



World Church Relationships News Bulletin

December 2011

John 1: 14 ***"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."*** (NRSV)

News from Partner Churches and Organisations

Sierra Leone

Last month, a group of four people from the Methodist Church in Britain arrived in Freetown to join the Methodist Church Sierra Leone (MCSL) as it celebrated 200 years of missionary engagement between Britain and Sierra Leone.



Mission partners Peter and Janice Clark write: *The Methodist Church is somewhat older than this, as the freed slaves (on their return to Africa, to what was then The Colony, to be later called Freetown) brought with them the various Christian traditions they had encountered in their places of bondage. So it was, that those who were Methodists, appealed to the Methodist Church in Britain to send them some helpers, and on 12 November 1811 Rev George Warren, Thomas Hirst, Jonathon Raynor, and John Healey stepped off the boat 'The Traveller', onto the shores of Sierra Leone.*



Peter has been the chair of the celebrations committee and during the last eight months there has been various events including a lecture and a service to commemorate the four men leaving the shores of Liverpool. Warren Memorial Church was packed for the service of celebration, with the choir singing an anthem written by one of their members for the 200th anniversary of the church, and identifying with some of their ancestors in the faith as the congregation left the church to the music of a hymn from the Caribbean.

Janice's contact with the MCSL Support Group for people living with HIV continued during the year. The main work has been with the Literacy Facilitators and small community groups. The facilitators are waiting to hear whether they will be accredited by PADECO, the organisation that trained them in 2010, and also gave them a refresher course this year. The process of handing over the project to a small group is almost complete, with the new name of Family Literacy, realising that the improvement of parental literacy impacts on the life of a family.

North Korea

In response to the growing crisis of malnutrition in North Korea, the Methodist Church World Mission Fund is working in partnership with the National Council of Churches (NCKC) in South Korea and the Christian Federation (KCF) in North Korea. A second shipment of food has just been successfully sent across the border into North Korea.

Following the first shipment of food in May, five US-based aid organizations visited North Korea in September, and confirmed that large numbers of people are suffering from chronic malnutrition and facing starvation due to reducing rations.

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NCKK therefore sent this second food shipment, 180 tons of wheat flour transferred it to the KCF by truck at Bongdong station, Gaesung City, just across the border between the North and the South. The flour will be delivered to nurseries and orphanages in Hyangsan-gun and Pyung An Buk-do. The South Korean government has limited and controlled the humanitarian activities of NGOs insisting that there

should be a detailed distribution plan, confirmation of monitoring from the partner in the North and acknowledgement of receipt from each nursery and orphanage. Contrary to expectations, it took about 6 months to satisfy these conditions and accomplish this 2nd shipment.

Donors for this effort included both the Methodist Church in Britain and the Korean Methodist Church.

Our partner in NCKK writes, *“Now I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to your being with us and what you have shown to us, remembering the people in North Korea.”*

Thailand

During October, the World Student Christian Federation Asia Pacific Region (WSCF Asia Pacific) organised the Women Doing Theology Workshop 2011 at the Bangkok Christian Guest House in Thailand, on the theme of *Women’s Liberation and Transformation*.

Masophy Kengoo is the regional coordinator of WSCF Asia Pacific, whom the Methodist Church in Britain supports with an annual grant. She sent us this report from the workshop:

Attending this workshop has been a blessing for me. It was so inspiring to see so many young women coming together to find new ways to make the message of the Bible more relevant for readers. Women as young as 17 attended this workshop; it was such an inspiration to see these women dedicating themselves to work for the women in their countries.



The exposure trip to Pat Pong (the biggest red light district in Bangkok) was an unforgettable experience. No normal human being in their right mind would take pleasure in seeing the performance by the women in those

clubs. They were treated as if they were circus animals. One could not stop crying looking them in the eye. They conceal their pain and humiliation with a smile, just for the sake of survival. And the sad part is that people pay huge amounts of money and take pleasure through these performances. What is worse is the fact that there are women and mothers who take delight in these shows. It made me wonder how they would feel if these girls were their daughters. The questions in my mind which I could not answer were, "Who is going to rescue them?" and "What will happen to them when they become old?"

The one thing I really liked about this workshop is that all the participants were women, which created a comfortable environment. Participants could share whatever we wanted, which would not have been possible if there were men present. The way the resource people presented and interpreted the text was unique. During the Sessions on Hermeneutical Framework for Re-reading the Bible, we made use of some Asian hermeneutics which made the text very relevant for Asian women. I had never experienced this way of reading the Bible before. It is a very new experience, which I intend to continue throughout my life.

