



“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.”

Psalm 67: 1-3 (NRSV)

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PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS



Bringing hope from despair

Our partners in Colombia are using money from grants to support vulnerable women and children through a range of workshops

Colombia is a society not alone in dealing with issues of chauvinism, paternalism, sexism and racism. But help is at hand in the shape of The Ecumenical Centre for Popular Communication in Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPALC).

CEPALC is a safe space in which marginalised and vulnerable groups can learn about their rights as Colombian citizens. They can also find an outlet, through media communication and the arts, to explore this knowledge and share it with others.

Working in impoverished areas

For 40 years CEPALC has been working with children, women, young people and indigenous communities in impoverished areas across the

country. Its founders, Felix and Amparo Beltran, explained that they have seen generations of young people grow with the help of CEPALC. They have gone from being children who benefited from CEPALC's activities to becoming activity leaders and examples to the younger ones.

Felix and Amparo believe that one of the greatest challenges to overcome is the feeling of despair that has taken over many social sectors. This leads to a resigned acceptance of inequality and injustice. Such passivity and hopelessness has led to the rise of corruption, violence and drug trafficking in their country.

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Through CEPALC's activities and workshops, they seek to show vulnerable young women that they are true daughters of God. At the same time, these young women learn to recognise their rights and abilities.

As their self-esteem is raised they are able to take control of their own lives. This has the knock-on effect of reducing cases of teenage pregnancies and the number of adolescents

abandoning their school studies. Felix says that as they progress through the activities, the participants' hopes and spirits begin to lift. They start to realise their value to God and to learn that God loves the poor in spirit.

"We know that the Jesus of the Gospels was a friend of women, who recognised them and valued them. He ignored the prejudices and macho taboos of that era. He shared with them many of

the most profound and significant messages of his gospel. That merciful and inclusive Jesus is the one who, without doubt, illuminates our missionary work."



In the aftermath of the Easter morning bombings the Methodist Church Global Relationships team responds

A prayer for the people of Sri Lanka

Written by Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific

**Creator God, who loves peace and concord,
We bring before you the people of Sri Lanka.
Just as your Son suffered betrayal and agony on Good Friday,
They have faced brutality and violence on Easter Day.**

**May the church and hotel communities who have faced attack, find reassurance and healing;
May the bereaved friends and families, find consolation after tears,
May those who believe terrorism changes things, discover the power of love and hope.**

**Loving God, who hates nothing you have made,
We bring before you the divisions we have created,
Ethnic, religious, national, class and many more.**

**May we be hopeful rather than harsh,
May we avoid the barbed word in favour of affirming phrases,
May we offer a smiling eye rather than an uncaring glance.**

**Compassionate God, who brings healing and peace for all,
Look now on the bereaved, the injured and the fearful in Sri Lanka.
We pray in the name of Jesus, friend and companion.
Amen.**

For more information please visit: www.methodist.org.uk/prayersforsrilanka/



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Safeguarding beyond Britain

Connexional Safeguarding Director, Tim Carter, reports on a recent visit to explore the issue of safeguarding in South Africa

South Africa has one of the highest rates of rape and sexual abuse of women and girls in the world. How does the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) respond to this challenge?

My recent visit to the Southern Africa connexional office has shown how safeguarding training and development works in different cultures and legal systems. This is directly linked to the work the British Connexional Safeguarding Team has been developing with our mission partners to better resource and train them.

It enables them to embody effective safeguarding practice when they are serving. In many cases they are having to do this without the safeguarding support that we currently provide to those in the British Church.

At the same time, we are able to share our best practice with our South African colleagues. We offer them encouragement as they seek to update and improve their policies, procedures and practices in their churches.



Safeguarding in schools

Project Zulu is a charity attached to the University of the West of England (UWE). Each year it sends 30 students to work across a number of schools in the township of Madadeni. With a population of 100,000, Madadeni is located just outside the city of Newcastle, between Johannesburg and Durban.

This has proved a particularly beneficial partnership. It's enabled British students

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and staff to learn about an economically impoverished part of the world, while having their attitudes and assumptions challenged.

