

# mission matters

INSIDE



News from Lesotho



Pakistan Earthquake

Issue 19 May 2006

**J**ohn Wesley coined the famous phrase, "look upon all the world as my parish." Today, a few hundred centuries later, people are still discovering the parish on their doorstep. This issue of *Mission Matters* is packed with inspirational stories of people who have reached out to their communities in God's love by engaging in practical mission right where they are. They have been amply aided and, in most cases, solely supported by grants from the *Methodist Church Funds*. This would not have been possible without your prayers and generous giving.

Your support means a lot to Nationals in Missions Appointment, Jonsen Sembiring who is working with rural communities in Indonesia to establish self-sustainable organic farming projects. It means a lot to Rosemary and her husband James



Rowley, diligently serving as Mission Partners in Sri Lanka despite the strained political situation. They write with untiring enthusiasm; "James's new role as College Development Officer means even when walking home from the office to our house...campus residents stop and tell him about their drains, dripping taps, water leaks (about which James is fanatical)...He really has become 'Jim'll fix it.'"

On the home front, your support made all the difference to

the British churches experimenting successfully with different ways of doing church and engaging with today's spiritually hungry but church-disaffected people. Without your giving to the **Fund for Home Mission**, these experiential initiatives would not have been possible.

Through these featured stories, we hope to challenge, inspire and encourage you to find

your parish on your doorstep. We are interested in your mission stories. Send them in so we can share the good news with our partners around the world.

*The Special Projects and Mission in Britain* booklets detailing the good works that are supported by the **Fund for World Mission** and **Fund for Home Mission** are now available from Mission Education.





# BEHOLD the of GOD?



In some instances the translation seems odd, even inappropriate to us; Jesus, "the Lamb of God", became in this Bible "the Pig of God"! However, in the parable of the lost sheep, this could be especially poignant: any islander who lost a pig would search diligently until it was found and brought home.

In many cultures around the world pigs are vital to people's livelihoods. Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMA) post-holder Jonsen Sembiring, has been working with rural communities in Gereja, Indonesia. In 2003, with the help of a £7,500 **Fund for World Mission** grant administered over five years, he was able to help them establish self-sustainable fundraising projects through integrated organic farming. One of the results of the projects is a thriving piggery.

Jane Petty, a Mission Partner in Livingstone, Zambia, was also involved in establishing an agricultural extension project. Shortly before she left she reported:

*The first piggery is up and running. We expect our first piglets any day now. We have bought one boar and three sows to start with. At the moment we only have six stalls in our sty so the piglets after weaning will go into the remaining two. We now have, thanks to your generosity, money to start construction of the second building. The two buildings will be joined together at the roof to form one building. So we should have 12 stalls at the end of construction – hopefully before I leave!*

With Jane we continue to pray that this project, and all similar projects around the world, will, by the grace of God, continue to survive and thrive.

Your giving to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission supports the Mission Partners scheme, Nationals in Mission Appointments and Special Projects grants. You can find out more about NMAs by going to our website [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) or calling the Mission Education office.

Translating the scriptures for the natives of Papua New Guinea posed a problem. Scripture mentions many animals; ox, ass, sheep, but the only domesticated animal in New Guinea is the pig. One attempt to translate the scriptures decided to substitute "pig" for all of these in order to make it meaningful and culturally relevant to the natives.

## New Website for News and Culture

**Interface** is in the process of creating a website that will give Methodists (and others) an opportunity to discuss issues as they arise in the news and popular culture. The wide range of topics to be covered include: *Christians in Coronation Street, the War in Iraq, and the new Prostitution Laws.*

Could you contribute an article of approximately 300 words every now and then on particular topics relating to your field of knowledge? If you are interested, kindly contact Alice Lambert on 020 7467 5195 or e-mail [lamberta@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:lamberta@methodistchurch.org.uk)

*Interface is the apologetics network of the Methodist Church. It is funded via the Methodist Church Fund for Home Mission.*



# 1,000 NOT OUT!

This year the Lay Witness Movement will be holding their 1000th weekend since it began missions 30 years ago. Although the Movement is independent and non-denominational the majority of the weekends have been held in Methodist churches throughout the country. A team of visiting lay people who share some of their spiritual experiences lead the weekends. The 1000th weekend will be held in October at Meir in the Stoke (South) Circuit. Members of the Movement will be celebrating at a special Fellowship Day at Mansfield Baptist Church,

when the guest speaker will be the current President of Conference, Revd Tom Stuckey. The work of the Movement is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago and this has been highlighted by the recent report *Time to Talk of God*. Weekend programmes allow congregations to share their faith in a gentle way through meals, fellowship, worship, testimony, and discussion. Experiences at weekends have renewed the spiritual lives of many churches and individuals. The Movement offers two different weekends. The "Sharing God's Love" weekend provides an opportunity for

