



World Church Relationships News Bulletin

15 December 2010

Asia/Pacific

Nepal

Jeremiah 9:23-24 *“Thus says the LORD: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the LORD; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the LORD.”* (NRSV).

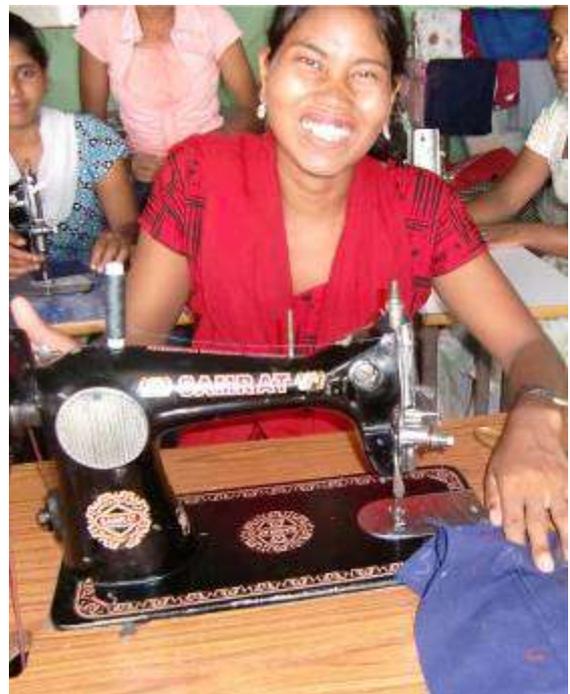
For more information on how the World Mission Fund is being used in Asia-Pacific, please contact Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia-Pacific:
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2010 has been a very busy year for Prison Fellowship Nepal, as the organisation continues to build on its work amongst women from extremely deprived backgrounds in various parts of the country.

One area where Prison Fellowship has been doing a lot of work in is the district of Chitwan, located in the western part of Narayani Zone. Prison Fellowship currently has five women on a six-month training course in tailoring and organic farming at their halfway house in Chitwan. In addition to that, 44 children are being cared for in four Peace Loving Children’s Homes – one in Chitwan, the others in Lazimpat, Gothatar and Pokhara.

“The Chitwan farm is developed as agriculture training centre for released women prisoners and girls sheltered there,” explains Dinesh Neupane, director of Prison Fellowship Nepal. “We have farming land for cereals, vegetables, fruit trees and to keep fish, cows, water buffalo, goats, chicken and pigs.”

The fellowship helps not only women in prison, but also some ‘outside’ who find themselves in dire circumstances. One such woman is Sara Chaudhari (pictured, right) – a resident of Tulasipur, a rural community of Nepal. Sara’s husband died a month after they got married, and her in-laws accused her of having used witchcraft to kill him. She was thrown out of her home and had nowhere to live. Prison Fellowship’s district prison coordinator for Tulasipur met Sara in church, and she told him about her situation.



“The DPC realized her poor economic condition and totally helpless situation,” says Dinesh. “The Prison Fellowship Nepal committee realized her pitiful condition and admitted her to Chitwan farm. She came to Chitwan in November 2009, and she received organic agriculture training and tailoring training from us. The training helped her to build self-esteem. She learnt to make organic manure, sow seed and cultivate crops, as well as how to sew casual and seasonal Nepali women’s wear.”

Sara is very grateful to Prison Fellowship for this opportunity. She says, “I learnt many new technologies in agriculture and sewing clothes. Now, I am no longer helpless. I’m now able to earn money through these skills, and I have Jesus my Saviour to help me in difficulties. Praise the Lord. Jesus changed my life.”

Africa

Zambia

Here’s a brief update from Jenny Featherstone, one of our mission partners in Zambia:

Mongu in Western Zambia is one of the hottest parts of the country, and we faced temperatures in excess of 46 degrees Celsius (that’s 114 Fahrenheit to those of us who still think in old money!). Mongu is a fascinating place. Although it lies 25 kilometres from the Zambezi it is still on the vast floodplain and the low ground becomes a shallow sea for five to six months of the year – ideal for growing rice.

Revious, my former student, is now a deacon in charge of one of the United Church of Zambia churches in Mongu and has started a testing and counselling programme for HIV/AIDS from within the church premises. He works closely with HIV-positive groups and is making use of their skills in counselling people who want to be tested. There is still a great reluctance for people living in Zambia to know their HIV status. Only 20% have been tested – which, to my mind, makes any figures quoted of people living with HIV/AIDS not much more than a ‘guesstimate’. Having said that, the government is now compulsorily testing pregnant mothers, so eventually 50% of the population will know its status! They managed to avoid the ethical questions of the rights of the mother by emphasising the rights of the unborn child to know its status.