At the same time, every other year a choir made up of children from Madadeni schools goes on tour in Britain. Money raised from their performances finances the trip. It also provides funding that the choir can take back home to pay for improvements to the poor state of most of their school buildings.

Ideas for future training

Because of my involvement with Project Zulu I have had the opportunity to talk with the school principals. We discussed safeguarding and training that could be undertaken in schools

across Madadeni. I was also invited to address a teachers' conference to share some of the ideas that could be offered for future training.

In Johannesburg, I was able to follow up last year's contact with Vicky Sikhakhane, Child Care Desk Coordinator at the Methodist Southern African connexional office. I was responding to their request to plan a training package for ministers. This is something I can deliver next year on child protection and listening to children.

Safeguarding links with the British Church and MCSA go back some time. It therefore feels especially fitting that we now have the opportunity to continue this link with the MCSA. Our aim is to

support their safeguarding work and gain from the learning this affords us for our own work in Britain. This learning can also be passed on to our mission partners in other parts of the world.

Progress

Project Zulu's organisers want to maintain links with me and the church work. We are therefore planning to visit again early next year to deliver some safeguarding training to school teachers and Methodist ministers. This will help their understanding and learning in a critical area of work with children and young people.

Global Relationships have kindly agreed to support me and a colleague to enable us to take these next exciting steps.

Hunger for more of God in the Caribbean

The Revd David Winstanley and a team from Aldersgate Renewal Ministries visited Barbados to run two 'Life in the Spirit Experience' (LISE) weekends



What might give you the desire to fast for 14 days? One of the taxi drivers collecting the team from the airport, had a very clear reason for fasting. He said he was doing it because of his hunger to see the Holy Spirit moving in power in Barbados.

A team of ordinary Methodists from the UK were invited to the Caribbean island to lead

two renewal weekends at local churches. This involved teaching, giving testimony and praying for people to encounter the Holy Spirit in their own lives.

The first weekend took place in Bridgetown with team members sharing testimony of their own experience and offering prayer ministry to those present. With over 150 people attending there were many occasions when people

were queuing to receive prayer.

This demonstrated the hunger and desire of the participants. Throughout the weekend there were healings, words of hope and promise, acts of forgiveness, affirmation and encouragement.

To find out more about the work of Aldersgate Renewal Ministries UK visit: <http://aldersgaterenewal.org.uk/>

A fresh perspective from Hong Kong

Alison Judd, World President of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW), recently attended an area seminar for East Asia

During her visit to Hong Kong Alison met many inspiring and courageous women from Methodist and Uniting churches. Delegates came from Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and Cambodia, as well as Hong Kong itself.

One woman from Cambodia told the story of one of her companions whose Buddhist father had converted to Christianity. Sadly, he had been killed by people who were enraged by his conversion. Her husband is a Christian pastor and she admits she is still anxious for his safety at times.

We must also remember that many women in Cambodia are illiterate. They hope the pastor can start teaching reading and writing so they can better study the Bible.

Our courageous sisters

Alison says, “As so often happens, this visit to another part of God’s mission field has given me a fresh perspective. It has renewed my determination to make Christ known more widely. Please join with me in maintaining prayer support for our courageous sisters in Christ.”



The World Executive of the WFMUCW marking 'Thursdays in Black' at their meeting in Hong Kong

To learn more about the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women visit <https://wfmucw.org/>

To find out about 'Thursdays in Black' – the campaign against gender-based violence – please visit www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black



Update from Tiana Dinard-Samuel in Argentina

My last month in Buenos Aires has flown by. I am nearing my halfway point of being out here working for CREAS, which seems crazy to think!



At the youth camp

Tiana at Cerro San Cristóbal

Statue of the Virgin Mary Cerro San Cristóbal, Chile

Aside from work, it has been an eventful month for me. One of the things I was lucky to experience was a youth camp for the Methodist young adults in the province of Buenos Aires. We met together in Gowland, in the countryside in the north of the province, and were there for two days.

