



## Andy Dye's Prayer Letter from Grenada February 2010

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The commitment shown by many teachers around the world is extraordinary. Imagine teaching a class in secondary school and for most that is a challenging enough thought. But now imagine it has to be done outside due to lack of classroom space, on top of that, at the start of your lesson your students have to gather together, not only themselves but their chairs and desks of various conditions from around the school. Because the lesson is outside the pupils are constantly distracted by the things going on around them, the shade only covers half the class and the other half have to sit in the glare of the sun, using books and cloths to shade their heads. There is also a strong breeze blowing which means that everything has to be held down or it will fly away. The outside space is shared by another class, separated only by a blackboard, which looks as though it might fall over in the wind. Finally imagine a school where some students can be very challenging and that the other class have no teacher, so they are left to their own devices and you have to monitor them while trying to teach you own class. This accurately describes a lesson that I observed this week by a teacher at Wesley College. At the end of it I congratulated him of his perseverance and he just said 'Well, we don't really notice it, its normal for here'. It is worth noting that while retail prices here are similar to the UK, teacher wages are much lower and about eighty percent of teachers enter the classroom with no formal teacher training.

On Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of February it was 36 years since Grenada became independent from the United Kingdom. For independence celebrations decorations went up all over the island and almost every house, business and school was decked out in the national colours of red, green and gold. In fact people also dress up in the national colours. At school we had a day celebrating independence with a concert in aid of Haiti and the



preparation of the national dish called 'Oil down'. This consists of lots of meat, breadfruit, dumplings and vegetables all chopped up then placed in to coconut milk and cooked in a big pot over an open fire. It tastes good but is a really heavy meal, so after 'Oil down' there is no need to eat for a day of two!

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of February we had the Wesley College sports day. This is the time of year all the schools have their sports days and they are a big deal. Schools hire the national athletic stadium, the minister for education or sports comes a visits, they have food stalls, a huge sound system, official starters and even

have each school house put on a marching parade with cheer leaders. The school sports days are so important that they make the TV news sports report. Then just before the Easter break, a team from each school competes in the inter-college games which is one of the biggest events on the island. In fact a young man from Grenada, Kirani James, recently beat Usain Bolt's Caribbean record for the 400m. At the same time the sports are meant to be fun and include classics such as the sack race, catching the school bus (dressing up) race, and the lime and spoon. It was great to be a part of...even if sometimes I have been scratching my head wondering about all the school work that everyone seems to have forgotten about. I even managed to win a medal for the teachers 100m race (see the picture above!).....well no not a win...just for getting to the end!

Last weekend at church we had some announcements. This is not unusual, but last Sunday we had some strange announcements...at least they were for me. The first was 'What to do in the event of an earthquake'. Grenada has an underwater volcano near by so it is possible, although unlikely. I now know that I should either go under the bed, door frame or in to a field (if there is one near by). The second announcement was that we are in to the dry season and because rain fall has been low over the past year we are expecting severe drought over the next three months. That means that from the 1st of March the Government will be rationing water. People will only get water in the morning between 5am and 9am. Any water that is needed for the day has to be collected then. But actually from talking to people many do not have a consistent water supply already. One boy at school told me that because he lives on a hill the water pressure is too low to make it up the hill and so his family have to take buckets down the hill to collect their water. As usual in these situations the poor, elderly and sick suffer most, so it is important that we look out for them and help them during this time.

Prayer points:

- Give thanks for an initial good response in re-starting youth meetings at Bethel church, where I am based for church activities.
- Thank you for the prayers about the difficulties of accents, I am understanding more and I think (hope) the children are understanding me more.
- Continue to pray for Haiti, the long term work of reconstructing lives and the continuing campaign to see justice and freedom from debt.
- For Grenada and the region which is suffering from a lack of rain, especially the most needy in society.
- For the church as it seeks to celebrate 250 years of Methodism in the Caribbean in a meaningful way.

Please feel free to drop me an e-mail at the address above.  
God bless,  
Andy