

Visit to the Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia (IEMB) by Sandra Goodwin

Visit arranged by Sandra Lopez WC Partnership Coordinator Americas, on behalf of Sandra Goodwin, Vice-President/President MWiB 2016-2020 and Chris Thompson, Forum Representative MWiB Chester and Stoke on Trent District

Date of Visit 11th April – 23rd April 2017

Visit Objectives

1. To represent Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) on behalf of Methodist Church Britain (MCB)
2. To form links with the Methodist Women's Federation of Bolivia (FEFEME).
3. To assess the feasibility of working together with FEFEME and IEMB to encourage, equip and enable women of Bolivia to learn new skills with which to support their families, to take on leadership roles within their communities and to provide safe spaces for those at risk.



Welcome!

Brief summary of visit

Greeted and hosted by Bishop Modesto Mamani, members of the IEMB leadership team and FEFEME leadership team we participated in the Easter worship and celebrations within La Paz, El Alto and outlying Districts in the Altiplano Region of Bolivia.



Easter Worship at Iglesia Galilea El Alto

On Easter Saturday, we were taken to see a major project, Tabita House, currently under construction in the El Alto district of La Paz. The United Church in Oklahoma initially funded Tabita House but, unfortunately, this funding has ceased leaving IEMB and FEFEME with a partially constructed building, without a roof, which is therefore

subject to damage by the weather. The initial aim was to build a 5 storey building which would provide accommodation for a) homeless women and women needing refuge from domestic abuse b) kitchen facilities providing food and lessons in cooking c) rooms with teaching and craft facilities d) small retail units that could be rented to generate income for the centre.



Tabita House El Alto

During the following week, escorted by the FEFEME leadership, we visited a Women's Centre in Lago District, the Susana Wesley Centre in Central Altiplano and joined in FEFEME's annual two day gathering in La Paz. At each of these visits, we presented, as requested, a Bible study and a talk on 'Leadership - Susanna Wesley style'.



Centro Susanna Wesley. Lago District

Conclusion

Chris and I feel very privileged to have shared with fellow Christians in Bolivia. Their warmth and generosity is second to none especially in the rural Aymaran communities where life is often a daily struggle and their resources very limited.

Visit Recommendations

1. Maintain and build upon the links made with FEFEME.
2. Begin exploring with WCB and MWiB the feasibility of supporting the Tabita House project.

Challenges

For the majority of the time we were in Bolivia we were provided with excellent interpreters. Maintaining the link and making any progress with potential support for Tabita House would require the services of an interpreter.



Annual FEFEME gathering in La Paz