

Eve; First Harvest; and an Annual Fiji wide Methodist church conference held in an agreed host Division. Amongst other things, the annual conference provides an opportunity for members of the Methodist church to give their pledges to the church, pilgrimages to historical church locations in Fiji, a week long choral carnival, a bazaar for traditional artifacts sales and also a time for renewal of faith and social bonds among the different village communities in Fiji.

The main services held in the church include: Saturday evening prayer service; Sunday early morning prayer service; Wednesday evening prayer service; Sunday mid morning church service; Sunday evening church service; Monthly circuit church service; Women's circuit church service (quarterly); Men's fellowship circuit church service (quarterly); Sunday School circuit church service (quarterly).

The hymns used during the church service are from the Fijian Methodist hymn book, the tunes which closely resemble the music provided by the missionaries. Chorus are occasionally sung too. Children are an integral part of the formal worship as they are normally expected to be in the presence of the parents and village elders during the delivery of the sermon on the main Sunday mid morning service.

In line with Methodist Church in Fiji guidelines and constitution, the church also performs various church related activities with other churches in the area. These include: Sunday school rallies, Youth rallies, Annual Division Youth Camps; Women's fellowship rallies, Men's fellowship rallies; Circuit choir competition; Annual country wide Methodist choir competition; Visitations to hospitals etc.

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Churches Overseas

“My home church”

Prepared by the World Mission &
Service Committee for World Church
Sunday 2007

It is very easy to sit in church at Selly Oak and forget that we are one of many thousands of churches around the world holding a Christian service.

A glance round our congregation soon makes one realise that there are people from many countries worshipping with us. In this booklet they tell us about their own churches and we can gain a new understanding of the world church

You may find it helpful to use this booklet as a prayer guide and a way of thinking about other churches.

Many thanks to those who have contributed . We hope other people from overseas will tell us about their church and we extend our knowledge and understand still further

ZAMBIA

Friday Nkhoma

The United Church of Zambia, St. Andrew's Congregation, Lusaka.

The Congregation has a **membership** 900 to 1200 members. It has different groups and these are Women, Men and Youth Christian Fellowships, Boys & Girls Brigades, Sunday school, HIV/AIDS Millennium Project, Social Welfare, Globalization Committee, 3 Choirs etc.



The church leadership consist of Executive (Minister-in-charge chair, Congregation Secretary, Vice Secretary and Treasurer), then Pastoral Committee, Congregation Council, Annual General Meeting with seven sections each with four elders and six stewards.

The church celebrates Christian **festivals** and these are Unity week, Psalm

FIJI

Moses Dukanivosa

Vanuadina Village Methodist Church is a Fijian village church. The Church comes under the supervision of a circuit minister who reports to the Division minister or superintendent in accordance with the organisational structure of Methodist Church Conference in Fiji.



Methodism in Vanuadina village is said by the elders to be the direct influence of the early impact of Methodist missionary work in Rewa and Bau, two early powerful Fijian tribes on the south-eastern part of Fiji's main island. Interactions between the missionaries and the chiefs paved the way for expansive evangelism and associated Methodist training and education for locals. In fact an important part of Fiji's colonial history is closely knit with the development that early Methodist missionaries brought. Significant of these early church developments was the translation and printing of the first Fijian bible on the island of 'Viwa' and the establishment of a seminary training centre in 'Navuloa'. Trained local pastors often got posted to villages along the route of the mission work to further cultivate and help sustain the faith in the village communities. Vanuadina's location within the area in which this early church development was taking place proved beneficial. The work of pastors assisted the early rooting of Methodism in Vanuadina and other similar village communities within the area. This was also aided in general by village leaders or chiefs who were transformed by the gospel. Their social and institutional influence contributed to the communal turning to Christian worship and practice. For the village of Vanuadina, an outstanding contribution to the institutionalisation of Methodism with its people is the late Orisi Wabutu. Orisi was the 'Vunikalou' (leader of the 'Naiwau' clan or 'yavusa') at that time during the early 1900's.

There are about fifty families who worship at the church today. They contribute to the management and organisation of the church's activities. The church continues to grow in numbers

Various festivals that the church celebrates include: Children's Sunday or Palm Sunday; Easter Sunday; Christmas Day; Mother's Sunday, New Year's

church also exists outside Iraq , in UK, USA, Canada , Holland, Sweden , Australia, France , Norway, Germany, Iran, Jordan ,Syria, Turkey and Greece .