Activities included games, teaching and Bible study, singing and food – much like any of the Christian camps I've been to in the UK. It's so interesting to see how similar the communities are and be reminded that we are all part of the same body of Christ.

Another thing I got to do was visit Chile with a friend one weekend.

Three days is definitely not enough time to fully experience the whole country or even the city, but I had a great time. I found it really interesting to compare both Argentina and Chile's capital cities, as they have such different but equally captivating energies.

We got to visit the coastal town Viña del Mar, as well as exploring Santiago where we were staying. We went to a tour of the poet Pablo Neruda's house and also visited the city's own theme park, Fantasilandia.

Before we left on Monday, we walked all the way up Cerro San Cristóbal to the Sanctuary of the Immaculate Conception. It has a huge statue of the Virgin Mary as

well as a beautiful small church and different Stations of the Cross.

It felt like a very holy place and the view from the top was incredible, so it was a great way to end the trip. I am looking forward to, hopefully, seeing a little more of South America while I am here.

If you're interested in learning more about the Encounter Worldwide programme, go to: www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-worldwide/world-church/overseas-opportunities/encounter-worldwide/

How I narrowly avoided arrest

Mission partner, Daniel Pratt-Morris Chapman, reflects on a scary experience in Milan



Daniel with his wife, Grace and their children

Last Saturday night I was nearly arrested. I was getting a lift to the station, after a prayer meeting at our Church here in Northern Italy. Suddenly, blue flashes of light brought our vehicle to a standstill. Before we could wind down our windows the words “I DOCUMENTI” penetrated through the glass, as two armed policeman approached the car.

Strictly speaking, the police in Italy can ask for identity documents at any time, but as usual, I had forgotten my ID card. After rummaging through my rucksack, to no avail, the policeman started to get angry. In desperation I gave him my Cambridge University library card, which he declined. It was at this point that things started to deteriorate.

I had to step out of the car and spread my arms in the air. After searching me in a manner more intrusive than any airport security, he asked me if I had drugs or a knife. All this took place in front of the church members, who repeatedly stated that I was their Pastor. Their cries fell on deaf ears.

Police station

They told me that I would have to come to the police station for the night. At this point one of the church members started waving his phone in the air declaring, “His photo is online!”

He presented the church website on a mobile phone as evidence for my being a pastor, as opposed to a knife-wielding drug dealer. The policeman said: “It’s not my job to trust. You might be British or Albanian. Anyway, next week is Brexit, so you better get used to carrying your documents.”

As the police car left us I was visibly shaken. However, before I could start feeling sorry for myself, a teenager with me said, “It’s because you were with us – we are black.” These words, spoken by a Ghanaian Italian teenager, cut into my heart.

Insidious political climate

It doesn’t really matter if I get deported back home. My identity is not contested. I can’t comprehend what it must feel like to be in my own country and yet feel like I don’t belong. Yet many young people born in Europe, second or even third generation citizens, are having experiences like this all the time. Their identity is called into question by an insidious political climate.

It’s easy to miss all this if you are white. When I told my mum, my sister, friends from school etc, they were all utterly horrified that the police had done this. When I told my wife, my Cameroonian, Kenyan and Jamaican friends, they all laughed. Not because they thought what happened was funny, but because I had only just realised how common this is.

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PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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Pray for Europe, that it would abandon the xenophobic spirit that is fast taking possession of its nations. Pray for young people, especially those in our churches who are blessed with a rich cultural matrix and diversity.

Help them to find a sense of belonging and identity in Europe without jettisoning the riches of their cultural heritage. Help them to navigate what it means to be bi-cultural in a xenophobic world.

And pray I remember my ID card next time.

MISSION PARTNER NEWS IN BRIEF

Anne Baldwin shared in celebrations to mark 71 years of independence in Sri Lanka. They included a sports day with many medals and trophies to be won.

Readers will be pleased to learn that Anne is safe and well after the recent atrocities in Sri Lanka.



