



World Church Relationships News Bulletin

September 2011

Partner Churches and Organisations

Psalm 31:24, "Be strong,
and let your heart take
courage, all you who
wait for the Lord."
(NRSV)

India

From the Diocese of Durgapur's monthly newsletter comes this story from Subrata Gorai:

Prayers are answered, but in God's time. That was the simple expression made by one of the faithful at Khejuri. Khejuri in Midnapore was badly affected by "Aila" – the storm which hit two years ago.

The Diocese of Durgapur responded to the situation and provided relief work and built houses and deep tube wells for drinking water. After the work was over, the Diocese of Durgapur withdrew itself from that area. But during the relief work, a relationship was built with the Diocese and the local people of Khejuri. The result was that the Diocese of Durgapur was approached to work on education and health for the "beedi" workers' children.

Keeping that in mind, the Diocese (with the help of the Methodist Church in Britain) will now build a school and a church.

On 23 May, a ground breaking ceremony for the school building was held at Khejuri with the local people and political leaders participating in it. The Rt Revd Dr Probal Kanto Dutta, Bishop of the Diocese of Durgapur, along with Revd Samiran Sinha, Mr AK Roba, Mr KN Das, Mr Subrata Gorai and Mr A Banerjee were present for the ground breaking ceremony.

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Peru

AMIPASTOR (a partner organisation of ours in Peru) specialises in rural mission and development, working amongst rural communities which are in great need. With the cooperation of tribal chiefs, AMIPASTOR coordinates training courses to train agricultural and farming advocates within the native Ashaninka community. They sent us this recent update on their work:

We have been offering courses on organic vegetable growing at the school located in the town of Ene. They were trained in guinea pig rearing using multimedia tools to educate and teach students. We have also been supporting families migrating from the jungle to the San Juan de Oro community, the Santa Rosa District, since 2010. They used to earn a



living by cultivating coca, but now the majority of these families work on organic coffee plantations. In much the same way as the indigenous people, these families did not have any experience in coffee plantation and therefore it was imperative to train them in this area as an alternative to cultivating coca. The training was informative, using multimedia tools and together we visited the plantation in order to teach them about the different diseases and plagues that attack coffee trees.

Those living in the jungle suffer from widespread chronic malnutrition, to a greater extent within indigenous communities. This is because their staple diet consists mainly of cassava. They do not eat any vegetables, so to counter this we have developed a course on growing vegetable gardens and each advocate has been given a manual on growing their own vegetables at home. Likewise, they were given onion bulbs and tomato seeds as these can be grown in the jungle. Families have planted the onion bulbs in their vegetable patches and the tomato seeds have been planted communally, in the aim of eventually being planting in individual vegetable gardens.

The sale of cocoa generates income for the region. The indigenous population had previously never been part of the market, but due to globalisation and to an even greater degree the colonisation of a large part of their territory, they no longer have the natural resources they formerly relied upon. Resources such as fish and other crops were poisoned by the settlers or wiped out. For this reason, there is an urgent need to support them so that they can gain skills in cocoa cultivation and generate income.

This course was taught using multimedia tools and each advocate was also given a manual on cocoa planting.

In light of the fact that animals for hunting have declined, we offered two training modules on rearing guinea pigs to the Kimary alto community. We will offer this training to the Shirumpiari community in the near future. We hope that the children who eat the guinea pig meat will be well nourished, especially as guinea pig meat is higher in protein than other meats. They have been reared communally, after which they will be distributed to each family once they reproduce.



South Africa



The presiding bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Revd Ivan Abrahams, was inducted as the next general secretary of the World Methodist Council on 8 August. Revd Abrahams will succeed the Revd Dr George Freeman, who retires at the end of the year.

The elections took place at the World Methodist Council meeting on 2 August. About 300 council members voted, with Revd Abrahams gaining 97% support from voters.

Speaking of Revd Abrahams' election as the first African, non-United Methodist Church member to hold the post, Bishop Richard Thompson of the AME Zion Church in the USA said: "It's a tremendous sign of hope; a sign that God is really at work among us, lifting us above racism and sectionalism, and pointing us to the power of togetherness."

