



“The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
Jeremiah 31:31, 33
(NRSV)

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PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS

The privilege of ministry in Cambodia

The Revd Dr Howard Mellor writes about working in a country “where young girls are sold for the price of a pair of sandals”



Tucked away in the back streets of Phnom Penh is a jewel of a Bible School. It's the Cambodian Methodist Bible School (CMBS), blessed with a committed staff and enthusiastic students.

It has been my privilege to help students engage with the Old Testament prophets in the setting of modern Cambodia. They have been reading Amos and his critique of political corruption, financial exploitation and his condemnation of the powerful who crush the poor and needy.

Abject poverty

His words have a real bite to them in Cambodia. This is a country where there is exceptional wealth for a few but abject poverty for most. It's also a country where young girls are sold for the price of a pair of sandals.

My wife, Rosie, and I were invited there because of links spanning 20 years between the Hong Kong Methodist Church and the fledgling Cambodian Methodism. Rosie's role is to support the teaching of written and spoken English, while mine is to assist in the biblical and theological teaching programme.

It's an honour to work with the Academic Dean, the Revd Tiong Yeun, and Principal, the Revd Prak Vuthy, in delivering seminars and lectures for students.

Their students are devoted to their faith and studies. On weekdays they are up at 4.30am, attending prayers at 5.00am

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for one hour. They wake me up with their enthusiastic singing.

Their day has a demanding schedule but they seem to approach it with joy.

Sending out a challenge to students

It occurred to me that the Buddhist monks would be in the Temple at dawn, so why should Christian ministerial students be any different when praying to their Triune God? Their enthusiasm

for their faith and studies sends out a challenge to students (and supernumerary ministers), the world over.

I thank God for the opportunity Rosie and I have been given to minister in this way.

An answer to prayer for the Bulgarian Methodist Church

Before Christmas the Revd Margarita Todorova wrote about the proposed new laws in Bulgaria. Here she updates us on a wonderful turn of events

In mid-December Margarita wrote: Christmas is approaching and our hearts are burdened with worries. In May, four of the political parties introduced changes to the law on religion that aim to severely restrict all minority religious groups.

Such changes are in direct violation of the Bulgarian Constitution that guarantees separation between Church and State and religious freedom for all citizens. They threaten the existence of all minority groups.

Protest letters

Despite protest letters from religious groups across the country, as well as from outside Bulgaria, Parliament passed all proposed changes. These included an increase in the minimum number of people required for registration from 300 to 3,000.

If accepted, this would threaten the registration of the majority of Protestant denominations, including the Methodist Church.

Politicians here want the law to be passed quickly and implemented immediately.

Despite street protests by Christians, one party leader declared openly that they would fight “with teeth and nails” for the articles to be passed exactly as proposed. Please continue to pray for us.

Then on 21 December Margarita sent us this update: Today, in its final working day for 2018, Parliament passed the new religious law in Bulgaria. We are happy to inform you that to our great relief 95% of the proposed restrictions were dropped.

Prayer marches

It has taken a lot of work by many people to reach this outcome. This includes international pressure, as well as seven Sundays of official prayer marches and protests in Sofia and other cities.

It has also involved prayer and fasting, TV interviews, other



media activity and discussions with members of the Parliament's Commission on Religion and Human Rights.

We are grateful to God for all the support that we received. This has shown our politicians that, though we are a minority, we are part of a big worldwide family. We are a force to be reckoned with.

Tremendous support

As a representative of the Bulgarian Methodist Church I would like to thank everyone who helped. I'm especially grateful to the World Methodist Council, the European Methodist Council and the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church women for their support.

We have one more reason to celebrate this Christmas. Our hearts will gladly sing praises to our Lord Jesus for his power and might, love and faithfulness.

Tabita House, Bolivia

Sandra Goodwin from Methodist Women in Britain updates us on developments at Tabita House in Bolivia



Bolivian women

In 2017 Sandra visited Bolivia on behalf of Methodist Women in Britain. She was greatly moved by the hardships that Bolivian women face on a daily basis.

