



World Church Relationships News Bulletin

October 2011

Matthew 5:3 *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* (NRSV)

Partner Churches and Organisations

Fiji



The governing body of the Methodist Church Fiji, the annual conference, has been banned since 2008 by the ‘interim government’ which took power in a coup in 2006. Three years of careful negotiation and ‘good behaviour’, aimed at obtaining a police permit under the Public Emergency Regulations for the Methodist annual conference seemed to have been successful and a permit was issued for a scaled down event to begin on 23 August. During the evening of 22 August, the general secretary and his deputy were escorted

to the Queen Elizabeth Barracks for a meeting in which the interim government demanded that the Methodist President and General Secretary play no part in the conference. The only reason offered was pending charges under the emergency regulations, for which the two have been on bail for 14 months while prosecutors attempt in vain to gather evidence relating to the alleged illegality of a committee meeting. The Church took the view that there having been no conviction, it would be unjust to exclude them. At this point the police permit was withdrawn and the Church has since been notified that no Methodist business meetings of any sort may take place until further notice.

Fiji’s interim rulers have made clear their intention to restrict religious freedom, to impose their own choice of religious leaders and to curb free speech. While the Methodists have clung to their right to choose their own leaders it is clear that they will pay a high price for this.

Fiji remains under military rule with no constitution, no parliament, a declining economy and censors in every newspaper and radio station. The Methodist Church in Fiji (which comprises 30% of the population) has been silenced and intimidated by the military during the last five years as the interim government sought to bring about changes in society which it suspected the Church (and the judiciary, parliament, unions and the traditional chiefs) would resist.

In a meeting at the Foreign Office this week, the Asia-Pacific Partnership Coordinator shared concerns about the situation and found there was already considerable concern and activity on the matter. *“The UK Government continues to monitor the situation in Fiji and is committed to supporting freedom of expression,*

the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of association and will continue to encourage states that restrict these rights, including Fiji, to uphold their international human rights commitments,” was the official line with much welcome activity behind the scenes as well as cooperation with other governments and the EU.

The World Church Relationships Team has also been in contact with the TUC, as unions and workers’ rights have also been the target of unjust treatment in Fiji.

You may like to express your views to the new High Commissioner from Fiji, who was accredited on 29 September. He is Solo Mara and the address is Fiji High Commission, 34 Hyde Park Gate, London SW7 5DN.

For more information please contact Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, at wcr.asiapacific@metho-distchurch.org.uk

Pakistan

The Methodist Church in Britain has launched an appeal for the people of Pakistan as the number of flood victims continues to rise.



Photo CWS P/A

The Church of Pakistan called for help after torrential monsoon rains recently fell over the southern Sindh province, destroying livelihoods and spreading disease. More than 7.5 million people have been affected by the disaster and the number could still rise. Four church staff in the Raiwind Diocese died of dengue fever last week and the epidemic has claimed many more lives across the region.

Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, is set to visit Sindh province next week. He said: *“The scale of the disaster is huge. These are the people who were also flooded last year, so some of them have not yet got their livelihoods back in order. The Church of Pakistan is in a position to help. Pakistani church leaders have met with local government officials and that is important because Pakistan is an Islamic state where Christians are a minority.”*

The Church's World Mission Fund has given a grant of £20,000 to the Church of Pakistan. Half of the money will go towards curbing the spread of dengue fever through the purchase of mosquito nets, insect repellent and sprays. The other half of the grant will be used to buy food and emergency supplies. NGOs are responding to the crisis, but the Church’s response is helping to dispel negative connotations surrounding Christians in Pakistan who have been oppressed because of their beliefs and their associations with the West.

You can read a report from Church World Service's Advocacy and Research Unit [here](#) for more information on the affects of the floods in the Sindh Province.

World Church Blog

Follow Steve Pearce, Partnership Coordinator for Asia-Pacific on the [The World Church blog](#) as he visits the Methodist Church in Britain's partners in the Church of North India and the Church of Pakistan.

Ghana

MCB has just given a grant of £15,000 to the Methodist Church in Ghana's Street Children Rehabilitation Project, to help provide care and assistance to street children in Accra.

The programme was started on premises of the Revd Ernest Bruce Memorial Methodist Church in Adabraka, Accra. It is currently non-residential; 25 street children aged between 6 and 15 attend mostly on Saturdays and Sundays to learn basket-making and have Bible studies. They are also taught leadership skills.

"MCG's goal is to contribute to the holistic development of these street children in Accra to enable them to realise their God-given potential and become responsible and useful citizens of Ghana," says partnership coordinator Dr Bunmi Olayisade, who saw the project during a recent visit to Ghana.

"Forty children were identified, profiled, counselled and Christian mentoring and social support provided. They were also enrolled in formal education or vocational training. Target groups were children abandoned by their parents, those living in the streets caring for themselves, those collecting and selling scraps, school drop outs or those who had never been to School and those exposed to abuse, exploitation and criminal activities on the streets."

