are hoping that the roof will be on the new house before the start of the rains at the end of October; then we may be able to move into it despite it being incomplete. We bought more plumbing and electrical materials in Lusaka.

'Keith is teaching at the Basic School, Grade 8 C for Science and Maths, and History at Grade 10. The second classroom block at the High School is now complete as are the pupil latrines. The funds for 2 staff ones are now available and will be started shortly. The Fort Collins Group from Colorado who are visiting us for the second time have helped here and with making computers and the internet more accessible to both staff and children at the schools.

'We are awaiting the response to a proposal for two staff houses that has been lodged with the Norwegian Church. ZESCO have now connected us to the mains so lights are now available at part of the High School. A borehole has been sunk and capped while we await the solar pump tank and stand promised by the Department of Water Affairs.

'Ida is back doing her Aids Relief Coordination, Theatre work and keeping the Central Store. She has also been busy working with the Consistory setting up a home-based care programme through CHAZ (Churches Health Association of Zambia) This has involved much paperwork as well as the more practical side of training and equipping the care-givers and liaising about referrals from the Hospital. It is hoped that although this is presently only covering the Mwandi Village area it will in time spread to the rural areas through the Church. The

For more information on how the World Mission Fund is being used in Africa please contact Dr Olubunmi Olayisade, Partnership Coordinator for Africa: wcr.africa@methodistchurch.org.uk

Women and Men's Christian Fellowship will play a leading role in this voluntary service.'

Kenya

The Methodist Church of Great Britain has just approved a grant of £10,000.00 from the **World Mission Fund** to the Methodist Church in Kenya, towards the welfare of children in a deaf school.

Half of the grant money will be used to support 35 deaf children from very disadvantaged backgrounds who attend the Kamatungu School for the Deaf, based in Marimanti. The other half will be used to build toilets for both pupils and teachers.

The major cause of deafness amongst the children who attend the Kamatungu school is cerebral malaria. Pupils have to travel very long distances to get to the school, and so many of them board there. However, most parents struggle to pay the school fees of Ksh 1100 (£10.00) per term for its boarding school facilities; hence the need for the grant. Also, pupils and teachers have to walk a fair distance to use a nearby school's toilets.

Kamatungu School is the first deaf school in eastern Kenya. Helen Moorehead (a MCB mission partner from Northern Ireland) works there, and many of the existing school buildings were funded by friends and relatives of hers, as well as by church members of Portadown Methodist Church in Northern Ireland. The school is now state registered but is yet to be sponsored by the Kenyan government; however there are hopes that this will happen by the end of 2011.

Europe

For more information on how the World Mission Fund is being used in Europe please contact Roy Crowder, Partnership Coordinator for Europe: wcr.europe@methodistchurch.org.uk

Throughout 2010, the Conference of European Churches (one of our Europe partners) has been focusing on migration issues, focusing on a different theme each month. During October, they turned their attention onto the issue of human trafficking, in the run-up to the EU's Anti-Trafficking Day (18 October).

A lot of trafficking-related work has been taking place in Birmingham, according to the Revd Stephen Willey, chair of the Regional Anti-Trafficking network – a collection of statutory and non-statutory groups working with the issue of trafficking. He said: "The District has just made a grant to Deacon Kerry Smith which we hope will be matched by the Connexion in order for half her time to be focused on anti-trafficking work. Amongst many other things we are currently involved with a UK Human Trafficking Centre training event and we are involved in putting on a conference for workplace chaplains next month, focusing on human trafficking and exploitation."

You can find more information on Conference of European Churches' work on trafficking and other immigration-related issues on the Migration 2010 website: <http://migration2010.eu/>

Italy

A vacancy has arisen for an ordained presbyter to serve the Methodist Church in Rome.



Ponte St Angelo, founded in 1877, is a local Methodist Church whose main ministry is with English speaking people from different parts of the world. The current minister of the church is the Revd Trevor Hoggard, whose appointment in 2006 re-established the link with British Methodism which had lapsed since the late 1990s. Trevor comes to the end of his appointment in July 2011.

“Trevor has acted as a host and guide for Methodists visiting Rome,” said Roy Crowder, partnerships coordinator for Europe. *“He has advised Methodist choirs and groups of pilgrims as well as groups of visiting theological students. He has offered support to Methodist tourists in hospital or other troubles.”*

The appointment is from September 2011 for an initial period of five years. Closing date for applications is 12 November, and interviews will take place in London 23 or 25 November. Applicants must have experience of working in an ecumenical and multi-cultural context, able to write and teach, and be able to demonstrate an understanding of Methodist – Roman Catholic relationships. The successful candidate will develop the ministry and mission of Ponte St Angelo Methodist Church, and help facilitate Methodist relationships with the Roman Catholic Church and the wider ecumenical community.

MISSION PARTNERS ON MISSION PARTNER LEAVE IN 2011

The following serving Mission Partners are expected home on leave in 2011. The information given below about their location and availability may change as their plans are finalized, so should therefore be used as a rough guide at this stage,

If you would like to invite anyone on this list to speak at your church, please contact **Jan Deakin at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR, Tel: 020 7467 5109, email: deakinj@methodistchurch.org.uk**

Name	Country Serving	UK Base	Time Expected/Available for speaking engagements in 2011
Rev Colin and Mrs Muriel Barrett	Germany	TBC	June-August
Rev David and Mrs Rhona Burfield	Malaysia	Initially Nottingham	November and December
Rev Peter and Mrs Janice Clark	Sierra Leone	TBC	December and January
Daniel and Yasuko Dellming	Japan	Probably Stoke-on-Trent	July
David Furnival	Sri Lanka	Blackpool	January-March
David and Sarah Hall	Bangladesh	Speaking engagements co-ordinated by MMS Ireland	
Rev Michael and Mrs Sheila Holland	Togo	Cumbria	July-mid-August
Rev Sue Jansen	Argentina	TBC, initially St Andrew's, Fife	February-April
Rev Mark and Mrs Sarah Jason	The Gambia	TBC	Mid-June-early August
Rev Alison and Mr Robin Walker	Italy	Mobile location	May
Ruth Wilson	The Gambia	Speaking engagements co-ordinated by MMS Ireland	Mid-June-mid-August

Prayer Points

- ⊗ Praise God for what he is doing in the lives of young Methodists in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- ⊗ Pray for Haiti; for the continuing rebuilding work after the earthquake, as well as for the recent cholera epidemic.
- ⊗ Please pray for Wesley College in Grenada; that the college can find the right person to take over the position of principal.
- ⊗ Pray for the people of Indonesia who have lost homes and loved ones in the recent tsunami and earthquake.
- ⊗ Pray for the poor in Bangladesh, who are most affected by environmental degradation and natural calamities, such as arsenic contamination in their drinking water.
- ⊗ Pray for the people of Fiji as they celebrate 40 years of their nation's independence.
- ⊗ Pray for the deaf children who attend Kamatungu School in Kenya, and pray that work building the school's new toilets is completed as soon as possible.
- ⊗ Pray for Keith and Ida Waddell as they settle back into life and work in Zambia.
- ⊗ Pray for the Methodist Church in Rome, in its search for a new minister, and praise God for all that Trevor Hoggard has achieved during his time in the role.
- ⊗ Pray for all the mission partners going on home leave during 2011; for safe travel, and that their time on leave will be a time of spiritual and physical refreshing.