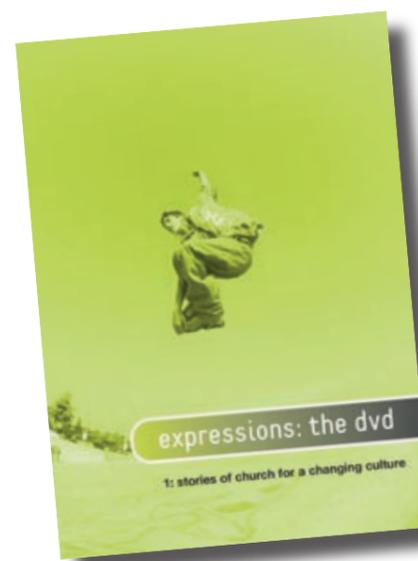
individuals to examine their relationship with Jesus and to explore the work and witness of the church. The "Living in God's Love" weekend is a journey during which the extent of God's love is discovered.

For a publicity pack, or to arrange an information talk, you can



contact the Lay Witness Office at 7 Sandown Road, Toton, Nottingham, NG9 6GL. Tel 0115 877 3827 or e-mail [lwm@laywitness.org.uk](mailto:lwm@laywitness.org.uk)

## freshexpressions on DVD



*'m colossally encouraged by the amount of activity that there seems to be around the Church at the moment. This DVD tells part of this new story: I hope you will watch it, give thanks to God, and get involved!*

*The Revd Tom Stuckey (President of Methodist Conference 2004-05)*

We live in a turbulent time of change. Many, beyond the borders of the Church, are desperate for some sense of spiritual reality. **Fresh Expressions of Church** are the green shoots of the future. Skater Church... Cell Church... Messy Church... All over the country Christians are beginning new initiatives to connect with those outside the Church.

Presented by Diane Louise Jordan, *Expressions: The DVD* tells 14 stories about these fresh expressions and describes some of the lessons learned so far. An excellent training tool for those interested in setting up or understanding more about fresh expressions. The DVD has been a great success, selling 1,500 copies within days of its release.

### You can order Expressions: the DVD

(£12.99 + £3 p & p) by contacting mph bookshop, Tel: 020 7467 5106. National Evangelism work, including Fresh Expressions, is supported by the Fund for Home Mission.

BeInspired





Helen Thorp  
Tutor, Wesley Study Centre, Durham.



## LESOTHO - HIV/AIDS

Lesotho has the third highest HIV infection rate in the world. Historically its people have lived with setback and struggle against powerful invading forces, but there has never been an onslaught as merciless as the invisible, destructive power of HIV/AIDS. In a country the size of Wales, 100 people will die today of opportunistic diseases.

What unnerves the European is not the horror but the absence of outcry. No one mentions HIV/AIDS. Most deaths happen in the back corner of a hut distant from any road. Villages stoically host funerals weekly. Families are decimated. And life – and sex – goes on as it always has in Basotho

society. “The loss is changing us but we are not changing our sexual habits,” commented a desperate school head.

While living in Lesotho I designed two sets of training materials. A peer education programme for teenagers focused on learning the life skills necessary to change sexual behaviour. No other AIDS programme was addressing cultural breakdown, discussing gender issues and teaching assertiveness. It has been delivered to hundreds of secondary school children.

With HIV/AIDS uncontrolled, the legacy of multiple loss and unresolved grief continues to accumulate. A series

of ‘Loss Workshops’ aimed to provide a framework for growing awareness and understanding of the complex and compound nature of loss in Southern Africa today - to enable Christians to discover a voice for both lament and resurrection hope.

**This cross-cultural mission project was supported by the Fund for World Mission’s Formation in World Mission programme. For further information about the programme, contact Gary Hall at g.hall.1@bham.ac.uk**

The Fund for World Mission also supports a wide variety of HIV/AIDS projects around the world. For more information on these projects and accompanying resources, kindly contact the Mission Education department.

## Cliff College:

Ten Day Mission in Europe

Eva Walker

European Evangelism Enabler, Cliff College

A group of Cliff students and I went for a ten day mission to a Gap Year school in Norway. We spent all day with the students, getting to know them and loving them. We had the chance to lead their assemblies, lessons on Christianity and other subjects, and we had times where we shared our faith. The most valuable time however, was spending time with them, listening to them and accepting them for who they were. We saw people touched by God’s love, people who were searching and people that we helped in the journey. If people out there think that mission is impossible, that it is not for them, listen to the words of Mother Teresa:

“We can do no great things; only small things with great love.” That is what we did, and we saw how these small things meant a great deal to the people who became our friends.