Ecuador

Sandra Lopez, Partnership Support Officer for the World Church Relationships Office writes: "Every month I find myself mainly editing the World Church Relationships Bulletin, this time I make a personal contribution. Recently, on behalf of the World Church Relationships Office, I visited Ecuador with the Revd Michaela Youngson.



During the 10 days in Ecuador, we met dedicated church members doing amazing mission work in their local communities. The experience that most moved me personally was the day we visited a primary school in Pastocalle, a rural, poor and mainly indigenous village some 3,500 metres above sea level.

The 'El Sembrador' (the sower) Methodist Church runs the school and parents pay whatever they can afford towards tuition fees. Teachers have often denied themselves a salary to keep the school running.

I was moved by the traditional dance we were treated to by the pupils of the school's dance club, where they learn to value their cultural roots and traditions. The dance was to a song of praise and thanks to Jesus Christ. Their clothing, music, and dance were in the style of local indigenous people.

Here were children praising God in their own way, in the culture, creativity, colour and movements that God had gifted them with. What a beautiful sight to behold!"

Read more about Michaela and Sandra's visit to Ecuador through the [world church blog](#) (and to see a video of the same children dancing at the church's General Assembly).



Honduras

Thomas Quenet is currently visiting partners in Central America. Here's an excerpt from one of his

blog posts about his visit to Honduras:

Yesterday I visited Talanca, where Methodism has two churches. At one named "10th of September" the children of the community were enjoying a game of football on the recently cleared church lot. This community suffers in the rainy season since it is constantly flooded and makes a breeding ground for marsh flies. Administering communion is a real challenge during the season, since any uncovered elements have to be kept constantly moving or the flies will overwhelm them on the way between the pastor and the member.



The church and the homes were built on donated ground and prove that sometimes it is worth looking a gift horse in the mouth. Not only are there flies, and floods but the marshy ground has made the church unstable and remedial action has been taken to recover the situation. It's not a pretty building, but it is the Church being where people are and offering some degree of hope. At one time the church gave constant

handouts of donated clothes and school supplies and human being what they are - they came for the clothes and the supplies but for little else. Now the supplies are given less often and a congregation is being recovered and struggling itself with how to manage the resources that others give them.

In the midst of this there is still vision that inspires and motivates. We meet together and discuss about how a church has grown based on a simple yet effective house group structure. The Church becomes the focus for Worship and Celebration, a place where tithes are brought as well as a place where meetings are held about management of resources. Yesterday I was moved and inspired (as I regularly am) by the people I work with in the region sharing with me their vision. Two of the images are the external view of the church at "10th of September" and myself and pastors Guerrero and Luis Soto sharing the vision about how a small space, little bigger than a one car garage, will become a space for a Church of over 100 members in two years.

"We have to concentrate on the building - that is the most important," declares Pastor Luis, whose family manages on the equivalent of £150 per month.

**For more information please contact Thomas Quenet,
Partnership Coordinator for the Americas and the Caribbean,
at quenett@methodistchurch.org.uk**

Mission Partner News

World Aids Day in Zambia

Our mission partner in Zambia, Ida Waddell, writes about the recent [UNAIDS report](#) that confirm the drop in the number of HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, despite a decrease in finances:

Especially encouraging for us in Zambia is that access to HIV treatment has improved greatly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the region which has long been worst hit by the AIDS epidemic, making up some 68 percent or 22.9 million of all HIV-infected people. Access to ARVs has increased in SSA by 1/5 between 2009 and 2010 though 1.2m people still died of AIDS-related causes last year. Zambia has reported coverage levels of between 70 and 80 percent; nearing universal access (considered 80%). The overall world statistics are encouraging too; while 2.7 million people contracted HIV in 2010. This represents a fall of over 1/5 since 1997. 6.6 million people are now accessing ARVs, an increase of 1.35 million in less than two years. With improved access to treatment, new HIV infections are also declining sharply. Changes in behaviour such as abstinence, condom-use and male

circumcision are also contributing. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission is another success, where 400 000 new infections have been prevented...

...Our Aids Relief Programme at the Mission Hospital here in Mwandi continues with its static clinic based here at the hospital and the 6 mobile outreach clinics. The outreach is now undertaken weekly. There are 1478 people on ART, 164 of whom are children.

We are grateful to many people for being able to look after our clients in many different ways. Starting at the top we have PEPFAR and AIDS Relief with the funding and other structural and logistical support. On the ground here we have a number of Church Partners who help such as IPC with reagents, Aiken and Goldsboro and other individuals for their contribution to the Formula Programme. There are over 250 children alive today who benefited from this programme that uses WHO guide-lines. There are numerous churches and visitors who by buying bags and craft items made by the Mothers' Support Group give this group a small but steady income throughout the year.