New team leader

Introducing Conrad Hicks who has joined the team as Director of Global Relationships



Conrad is from Nottingham. He was called to the ministry when he was 12. At 18, he went to work in a Methodist Hostel for International Students and Refugees in London. He met Sonia who attended the Methodist Church next door.

He candidated for the ministry whilst studying Politics and Modern History in Manchester. Sonia candidated from London. They married and went to train for ministry, at Queen's College, Birmingham, three weeks later.

With three small children, they job-shared appointments in the former London North West District, before serving six years in the Jamaica District of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas (MCCA). Conrad was Superintendent of the Port Antonio Circuit and then also the Annotto Bay Circuit.

Following a call to serve the Methodist Church in Ireland, they worked in the Dublin North Circuit for nine years. During that time, Conrad was appointed Companion to the Iglesia Evangélica Nacional Metodista Primitiva de Guatemala. Sonia returned to Britain in 2012, but Conrad first served the Methodist Church in Mexico for a year as an EEP volunteer, looking after a church and as a school chaplain.

Prior to taking up his new role as Director of Global Relationships he worked $\frac{2}{3}$ time Presbyter in the Hants-Surrey Border Circuit and $\frac{1}{3}$ time Assistant Chair of the South East District.

ASIA SUNDAY 2019

Asia Sunday is observed on the Sunday before Pentecost: this year it falls on 2 June

Member churches and councils of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), as well as churches and ecumenical partners around the world, observe Asia Sunday annually. It's an occasion to offer special prayers and organise worship services with a focus on the Asia Sunday theme.

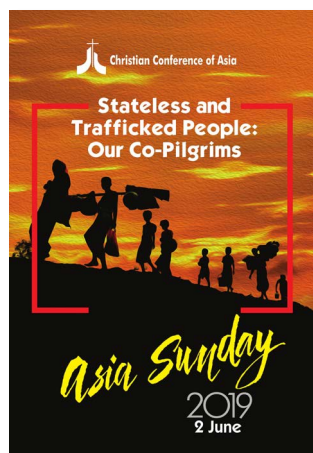
CCA General Secretary Dr Mathews George Chunakara said, "The consequences and impacts of statelessness and human trafficking are enormous. The Christian response must be to address these contemporary problems of dehumanisation with urgent priority.

Rampant rise of inequality

"There are numerous issues linked to statelessness and human trafficking as well as to the movement of people within and beyond borders. These include the rampant rise of inequality, ethnocentrism, racism, violence and extreme nationalism.

"All these dehumanising factors are increasingly evident in Asia. They are degrading the image of God and the basic dignity deserved by every human being.

"It is important for the churches in Asia to be concerned about migrants, trafficked and stateless. They are our co-pilgrims and sojourners, intimately connected or interdependent in our human family."



You can download worship resources for **Asia Sunday 2019**, either in the form of a Word document or a pdf. To do so, simply following the link below and scroll down to the bottom of the page, where you will find both options available. bit.ly/asiasunday2019



It's always good to receive feedback when we send a speaker to lead an event in a church or district. Margaret and Colin Gardner recently went to lead a world Church event in the Darlington District

Margaret writes: "Wow! What an amazing weekend we had sharing the work of the Methodist Church in The Gambia. We received a warm welcome and generous hospitality on our arrival followed by an inspiring evening of warm fellowship.

"On the Saturday the assembled congregation made prayer hands for us to take out on our next visit to The Gambia. The weekend involved much storytelling and conversation. We feel privileged to have had the momentous opportunity to share some of the journey from The Gambia with the Darlington District.

"We are visiting The Gambia again in a couple of weeks and will be taking with us the good wishes and prayers of the people with whom we shared."



Making prayer hands to send to The Gambia

Church twinning

A growing number of churches and circuits are building twinning links with Methodist Partner Churches around the world. Their aim is to share and learn in mission, understanding, culture and worship across Methodist communities – together.

Are you interested in developing a twinning link with a church or circuit in another country? If so, take a look at our new guidelines document on our website. The guidance takes you through a series of steps to support you in thinking through, developing and establishing a link that is mutually beneficial.