Eighteen years ago, FEFEME, the women’s organisation within the Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia (IEMB), had a vision for ‘Tabita House’.

With this project FEFEME, which is equivalent to Methodist Women in Britain, aims to create a centre with safe accommodation for vulnerable women. It will also provide training in useful skills

such as cooking, craftwork, reading and computer literacy, to enable women to find employment.

Insufficient funding

Work began on the centre but with insufficient funding, the organisers were left with a half-constructed building without a roof. With an estimated cost to construct the roof of £11,780, there was very little prospect of moving forward.

On her return, Sandra encouraged women around the country to donate to help with the completion of the roof. This would ensure that the building could be used.

Over the past year around half of the amount needed has been raised. Last November the MWiB trustees, agreed to forward the full amount to Bolivia so that the work could be completed. Any further funds raised will recoup the deficit and any surplus sent will be used to equip the building.



Inspecting the unfinished building at Tabita House

Cliff College honoured in Nigeria

The Revd Dr Richard Jackson visited Nigeria to accept an award on behalf of the Cliff College International Training Centre (CCITC)



Last November, with due ceremony and pageantry, the Revd Dr Richard Jackson, pioneer and coordinator of CCITC, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Ministry (D.Min).

This award was in recognition of the enormous contribution of the CCITC to evangelism and missions in many African countries. In particular, it recognises the work done by the CCITC in partnership with the Methodist Church in Nigeria, in their discipleship training.

Richard said that for him the most moving part of the ceremony was being embraced by the Prelate as one of their own. He said he felt enormously honoured to be acknowledged as the first Briton to have been recognised in this way.



EXPLORE • SHARE • ENRICH

Settling in: volunteer mission in Argentina

Tiana Dinard-Samuel is an Encounter Worldwide volunteer placed in Argentina on behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain. Here she writes about her initial reflections on her placement

So, I finally made it! After nearly three months of visa complications delaying my departure, I arrived in Buenos Aires, a few weeks ago. I'm now looking forward to nine months of volunteering with CREAS, which stands for the Regional Ecumenical Centre for Advice and Services.

Currently, I am a student of Hispanic Studies and Film at London University. This trip is



not just an opportunity to learn about and work for God's Church in Argentina, but also a chance to improve my Spanish skills.

I'm finding that the language is slightly different to what I've learnt so far, but I'm sure I'll get there eventually. In the meantime, everyone has been so patient with me.

Kind and welcoming

In fact, everyone I have met has been very kind and welcoming which helps as I adjust. I even got the chance to meet the Methodist Bishop of Argentina.

It does not yet feel like home, but the first time I visited the Methodist Church in Almagro, it did immediately feel familiar. As I walked into the foyer I just thought, "Ah, I know where I am". It was even better when I recognised the tune of one of the hymns and quietly sang the English words under my breath.

Then after 11 days of settling in and exploring the city, I started work with CREAS. It has various programmes.

Promoting peace

The one I'm volunteering for is called Entrepreneurs of Peace. It provides training and support for young adults to undertake projects in their communities that are promoting peace, equity and sustainability.

My role here is to get to know some of the past and ongoing projects and write about these experiences. I'm also developing links with similar projects back in the UK particularly in our Methodist congregations, so we can share experiences, ideas and resources.

What CREAS does is really exciting and important so I am looking forward to being a part of it. I pray that I will do a good job and let God use me to do whatever he has planned.

Return from Papua New Guinea

Wande Ebofin has recently returned to the UK after serving for six years with the United Church of Papua New Guinea. She thanks God for enabling her to serve in this way and for giving favour and security. Wande also appreciates all the support and prayer that she has received from friends, family and churches over the past few years.

So what is the next step?

God's work continues

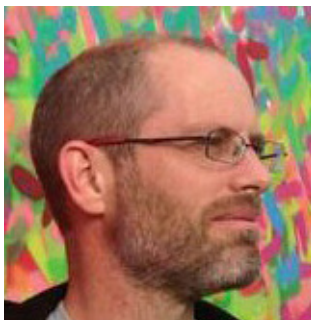
Wande says, "I'll be taking a break from mission work. Although the focus may change, God's work continues. Keep me in your prayers for God's direction.