**Eva’s work is supported by a £24,250 grant from Fund for World Mission.**



## An Island Experience

Elisabeth Leicester spent several months on Andros and Eleuthera (both rural Bahamian islands) and on South Caicos (a very small island in the Turks and Caicos Islands group) from February 2005 to January 2006 as part of the Experience Exchange Programme. Reflecting on her experience, Elisabeth said:

The experiences which I received in ‘exchange’ for my activities are too many to list, but I will mention some. I learnt more about generosity from people’s gifts of time and tangible matters: “Corbai, I want to give you a Sunday lunch.” I saw a vibrant faith which was especially evident from some elderly people who had had difficult lives but were still trusting God. I found more insight into my own pride and anger and self-centredness, and I hope I learnt more patience and acceptance of some things as they are. I experienced many answers to prayer: e.g. for a man

with a long-standing illness who was trying to raise money for treatment and who was unexpectedly offered free hospitalisation on Cuba. I learnt more about the warmth of Christian fellowship and the universality of Christian experience.

My presence on each island was inevitably very noticeable, and I am aware that this in itself constituted some witness. Although not directly related to work on the placement, the fact of my going on the Programme at all seemed to be a positive witness to a number of people in the UK. If another EEP was likely to be placed on the Islands, might I suggest that consideration be given to sending a younger person who could be ‘leaven’ for the churches which have many older people. I think it possible that someone with youth work skills and with sporting and music abilities might be able to make a very positive contribution.



Although I’ve brought no island person home in my suitcase (!) the contacts will continue for a little as I have agreed to follow up such diverse matters as an easily fastened bra for a disabled person and to write some one-act plays on matters of social concern for a Bahamian actress. My predominant feeling is one of great thankfulness to God for the experience.

The Experience Exchange Programme is jointly run by USPG and The Methodist Church. This programme gives volunteers, who must be resident in Britain or Ireland, a chance to work in a different culture and environment, and experience the church in another part of the world. **The EEP is supported by the Fund for World Mission.**

## PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE

Earlier this year Christine Elliott, World Church Secretary for Asia and the Pacific, visited the Abbottabad District of Pakistan that was devastated by massive earthquakes last October. She speaks about her visit:



You simply cannot imagine the devastation caused by the earthquake physically, economically, socially and psychologically. Although some houses were not demolished in the earthquake, there have been over 1,500 aftershocks and people still sleep outside for the fear of being trapped in their homes. Tens of thousands of people now live in tent villages, with 20,000 in one such settlement near Batgram alone.

But the camps are also giving many children the opportunity to attend school for the very first time, personal and community counselling are offered and people are being enabled to think about the future. So while it is a big shock to the system, people are being given the tools they need to recover from this tragedy.

The Church of Pakistan (our partner church), Diocese of Raiwind have been venturing into Jammu Kashmir to provide relief and are now planning to build a health unit for the survivors, using a £15,000 grant from the Fund for World Mission. This is only possible because of the donations of our generous supporters. There are so many needs to be addressed and the recovery stage will take a very long time, but inspirational work is being done.

**JMA is aiming to raise £20,000 for the Pakistan emergency. For more details see <http://www.methodistchildren.org.uk/adults/pakistan.htm>**



## And it's goodbye from him...

The Methodist Conference of 2003 created the two-year appointment of Mission Support Worker to promote the Mission work of the Methodist Church, and especially to advocate the work of the funds. John Newton took up this post in the Mission Education team at the beginning of April 2004. John originated and developed

various projects, including the new self-denial pack, *Take Up Your Cross*, the innovative *God's Mission: The Bigger Picture* resource, and the legacy brochure *No More Tears*, along with its Welsh version *Dim Wylo Mwy*. He also developed stewardship resources, in conjunction with other national Churches, many of which can be found on the

The 2006 MMS and God's Mission in Britain reports, with additional stories of projects supported by the Funds for World and Home Mission are available late June from mph (see contact details below). The reports are free, but contributions towards P&P are appreciated.

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stewardship web pages of the Methodist Church website. For the last eighteenth months he edited *Mission Matters* and oversaw the introduction of the full-colour editions. John is moving on to Chavagnes International College, a Catholic school in the Vendee region of France where he will be helping with marketing.

## REVD VAL OGDEN BEGINS NEW ROLE

The Revd Val Ogden will soon take up her new appointment as Director of the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies, within the Queen's Foundation, where UCA's work has been transferred. Val, a Methodist minister, brings hands on experience to this post, not only from her mission work and ministry in Zambia, but also from her role as tutor at UCA for the last six years. 'It's vital to keep on exploring mission from a worldwide perspective and learning from each other as international partners,' said Val, who will formally take up her new

post in the next few months. The new Centre has appointed the Revd Joshua Raja (Church of South India) and Revd George Wanchope (Methodist Church Southern Africa) as tutors. The Centre will continue UCA's work of training mission partners and shorter-term volunteers for service in the worldwide Church. It will also be a base for further study and research in World Mission, networking with similar institutions around the world and linking formation in both mission and ministry.

The Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies will be opened on 13 September 2006 at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham.



Revd Val Ogden with Revd Garland Pierce, Education Ministries, National Council of Churches, US



### Further Information

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