If you already have a twinning link, it would be great to hear how things are going. Tell us what has been shared and learnt in your efforts to understand and strengthen God's mission around the world.

Our new twinning guidelines could help you on your journey, both in developing a new link but also, perhaps, in invigorating an established one. Learn more now by downloading our twinning guidelines which you can find at: www.methodist.org.uk/media/8088/church-twinning-guidelinesdocx.pdf

You can also get in touch with the Global Relationships team by emailing us at: gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk



WANTED!

The Methodist Church in Antigua is looking for a volunteer archivist. They are seeking someone with an appreciation of Caribbean mission history to work for 3-12 months with historical mission documents.

If you are interested in this post, contact Carolyn at: lawrencec@methodistchurch.org.uk

Would you like a speaker for a World Church event or service?



If you would like to invite a speaker to your event, please get in touch with Carolyn Lawrence at Global Relationships.

You can email her at: lawrencec@methodistchurch.org.uk



MWM World Mission Conference

31 May – 2 June 2019

Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire

CHINA'S MISSION TO THE WORLD

For more information and booking details:

Email: bookings@mwm.org.uk

Website: www.mwm.org.uk

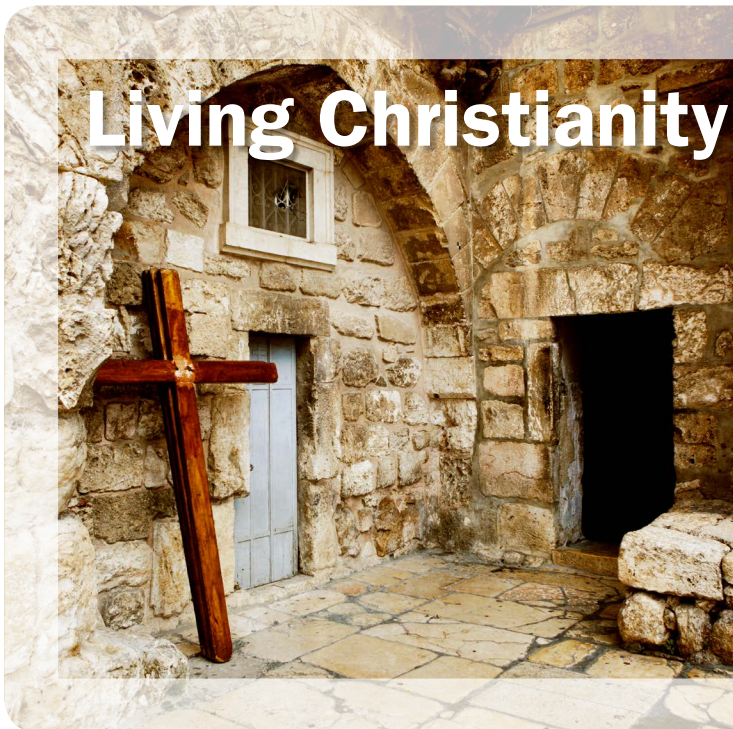


PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Living Christianity in the Holy Land

A two-week experience
of Christianity in Palestine
Wednesday 22 January to
Monday 3 February 2020

Led by the Revd John Howard,
former mission partner to Israel/Palestine
and Deacon Angleena Keizer from the
Methodist Liaison Office, Jerusalem

For more information contact John at:
john_d_howard@hotmail.com



PRAYER POINTS

Pray for the people of Sri Lanka, the Christian community and all who feel the pain of loss after the bombings on Easter Sunday morning.

Pray for our mission partner, Anne, that her health and strength may continue to enable her to complete her time in Sri Lanka.

Pray for all those who run the CEPALC project in Colombia and those who benefit from the work done there.

Pray for Tiana in the second half of her placement that she may sense God's presence and strength each day.

Pray for the whole Global Relationships team as they seek to serve and build relationships with the world Church.

Pray for those seeking to bring safe practices to the Church across the world.

Pray for the Church in Barbados that they will continue to walk in the power and enabling of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for Christian sisters and brothers persecuted for their faith in various parts of the world.