This year in Mwandi the Community will meet as usual on AIDS Day Eve for a candle-lit service in memory of those who are no longer with us and who have been lost to HIV/AIDS. At the service we will have a large number of Orphans and Vulnerable Children, a visible legacy and testimony to the destruction caused to ordinary families by this appalling pandemic. It is a sad and moving occasion but also one of joy and hope in the presence of these children.

Read Ida's full article [here](#).

For more information please contact Bunmi Olayisade, Partnership Coordinator for Africa, at wcr.africa@methodistchurch.org.uk

COULD GOD BE CALLING YOU TO BECOME A MISSION PARTNER?

Please click [here](#) for more information on how you could become one.

National in Mission Appointments

Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMAs): These appointments encourage and support local people overseas in key mission projects in their home churches. Salaries are paid by the Fund for World Mission and enable new work to be developed.

Spain

Ignacio Simal is a National in Mission Appointment (NMA) post holder for the Evangelical Spanish Church's Communications' Department.

At present, Ignacio is helping the Church increase its profile and have greater influence on Spanish society by developing its communications and media strategies. Some of the work he has been doing in the last two years as an NMA includes developing the church's website, diffusing information both to churches and secular society on issues that affect Spanish society, helping local churches make best use of internet tools which help them in their evangelism and social witness, developing campaign resources and redesigning and promoting the church's magazine.

As well as keeping people updated on its activities via networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook, the IEE communications team also designs and produces a wide range of cards and posters.



"Since we launched our Communications department, we've achieved 100% growth in the number of visits the IEE website has received," says Ignacio. "Our web site has become a place where churches can keep up to date on news and access material that no other ecclesiastic denomination is currently offering in Spain."



"Many people from various denominations have written to thank us for our communications work, or to request contact information on IEE communities. They tell us that through our publications, they have discovered a different and evangelistic church; one that is committed to the reality of our country."

Click on the picture to explore the church's website.

WORLD MISSION FUND RESOURCES

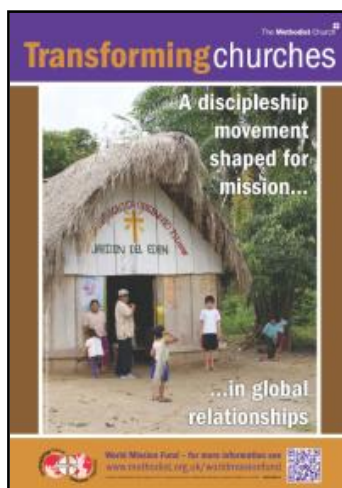
Discipleship on a world map

The World Church Relationships Team is pleased to announce that a great new World Mission Fund video, highlighting the work of our partners around the world, will be released on DVD in the new year. In the meantime, you can see and use the video online by clicking on this picture:



Free posters

Two lovely World Mission Fund posters are available to order from Methodist Publishing in Peterborough for free, plus postage and package (£2.50). Click here to go to their [webpage](#) to place an order.



[Read the stories](#)
[behind the people](#)
[in these posters](#)



World Church Blog: worldchurch.posterous.com

Follow Partnership Coordinator Thomas Quenet on his visit to Central America and Mission Partner Julia Edwards as she attends the UN Conference of Parties on Climate Change in Durban.



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 with its partner churches and organisations overseas, through the sharing of both resources and personnel. You can donate online [here](#) or send a cheque 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'. Click here for more information on the [work that the World Mission Fund supports](#) through the Methodist Church's partner churches and ecumenical organisations.

Prayer Points

- ⊗ Give thanks to God for 200 years of Methodism in Sierra Leone and for continued partnership between our two churches.
- ⊗ Pray for the malnutrition crisis in North Korea. Pray for governments to put the needs of the people first and for the NCKK to be allowed to continue transporting food into the North.
- ⊗ Pray for women all over Asia and the Pacific. Pray that our partners, the WSCF Asia Pacific, will continue providing a platform for training and encouraging women in the region to fulfil their God-given potential.
- ⊗ Pray for *El Sembrador* Methodist School in Ecuador and thank God for the way in which the United Evangelical Methodist Church of Ecuador values indigenous culture.
- ⊗ Pray for courage and perseverance for churches in Central America who have to be the church under difficult circumstances.
- ⊗ Thank God for the decrease in the number of HIV infection and AIDS-related deaths in Africa.
- ⊗ Pray that the communications department run by NMA Ignacio Simal in the Evangelical Spanish Church will continue to be the salt and light to society and to other churches.