There are three functioning Monasteries for men where they can live and get their training either to be Priests or Monks e.g Al- Dora seminary which was established since 1860 in Mosul, it then moved to Al -Dora in Baghdad. The Babylon College which is just a few yards from the seminary is where the priests and the ordinary people get together and study either to become priests or lay workers in the church . Because of present situation has moved to north Iraq because of the lack of safety . Several Chaldean monks and nuns belong to other orders of the Catholic Church, the Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans, Redemptorists, Salesians, the brothers of Focolare and the Little Sisters of Jesus.

This Institute for Religious Education, provides three year course in Christian studies students are awarded a diploma. A two years course in Eastern Liturgy also in Baghdad ,student will be provided with a Certificate. The church provides a Marriage Councillors course.

The year in the Chaldean Church Calendar is divided to seven seasons, the first is Advent it lasts for four weeks, Christmas two weeks, then the Baptism of Jesus for seven weeks. Lent which is for seven weeks, when people fast every day except Sundays, leading to Easter .

The congregation where I worshipped in Baghdad had 200 families as members. For Sunday School which was on Friday, not Sunday, we used to have up to 200 children starting from age three to 18 years old , the church was the only place where they felt they could play and relax and also learn about their faith. They loved coming to the church , if their family wants to punish them, they will say to their children 'no church tomorrow'.

On May 2nd 2007 the leaders of the church met the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams; they asked him to help the Iraqi Christians those who are inside Iraq and the ones who are seeking asylum in UK, to be granted asylum.

We have a big Iraqi Christian community in London, where we rent a church to meet every Sunday , we can not offer to buy one, so this means that the meetings are very limited. The church is run by Fr Habib Jajou , the church has website to help those in other parts of the UK to communicate and to know about any important events.

Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Easter (Holy) week, Harvest Sunday, Christmas and the church has also devised some festivals that are celebrated, Women Christian week (Mothering Sunday), Youth Week (Youth Sunday), HIV/AIDS Awareness Sunday, Globalization Sunday, Bible Society Sunday, Theological Education By Extension in Zambia (TEEZ) Sunday and Theological College Sunday.

The church was born in 1964, prior to independence, different denominations came together to form the United Church of Zambia (UCZ). These churches were Methodist Church, Church of Scotland, Council for World Mission(CWM) then London Mission Society (LMS), Church of France (CEEVA), Barothse Church, and Copperbelt Free Church. So the Church is protestant in nature and its liturgy is such. The church has usual services and special services like induction service of a new resident Minister.

The church being protestant uses the Hymns and Psalms hymnal prepared by British Methodist Conference, Baptist Union, Churches of Christ, Church of England, Congregational Federation, Methodist Church in Ireland, United Reformed Church, and the Wesleyan Reform Union published in 1983 by Methodist Publishing House Peterborough. The church being a Zambian church, traditional music instruments are used and the modern music instruments (Key boards, guitar etc) are used too. The church has also Zambian songs that are composed by its music directors and these are used by the choirs in most cases.

Children are special in the church, they have Sunday school classes, and once in a month and on special Sundays they come into the service. They present what they have been learning songs, bible memory verses, sketches and drama.

The church has a long history in its **ecumenical relations** with other denominations. On Psalm Sunday churches in the area come together in an open space for prayers, songs and preaching of the gospel early in the morning, then a march past going to different denominations for their usual mass. In 2007 nine denominations participated (2 Roman Catholic, 2 Living Water Church, UCZ St. Andrews, 2 Baptist Church, Dutch Reformed Church, and Anglican Church. It is also a member of the following ecumenical bodies Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), All Africa Conference on Churches (AACC), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), Council for World Mission (CWM) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

GHANA

Janet Mamsah

The Methodist church in Ghana has several branches throughout the country. One of its smaller branches is Dadiesoaba Wesley Methodist church. The church is located at Dadiesoaba, a village in the Asutifi district of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. The church has a membership of 265 adults and 85 children. It has a resident Minister and 5 outreach churches in the surrounding villages.



Apart from the various Christian festivals like Christmas, Easter and Good Friday etc, the church celebrates marriage ceremonies not necessarily weddings but traditional ones of its members. The death ceremonies like the burial of a dead member, its funeral celebration and the thanksgiving or memorial services are arranged and attended by the entire church.