Bishop Peter Stephens, Head of Church at the Methodist Church of the Gambia said: "It is wonderful to have an African general secretary, as the Methodist Churches of Africa are authentically Methodist – vibrant in worship, enthusiastic in witness and committed to social action."

The World Methodist Council is made up of 77 member churches in 135 countries. Revd Abrahams, whose current term as presiding bishop of the MCSA was due to end next December, has led the six countries of the MCSA (South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Botswana and Mozambique) since 2003.

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Mission Partners

Solomon Islands

Graham and Jenny Longbottom are Mission Partners working for the United Church of the Solomon Islands as doctors at the Helena Goldie Hospital in Munda. Jenny is also responsible for running clinics in different parts of the region. In a recent blog post, they describe one of Jenny's journeys to visit local clinics.



Since arriving here we have had tremendous admiration for the nurses who work in the rural clinics, either in pairs or alone and on call 24 hours every day. It has become a passion for us to support these nurses who manage under difficult circumstances. With this in mind Jenny went off to Paradise (a village in North New Georgia) with the double aim of seeing patients and starting work to improve the clinic building. We are grateful to a school in Wolverhampton for funding to support this project. As usual events did not turn out as anticipated. The chairman of the rural health committee had gone to Honiara

and the working party from the village never appeared. However they did supply us with food and we managed to paint two of the rooms in the clinic. Touring to the neighbouring villages was also a challenge as the boat has no engine and there is no money for fuel anyway. We enjoyed a one and a half hour walk through the bush to one village and borrowed a boat with engine and driver on another day to see patients in the most remote places. One lady complained of backache. Further questioning revealed that the cause was a 12-hour paddle in her dugout canoe back to Helena Goldie Hospital to visit her daughter who had just had a stillbirth. Being woken at 3.00am one night to deliver a labouring mother by torch-light and struggling to find fuel to return to HGH with a couple of sick patients only increased Jenny's respect for the work done by these clinics.

Being paddled up the river in the nurse's dugout canoe for our evening swim (wash) was a highlight: listening to and watching the birds above, and then returning under a beautiful sunset. Watching the locals return in their canoes loaded with water from the river in addition to their washing, reminds us of the lack of basic facilities that we take for granted. Jenny loves the simplicity of life here, whilst recognising the hardships. They are rich in nature, sea, fertile soil and

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also in family relationships where everyone looks after each other.

When talking at the community meeting on Monday morning, Jenny encouraged the people to recognise their own potential for improving their clinic and therefore their own health provision.

Grenada

Mission partner Andy Dye writes: *As I write this month's letter, I am listening to reports of another day of riots across cities in the UK. It's terrible to see what is happening and the ripples from them even hit the shores of Grenada as families seek assurance that their loved ones in affected communities are safe. One lady told me that the area of Camden affected was her shopping street when she visits family in the UK. I have thought about a few of these words mentioned above in the context of my experiences in Grenada this month.*

August in Grenada brings a number of things. For the weather it brings intense heat, humidity and thunder showers. For the events around the island, it brings Emancipation Day and then Carnival.

Emancipation Day commemorates the abolition of the slave trade in the British Caribbean on 1 August 1834, then full emancipation on 1 August 1838. For a day so significant it is strange to me that more is not made of it in the UK. At my church on the Sunday before the emancipation day a special celebration was made of the African heritage of most people who call Grenada home. It was one of those Sunday celebrations that felt as a real privilege to share with my friends here as part of the community.

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After Emancipation Day comes Carnival, a carnival which is said to be the biggest and the safest celebration for August in the Caribbean. It consists of shows, competitions for the best Soca, Calypso, Steel band, Carnival Kings and Queens of the year. There are 'jump ups' (parties) that happen by the side of roads with massive sound systems and of course processions through the streets.



The processions have all kinds of different things in them from Old Mas with placards giving a social commentary, Jab Jabs which are people covered in oil (or other colours) and represent little devils, through to the colour of the mas bands, or the groups of traditional Carnival characters of Short Knee's and Veckos with their heavy clog like boots. The Monday night is a mass of lights, sound and dancing. Now whether these celebrations are your cup of tea or not, you can't help but be left with a sense of community from the whole occasion. Families are involved together and as you walk

around people are constantly greeting each other, talking and laughing together. It's also a time when people can vent steam in dancing and energy but also in their frustrations over the actions of the government. I especially liked the Old Mas and the calypso for their social commentary and biting wit on the news stories in the island.