This is considered a long term social evangelism programme, and the MCG hopes to roll it out in phases by eventually recruiting a programme manager who will collaborate with the Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health service, the department of Social Welfare, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit, Accra Metropolitan assembly (child panel) and the Artisans Association. "The pressing needs are to provide food, clothing, healthcare and education for these twenty five children whilst Church volunteers help out," Bunmi said.

The UK Ghanaian Methodist Fellowship has also given £2,000.00 to the project, while the Italian Ghanaian Methodist Fellowship has donated a further £2,030.00 to it.

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

Scholarship and Leadership Training

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](#)

China/Malaysia

Simon Van Lal Chhuanga is a SALT Student from Upper Myanmar, Malaysia, currently studying at the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary. Every August, students from the seminary go on mission trips to different parts of Asia. This year, for his mission trip, Simon chose to go to Shenzhen in China.

"I had a good opportunity to encourage Chinese Christians around Shenzhen," Simon says. "God is working tremendously in China. Our mission team focused on factory workers and their children. Workers from



different parts of China come to work in Shenzhen; they usually have to leave their children and families back in their home towns.

"The workers stay in factory housing. Women and men are separated. Husbands and wives cannot stay together; neither can parents and children. This means the family can only stay together when their children are on their summer holiday. August is a holiday for Chinese schools, so all the workers' children came to Shenzhen. Their parents rent houses outside the

factory, and have to pay the renting costs for themselves. This causes depression, especially in the mothers. Their life is quite tough. In the daytime, all the children are free. None of them are Christians. So, we went and taught these children, using Bible stories and songs.

"The way I see it, economically China is developing and growing fast, but the people of China need the gospel. Let us pray for them."

Nigeria



Cliff College has been running the Cliff College Training Centre Programme training programme for 10 years, enabling Cliff College lecturers to visit overseas partners and lead group training sessions for the purpose of church capacity building. In 2010, a SALT (Scholarship and Leadership Training) grant from the World Mission Fund was awarded to Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) to support this cross-cultural exchange of personnel between the Methodist Church in Britain and the MCN for the duration of two years. In the summer of 2011, this grant enabled lecturers from Cliff College to

travel to Nigeria and train a group of about 150 Presbyters and Deaconesses in leadership positions within the MCN at two centres, the Methodist Theological Institute in Sagamu and the Methodist Theological Institute in Umuahia. The aim of the exchange was to impart practical, holistic training, with emphasis on mission and evangelism. The lecturers included Revd Dr Malcolm and Janet McCall (New Testament Mission and Theological English and Communication), Dr Peter Ensor (Church growth in Mission), Sir Peter Worrell (Adult Learning), Rev Steve Emery-Wright (Contemporary Youth Mission) and Revd Richard Jackson (Mission and Ministry).



On his experience of lecturing in Nigeria, Richard Jackson reported that, *“Inevitably with such a programme in a proper ‘Nigerian Rainy Season’ there were some comings and goings and adjustments to be made in the light of local circumstances, but with 81 trainees continuing at Umuahia and 70 at Sagamu any feeling of anti-climax after the awards ceremony was soon caught up into the fresh enthusiasm of meeting up again with trainees, local staff and supportive leaders in the local churches and centres. The fact that some members of the visiting team used in both centres were Nigerians and others, no strangers to those involved with us generates a unique sense of community in which we learn from each other. Once again the subjects being taught whilst focusing on mission as part of the programme can give only a hint of the fun and fellowship that is enjoyed rather than endured within the kind of interaction taking place throughout the programme, but particularly during the residential weeks with inspirational visits from the Bishop of Evangelism and local leaders, clergy and lay.”*

Mission Partner News

Why not invite a Mission Partner to speak at your church?

Click [here](#) for a list of Mission Partners who are expected home on leave in 2011.

If you would like to invite anyone on this list to speak at your church, please contact Jan Deakin at deakinj@methodistchurch.org.uk and at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5 JR, Tel: 020 7467 5109.

Mission partners often have PowerPoint presentations, music and stories to share that lend themselves to a wide range of events such as coffee mornings, international evenings or after Sunday lunch meetings as well as informal small groups and midweek meetings. Lay mission partners are happy to be interviewed during a service if they cannot preach.

Zambia

Here’s an update from mission partner Glenn Lund, newly arrived in Zambia:

Hi! It is six months since we arrived in Kitwe to begin at UCZ theological college. What an active time it has been on all fronts -- home, college, community. We have been in fine health except for seizure activity from Kathleen. Much of the time Kathleen seems to be thriving in the Zambian environment being lively and increasingly confident and independent. We are also blessed with good friends and neighbours who take an active interest in her welfare, who help out, and admire the way that Kathleen, as a special needs child, is able to participate so fully in our family and community.

As a family we have not yet fully adjusted to Zambian life and culture - sometimes we find ourselves feeling emotional and stressed. Our overall impression though is positive. We are thankful for our life here and the smooth transition. We appreciate advantages of being based in Zambia's second largest city but also miss many aspects of the African village life we have known. We are now halfway through the Copperbelt's dry season. The air is quite heavy with pollution and dust but most of this season's grass and rubbish burning is complete. On a few nights in June and July the outside temperature sneaked into single figures. We felt the unaccustomed chill and cracked out sleeping bags, duvets and jumpers for the first time since leaving Britain. By midday though it is pleasantly warm. Our water supply is still erratic as is the electricity and internet. Our power was twice cut off because of a payment dispute with a neighbour institution. The situation became so intractable that the UCZ theological college called in the Energy Regulation Board who made a decision strongly in our favour. Hopefully this will mean the end of deliberate, individualised power cuts. Meanwhile I still dream of solar powered water and electrical autonomy.