There is one service on Sunday between 9.30 am to 1.00 pm. The service begins with the choir and the singing band processing, followed by the preacher. In addition to hymns that are sung from the Methodist hymn books, there are other gospel songs that are sung mostly in Akan, the local language, with clapping of hands, drumming and dancing. This normally takes place during the period of praises and offering. Another kind of music used during service is 'abibidwom'. It is a kind of traditional music with lyrics praising God. One or two members sing interchangeably while the entire congregation joins in from time to time at the prompt from the singer.

There are early morning services on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 5 am and 6 am. On Sundays between 5 am and 6 am various classes meet to discuss the bible. At this service, members are given the opportunity to ask questions on the bible and give answers to questions in the bible. Members who attend the service are recorded and those who were unable to attend are visited in their homes and prayed for.

The children have their service differently. However, they are given a Sunday in the year for them to conduct a Sunday service to demonstrate

The children join in all the services except on Sunday morning and afternoon where they have their own children services.

At the beginning the church used translated songs from the western missionary but now have developed their own traditional **songs and tunes** and these are now becoming more popular in the church services than the translated western songs.

The church is a missionary minded church and sponsored 133 missionaries who are working in India and abroad. The church is also involved in the local development committee set up by different churches and the NGO's for better education for children, give awareness to the people about alcohol and drug abuse, and help the poor and the needy.

IRAQ

Rania Yousif

The Chaldean Catholic Church

Christianity took root in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in the first Century. The good news was brought by apostles; Toma, one of the twelve, Addie one of the seventy, two disciples of Jesus, and his pupils Mari and Aggai. The spoken language for the Chaldean community is Aramaic and we worship in Aramaic, the language of Jesus.



We are descendants of Abraham who was a citizen of Ur in Babylon. The church has bishops and patriarchs. The first bishop John Sulaqa was appointed in 1553. Then in 1830 Pope Pius VIII confirmed John Hormiz as the Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans'. The present patriarch Emmanuel III Deli was elected by the College of Bishops in 2003 after the death of Patriarch Bidawid. We have links with Rome but we have our differences as well.

There are about 24 churches in Baghdad which used to have regular services nowadays none can be regular. There are twelve in Mosul and Arbil, six in Alqosh, four in Kirkuk, five in Duhok, two in Zakho, two in Basra and one in each of Imara, Hillah and Ba'qubah. The Chaldean

'Network Gatherings' at different denominational churches, like at the Catholic, Anglican, Salvation and Methodist. The Network visits the sick, bereaved, assisted the poor, and even does some counselling. Regularly, churches would get together for a common national prayer event and the priests from all the attending denominations would share the platform. It would be heart-warming.

This is Charity Chitunhu showing her red uniform which is common sight in Zimbabwe



The **Christmas** festival is the most exciting. It would be marked by an all-night prayer session. There will be a lot of gifts and the spirit of joy and celebration. The 'have and the have nots' would come to church to worship and eat together whatever would have been donated by the people themselves. There would be exchanges/distributions of gifts.

INDIA

Rev. L. Lawmsanga

Presbyterian Church, Khatla, Mizoram,

It is a big church with total members of 2331 including children.

The Church celebrates major **Christian festivals** Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, Christmas and New Year. Besides these the church observes some local important days like Missionary Day, World Sunday School Day, Hospital Sunday, etc.



The church has different kinds of **services** Bible and Christian ethics study on Wednesday evening, Prayer and sharing on Saturday evening, Sunday morning is totally devoted to Sunday Schools for adults and children separately. The total enrolment of Sunday school students is 2143. Sermon services are in the afternoon and evening on every Sunday. There used to be a regular morning prayer at the church all through the year. Moreover, the whole month of September is dedicated for the mission and revival where the local church organises a month long programme on mission and evangelism.

what they have been doing. The church has affiliation with other churches in the village. There is a week long joint service for all the churches in the village every year. The position for the chair of the joint churches association moves annually from church to church.

SOUTH AFRICA

Lindile Xaba

I am from Pretoria in South Africa. The name of the church I used to attend was St Johns Methodist church based in Pretoria in a military Area called Thabatswane in South Africa. It is a small Church comprising of about 200 members with its own Minister sometimes assisted by chaplains from military Units. We normally celebrate festivals like Easter Festivals, have holy communions each and every first week of the month, do weddings of the members, conduct funerals, baptism and confirmation of members.