Germany

Here is a recent update from mission partners Barry and Gillian Sloan in Chemnitz, Germany.

About two and a half years ago, God started sowing seeds in my heart about starting a social and evangelistic outreach project in our neighbourhood (Hilbersdorf, Chemnitz City). This led to us hiring a sports hall one day a week and running a fun day with a warm meal for the kids of the neighbourhood. Volunteers included our Mission Team serving in our church for one year along with other helpers.

Since then I have felt God nudging me to expand this work with other activities and ministries, possibly acquiring a house and using it as a focal point for ministry.

God started to open doors and bring people on board. Philipp and Theresa, a young couple who recently started attending our church are both nurses working in the local Methodist hospital in Chemnitz. Philipp after much prayer has agreed to become project manager. Please pray for them as a family as we begin a new chapter in Hilbersdorf. He and Theresa will be joined by a team made up by Keren from Brazil; Sniedze from Latvia who will be responsible for organizing the daily activities and the creative arts project and others from within our church, USA and Estonia.

At the beginning of June, Philipp and the Mission Team carried out a survey in the neighbourhood, asking people about needs and wishes. The community is still largely atheist but the response was very positive.

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The one final piece of the jigsaw that is still missing is the house. We have viewed a number of empty buildings around the children's park where we would like to begin this project. We basically need the city of Chemnitz, or some other landlord, to provide us with a property, ideally more or less free of charge. In return, we would fill this house with life and ministry to disadvantaged people.

Please pray that God would work wonders here and that a suitable property would be quickly made available to us.

Scholarship and Leadership Training Students

Benin

A parish minister for the Methodist Protestant Church in Benin (EPMB) recently completed a two-year course of study at the Protestant University of Central Africa, thanks to a Scholarship and Leadership Training grant from MCB paid for by donations to the **World Mission Fund**.

Fidèle Fifamè Houssou Gandonou has spent the last two years looking into the issue of restoration of women in society. During the course, she wrote and defended a thesis titled 'the Ethical Crucible of Feminism'.



Fidèle has worked with the Department of Women and the Union of Methodist Women of Benin (UFMB). In her capacity as parish minister of the EPMB, she has travelled to many parts of the country. Fidèle is now going to return home to the EPMB to train other women in how to fight against poverty and ensure food security.

“My gratitude goes to the Scholarship and leadership Training (SALT) Programme for this opportunity,” Fidèle said. “During my studies, I have expanded my knowledge – especially on the restoration of women in society.

Once back home, I will mainly work with women and girls. The advancement of women must include the fight against poverty and ensure food security.”

The Scholarship and Leadership Training programme (SALT) is funded by the World Mission Fund. Students from Partner Churches are given Scholarships to study in a different cultural setting, in order to gain skills that they will use for the benefit of their home church once they have completed their studies and returned home. For more information on this programme please click [here](#)

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

- ⊗ Pray for the Diocese of Durgapur as it builds a new school and Church in the Midnapore region for the benefit of the community.
- ⊗ Pray for AMIPASTOR as it continues to reach out to impoverished indigenous communities and shares Jesus’ Gospel of love and social action.
- ⊗ Pray for Revd Ivan Abrahams as he becomes the new general secretary of the World Methodist Council and give thanks to the Lord for a successful Council meeting.
- ⊗ Pray for Graham and Jenny Longbottom in the Solomon Islands as they continue their work at Helena Goldie Hospital in Munda. Pray for the communities there who are located far away from healthcare facilities and face many hardships.
- ⊗ Pray for Andy Dye as he continues his work in Grenada.
- ⊗ Please pray for the ongoing outreach work of the Sloans in Chemnitz. Pray that God will help them find a suitable property to use as a base for this mission work.
- ⊗ Pray for Fidèle as she returns home to Benin to carry on serving the church by working with women and girls.