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



I was asked to come and do a couple of workshops, one of which was on tie and dye as a means of earning a living. Tie and dye is popular but relatively scarce in Mongu, partly because it is an eight hour bus ride from Lusaka, the nearest place that sells the

fabric dyes. The other workshop was on nutrition using soya, and I was pleased to demonstrate this cheap and nutritious food which has become something of a hobby horse with me nowadays. The people were, as always, very welcoming and there was lots of singing and dancing and enthusiastic blowing of whistles as well as a good sketch about the benefits of being tested for HIV and knowing your status, as opposed to visiting the witchdoctor. Evidence of traditional religion is still common in Zambia. Many traditional doctors (or witchdoctors) advertise

through flyers or have stalls in most large towns to sell their potions. In Mongu we even saw a man walking around wearing a traditional wooden mask which completely covered his head and shoulders. When I asked Revious about it he said, "It's OK; he's just a bad man." Hmmm!

Latin America & the Caribbean

Costa Rica

The Latin American Bible University (Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana, or UBL for short,) is one of four institutions in Latin America to add a Master's degree course in Theology with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS to its curriculum for the 2011-2012 academic year.

UBL recently interviewed Valburga Schmiedt Streck of Brazil, the Study Director for this new initiative of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina and Uruguay in partnership with the AIDS pastoral and regional coordination programme on HIV/AIDS for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Lutheran Federation. Also included in this initiative are: the Church of Sweden, the Faculty of Theology at University of Uppsala, the Service for Diakonia Mission and Sustainable Development of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and others who will partner in the initiative.

A similar project in 2008-09 in Africa resulted in a strong network of persons and institutions working with HIV-affected people. The idea of the project in Latin America is to train and educate a total of 32 students of theology (eight at each of the four campus sites) in their Master's degree focus so that more individuals (through congregations and institutions) may respond to HIV/AIDS, building networks in theology and looking at ecclesiology and HIV.

Europe

Germany

Barry and Gillian Sloan, two of our mission partners in Germany, have been having a good response to projects that they set up to cater for young people.



Two years ago, Barry and Gillian started the 'Wesley Scouts' (a scout group) in the town of Chemnitz, where they are based. It has had a good response, despite some early reservations.

"Uniformed organizations were frowned upon by the Church, because of the history in Germany," explains Barry. "Because of the Hitler Youth and the Communist Youth, churches had an aversion to uniformed organisations. And

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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it's only now that this is slowly starting to change, and we just took a risk with running a scout group. We called it Wesley Scouts; they have a sweatshirt with a little scout badge on it. But it's been accepted, and some kids from outside in the neighbourhood are finding it interesting."

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

Earlier this year, the Sloans started hired a sports hall in Chemnitz, from where they organise a 'fun and sport' afternoon every Friday. *"That's for the kids in the neighbourhood that are from poorer backgrounds, or neglected, or just need a bit of support,"* says Gillian. *"We give the kids a hot meal at the end of it."*

"What we're planning to do – what we would like to do – is develop this ministry in the sports hall," says Barry. *"It's an ecumenical ministry; we're working together with the Lutheran church, and we're basically just trying to develop a social ministry there to the neighbourhood. We would like to develop homework classes to help kids with their homework. Eventually, we hope to be in a position where we can employ a social worker, and have a drop-in and advice centre. But those are things that are in the future. We're working towards that; we'll see what happens."*

HOW YOU CAN DONATE TO THE WORLD MISSION FUND

The Methodist Church **World Mission Fund** exists to support the work of the British Methodist Church and its partner churches overseas, through the sharing of both resources and personnel. You can donate online through www.justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/donate/ or send cheques 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'.

For more information on the programmes that the World Mission Fund supports through the World Church Relationships Office, please click on this link whilst holding down the control key, or copy and past it into your URL: www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=openworld.content&cmid=3181

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 5 JR, Tel: 020 7467 5109, email:

deakinj@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Please note that 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, and that lay mission partners are happy to be interviewed during a service if they cannot preach.

Name	Country Serving	UK Base	Time Expected/Available for speaking engagements in 2011
Rev Colin and Mrs Muriel Barrett	Germany	TBC	June-August
Mr 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	Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent	April
David Furnival	Sri Lanka	Blackpool, Lancashire, Cheadle Hulme, Chester, Worcester and Birmingham	Mid-January-mid-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	St Andrews, Fife and possibly Maidstone area	Mid-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, limited availability, all weekends booked
Ruth Wilson	The Gambia	Speaking engagements co-ordinated by MMS Ireland	Mid-June-mid-August

Prayer Points

- ⊗ Please pray for all the Nepali women currently receiving training and support through the Prison Fellowship's programmes.
- ⊗ Please pray for Jenny Featherstone's ministry in Zambia, especially for what she describes as "the very informal part of my job": helping out whoever appears on her doorstep!
- ⊗ Pray that UBL has a good take-up of students for its new course in theology and HIV care, and that those who graduate from the course will make a great impact on how the Church in Latin America responds to HIV and AIDS.
- ⊗ Praise God for the Chemnitz Wesley Scouts and the Kids project in the neighbourhood reaching out to disadvantaged kids.