

Andy Dye's Prayer Letter from Grenada November and December 2011

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Happy New Year!

As I write this we are already three days in to 2012. It doesn't feel a lot different and I still haven't seen any of those rocket cars we were all promised in the year 2000! May I add my new years greetings to the many you will have had already and I hope and pray that 2012 is a year that is full of love in all circumstances.

Recovery

At the start of my last newsletter I mentioned that the Superintendent of the circuit had been taken ill. Well I can let you know that he has made a great recovery and he is now back, almost, to his best. Thank you for all of your prayers for him and for the continuity of the work in the Methodist Church in Grenada.

Recording

The month of November in Grenada traditionally contains a week of missionary services. This year was no different and the Rev. Dwane Samm, superintendent of the Tobago Circuit came to preach at each Methodist Church, night by night, over a week. A number of the services are held in the open air and invitation made to the community around to listen in (usually through a VERY loud sound system which is the norm!). The band that I am part of at Bethel church were heavily



Bethel Band recording songs for Carriacou

involved. For the church on the sister island of Carriacou it was impossible to take over all our instruments for the services there. So in a new experience for the band we were able to get some technical help and record the songs and hymns required as mp3 recordings. It took a bit of 'messing around' with wires and levels and microphone placements on drums, but eventually we managed to make some recordings that sounded OK (ish!). It was great to get feedback later on about how the songs had been used and how it added a different dimension to the worship in Carriacou, which is usually done without any accompaniment. In my opinion nothing beats a live band or organist but if technology can help us enhance worship and connect us together then that has got to be good!



Me and My parents Grenada Carol Singing!

Parents

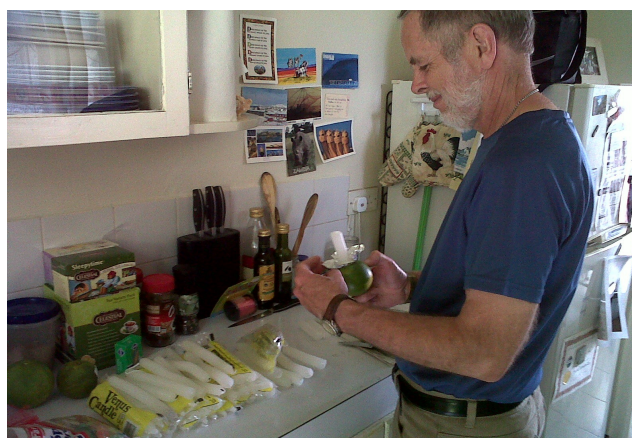
My parents joined me for Christmas in Grenada this year. It was great to spend time with them because I haven't seen them (apart from on Skype) for over a year! It was good to take them

around the island, show them my favourite places and introduce them to friends here. We had an interesting experience when my mum really wanted to go carol singing, so we went along to join with the Constantine fellowship. My parents expected a walk through the community, singing carols, which is what they got. However what they did not prepare for was the ear blistering sound system, powered by a generator strapped to the back of a truck, to amplify all of our singing and our prayers for the community. Amplification is needed to make sure that everyone in the community hears, however in the UK the police would probably be called! After two years here was good to see Grenada again through 'fresh eyes', challenging me to think about what I do and how I live in a different culture. However, I think their main comment was...'Its too hot to be Christmas!'

Weddings and Christingles

On the 16th of December I got to go to my first wedding in Grenada. It was of Leon and Leslie-Ann. Leon is part of the same fellowship group as me at Bethel church. Since my arrival in Grenada he has become a good friend and is always very encouraging. Leslie-Ann works on TV as a news presenter and Leon is a prison counsellor, local preacher and past revolutionary. This had something to do with the interesting make up of the guest list with media people, former revolutionaries, former prisoners, government ministers, lawyers, doctors and ministers of religion. However the best thing was seeing the big smile glued to Leon's face all day!

The day after the wedding was the cradle roll service at Bethel church. A special effort was made by the cradle roll secretary to contact all the parents of the children on cradle roll and invite them to celebrate Christmas. I was fortunate to be leading the service along with the Bethel youth, so we put together a Christingle service, along with the tradition giving of gifts to all the children below 6 years old. Thankfully my parents and a friend of mine, Ria, were on hand to help me make up the 50 (ish) Christingles for all the children.



Dad adding the candles



A table of Christingles eagerly waiting for children to take them!

For nearly everyone that I asked, Christingle was either completely unknown or mostly forgotten. That meant that after the explanation of the Christingle story, there was a satisfying (for me!) gasp as all the Christingles were revealed. My hope is that the children and adults remember the Christingle and what its different parts mean. Can you remember what the parts mean? The orange? Four cocktail sticks with sweets? Red ribbon wrapped round the orange? The lighted candle? The foil (a tricky one!)

Stereotypes (2)

"People must spend Christmas on the beach!"

Perhaps some people do spend Christmas on the beach here, but in the main its much like the UK. People spend the day with family, have a big Christmas lunch, drink a little (or a lot). People put up lights outside their houses, and artificial trees are surrounded by presents. The biggest difference is the 5am Christmas morning service in the Methodist Church and no sprouts!

Two years

So that brings me to the end of two years in Grenada. It continues to be a joyful, bewildering, encouraging, challenging, frustrating at times, learning, partnership experience. I have realised more and more over these two years of the need for Gods grace and love for me. I am more and more assured of His grace and love working in the world around us, especially in those places that seem the grimmest and toughest. The privilege of working as a mission partner still amazes me, and it would not be possible without the prayers and support from family, friends, colleagues, people of faith and people of no religious faith. Thankyou for reading, thinking and praying.

Please pray:

- For the life of the Methodist Church in Grenada to shine with the light of Jesus.
- Give thanks for the work of Wesley College and all the teachers at the school as they seek to give their time and talents to education children under challenging conditions.
- For the marriage of Leon and Leslie-Ann as they embark on a life together.
- For the children of the Methodist church in Grenada, especially Bethel, that they will remember the meaning of the Christingle and its message of God's love.

Please feel free to contact me, send me your answers to the questions above and now you can follow me on Twitter, to receive quick updates on my life as a mission partner.

Thanks for reading, God bless you
Andy

(Methodist Mission Partner in Grenada)

'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.' John 1:14