"May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands" (Ps 90:17): In Jesus' Name Shalom.

You can read about Wande's adventures in her blog pngtips2.wordpress.com



Wande visiting the World Church office on her return to the UK



WORLD CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS TEAM

New Programme Team Leader

Introducing Andy Dye, who has recently joined the World Church Relationships Team

Born and brought up on the Isle of Wight, Andy has a background in youth work, teaching, missions and science. He served as a mission partner for six years with the Methodist Church in Grenada in the South Caribbean. His work has also taken him to Kosovo, Mozambique, Tanzania and Russia.

Andy recently married Philippa and moved to London from Cornwall,

where he was a local preacher in the Truro Circuit. His role is to lead and support the development of relationships between Partner Churches and Organisations throughout the world and the Methodist Church in Britain.

Global missions

He will also manage programmes for mission personnel, engaging British Methodists with global missions. In addition, he will be

deepening work with All We Can and European Partners. This includes working closely with the Director of Global Relationships and Partnerships Coordinators to express our relationships with partners in innovative ways.

Andy is especially keen to engage with young people on global issues, justice and mission.

Please contact him at:

dyea@methodistchurch.org.uk

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. It's been specially designed to support you in thinking through, developing and establishing a link that is mutually beneficial.

Strengthen God's mission

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 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 www.methodist.org.uk/media/8088/church-twinning-guidelinesdocx.pdf. You can also get in touch with the World Church Relationship team by emailing us at: wcr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk

Volunteering opportunity in China

Are you interested in volunteering to train Chinese teachers of English in less-developed parts of China? If you're an English speaker interested in such an opportunity, the Amity Summer English Program (SEP) would like to hear from you.



By joining the programme you'll have the chance to spend a month in China, helping teachers, many from rural areas, to develop their English skills.

Make a difference

If you want to teach the teachers and make a difference, while experiencing China and its people in a unique way, join Amity's SEP 2019.

A landing page for the 2019 programme is currently not available on the Amity website. In the meantime, if you'd like to learn more about what's on offer, you may find last year's landing page of interest: www.amityfoundation.org/eng/join-amity-summer-english-program-2018

Alternatively, you can contact Sally Wang for further information on wangyu@amity.org.cn



 [oneprogramme/#oneprogramme](https://www.instagram.com/oneprogramme/)

 [oneprogramme](https://www.facebook.com/oneprogramme)

 [@oneprogramme](https://twitter.com/oneprogramme)

Dates: 16th-28th June 2019

Cost: £600 (flights included)

Application deadline: 25/2/19

Briefing day: 24/4/19 - Methodist Church House, London

For ages: 18-26

For more info contact G.Dixon-Gough@cliffcollege.ac.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 World Church Relationships.

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

A pilgrimage to India: Christian witness as a minority witness



We have news of a pilgrimage to India to explore Christian witness in Punjab. It's taking place from 29 March to 11 April 2019 and led by the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal, in partnership with the Methodist Church.

Participants will engage in

conversation with members of the Church of North India in Delhi and in the Diocese of Amritsar. It will be an opportunity for them to find out about the challenges of Christian witness in a multi-faith context.

They will also visit the village of Sadhu Sundar Singh and spend

time in a retreat centre in the foothills of the Himalayas. Among the landmarks they will see will be the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

For more information:
Telephone: **+44 (0)20 8901 7630**
Email: **enquiries@soulofindia.com**
Website: **www.soulofindia.com**



PRAYER POINTS

Pray for all those who work and study at the Cambodian Methodist Bible School.

Pray for the Church in Bulgaria at this time of uncertainty and for continued freedom of worship.

Please pray for FEFEME and the work they are doing to improve the lives of vulnerable women in El Alto, Bolivia.

Pray for Tiana as she settles into her new volunteering role in Argentina.

Pray for Wande as she seeks direction for the next part of her journey.