The Morning service is conducted in English starting from 9 am till 10 am and the service starting from 11am till 1 pm conducted either in Xhosa, tswana or Zulu languages where we sing and dance, clap in these languages. The morning is English singing with an organist helping. The children go to their different Classes that we call Sunday school till the end of the services.

Our church is very much involved in visiting local townships where we invite people to come and join us, and we visit the local hospitals and hospices giving hope and support to people and sometimes local prisons. We also arrange feeding the poor and street kids where we cook meals for them. We also have evening Services and bible discussions. It is growing step by step as the place is small and having lot of different denominations.

ZIMBABWE

Faria Masekesa

ZIMBABWE METHODIST (HWISIRI/WESLEY)

The services are very lively, well attended, mostly uniformed and con-

ducted in our own languages. It enjoys a massive following back home.

Attendance used to be about 200 people for just a normal service. Holy Communion services are periodically held but more somberly

We celebrated **New Year** as an overnight service. There used to be a myth that on the stroke of the New Year, it would thunder and the noise would be heard, so by the second there would be dead silence.

Palm Sunday is celebrated by a march along the road whereby people will be laying palms, leaves, cloths amid music, towards the church. At the church the praise and worship follows the bible reading

Easter: preparations would start about three weeks earlier, when small groups would rotate in their neighbourhood at night, conducting prayers in line with the spirit of Easter. On the Thursday night before Good Friday, people assemble at a chosen church for the year's celebrations. We used to assemble at three churches within walking distance of each other. Virgil starts. There is no sleeping but praise and worship. An elder or priest or church leadership would open the service and then it becomes open to revelations/witness by whosoever feels like saying something, in an orderly manner, with musical interludes and dancing. The mood is just blissful. The songs are in line with the events e.g. 'When I survey the wondrous cross,,,' and the bible readings accordingly. During the day people are put in groups to go out in the vicinity of about 5 km/miles to spread the gospel to the public and invite the willing to join them. They worshiped at different houses. Some people converted through these sessions and followed forever. Towards the end of the day, people leave for another church. Virgil continues on the Saturday when Jesus was buried. Saturday evening the congregation moves to the third and final church. The overnight services continue. Very early Sunday morning the gospel is about the mystery of resurrection. There will be a big Holy Communion service. .

There is a Sunday of the coming of the **Holy Spirit**. It is a Sunday service where people are usually in uniform and praise and worship is just slightly longer than normally the case. There is usually Holy Communion. We did not talk in tongues though.

Harvest, would be marked by different products being brought to church.

Depending on what an individual does for a living, people would bring vegetables, maize, or whatever produce of their field, money, livestock, to virtually anything one can think of. Some people would bring goods from their businesses so they could be sold and the money converted to the harvest fund.

Marriage services were held mostly on Saturdays, at the church, with full attendance and there would be a ceremony after. The church would give gifts through its different groups like women, youth, men, choir and individuals as well.

In the event of death there will be a **funeral** service conducted at the church but if the family wanted it otherwise, it would be at their home, conducted by the priest.

Our **hymns** are the same as those here, only they have been translated into our languages. There may be very few additions and current choruses. The other difference could just be the tunes. A foreigner in our service may follow our music by simply substituting the words to our hymnbook songs. We spice our music by the use of drums (ngoma), shakers (hosho), kudu horns (hwamanda), clapping hands, dancing the Zimbabwe Methodist way. The Zimbabwe Methodist Church has a very big following and we are proud to say that **children** formed a very big part of our congregation. There used to be a Sunday school before the main service. The children were grouped according to ages and taught different things accordingly. They would join the main service at the beginning with all others. Sometimes, the service will be conducted by the children, Such services would be short in accordance with the level of the children's attention levels. It was lovely.

There is an annual event for '**passing out and confirming individuals**' to full membership. The confirmed members will be eligible to wear their uniforms with the 'red' colour for women's blouses, red belts and collars for girls, red big sling belt for men and a white sling belt surrounded by the red strip for boys. This occasion usually marks the first day for the receipt of the Holy Communion. It's a memorable service.

The church in Zimbabwe has more women than men. The women have a '**NETWORK**' (**RUWADZANO/MANYANO**). This network, as the name implies, networks with other denominations on a monthly basis, holding