The Bahamas

The Revd Tom Quenet, Partnership Coordinator for Latin America & the Caribbean, recently returned from visiting mission partners in the Bahamas.



Tom writes: *In the Bahamas, just a scenic bridge crossing away from New Providence Island is the appropriately named location called the Atlantis Resort on Paradise Island. To stay here you can pay from £100 – more than £1,000 per night. With names such as “Atlantis” the images that are conjured are deliberately those of romance. Yet aquariums where sea life is kept*

captive just yards from the magnificent wild ocean and swimming pools with artificial sand beaches just yards from coral sand beaches and turquoise warm seas seems more than a little unreal. It is pretence offered at a price for those that seek to escape.

Yet on the other side of the bridge there is a different world. One of traffic fumes and gangs and crimes and razor wire – so much of the life of one is dependent on the other. The splendid marbled halls on one side provide the employment and economy for thousands on the other. The imbalance between worlds is linked to violence and HIV/AIDS rates amongst the highest in the world. In the midst of this is the Methodist Church that has made the love of God known at the best and worst of times. That has suffered the pain of separation



and violence. And with them is The Revd Eddie Sykes (Mission Partner) of the Methodist Church in Britain seeking to be a disciple of Jesus, bearing witness alongside Bahamians to the need for God in every place.

Belize

Here's an update from mission partner Maggie Patchett:

I am writing this just a few days before I take my annual leave, most of which will be spent back in the UK, returning to Belize by 23rd September.

Over the past few months we have had numerous mission teams working with us throughout Belize, on our various projects and we are extremely grateful for all the assistance they bring. I know most of them go back feeling they have received (spiritually) more than they gave (physically), and so both partners are blessed. In total this year we have had over 20 different teams working with us, and many of these are committed to long term partnering, and are already planning their next visit.

On our biggest project, the high school construction in Belmopan, the progress is visible, and we are now above ground level! The total cost for building the school is over BZ\$ 1.2million, (US\$ 600,000; UK£ 400,000) so you can see what a leap of faith we have taken in starting the project. The need is great, with only enough high school places in the country for around half of the teenage population. At the nearest high school to us in Belmopan, they have a shift system, to enable more students to attend. We hope to have the first intake of students in Sept 2012, but for that to become a reality we need some serious fundraising and hard labour! Many, many thanks to those who have already contributed, and to those who are pledging continued support. We are also truly grateful for all the school supplies, painting and other assistance given around the country.

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

Nationals in Mission Appointments News

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.

Eston

ia

The Methodist Church in Britain is currently jointly supporting two Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMAs) in the United Methodist Church Northern Europe, Estonia, through the World Mission Fund. Estonia's Methodist Church consists of two main cultural groups (Estonian- and Russian-speaking congregations) and Mrs Thea Kant and the Revd Maire Ivanova share the NMA post of coordinator of evangelism, discipleship and spiritual formation.

Part of their work involves working with mission teams from the Methodist Church in Brazil, one of which visited Estonia last year. This team carried out evangelism work with children and young people in Haapsalu, Vormsi, Paide, Tapa, Rakvere, Aseri, Camp Gideon (northern Estonia), Taheva Children's home, Ruusmäe, Veriora, Viitka, Ahja and Rápina (southern Estonia).



“Estonian UMC has come out from the transition period of Communism and has become a free civil society,” Thea and Maire said in a recent report. *“Estonian society has become very secular. The Estonia UMC’s board of discipleship and education has done much good work in the area of small-group ministry and life-long education. But the rapid secularization of society needs even more radical approach to mission: evangelism, church renewal, prayer-networks, discipleship and mobilizing Christians for sharing their faith.”*

For more information please contact Roy Crowder,
Partnership Coordinator for Europe, at
wcr.europe@methodistchurch.org.uk

TELLSHOWBE

The Evangelism, Spirituality and Discipleship Team have developed multilingual resource designed to dispel some of the myths about Evangelism, and to encourage people to engage in the task of evangelism and living life in an authentic way. It has been produced in Mandarin, English, Spanish, Welsh and Portuguese.

You can access this resource through www.tellshowbe.com. Please pass this onto others!

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

- ⊗ Please continue to pray for the leadership of the Methodist Church in Fiji at this politically tense time.
- ⊗ Pray for the ongoing flood relief effort in Pakistan.
- ⊗ Praise God for the opportunities Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary students have had to serve in China – and as Simon says, pray for the Chinese people.
- ⊗ Praise God for the ten years that the Cliff College Training Centre Programme training programme has been running in Nigeria, and for it to continue being a blessing to the Nigerian Church.
- ⊗ Pray for the street children project in Accra; that through it, many young children will have shelter and learn how to be children again.
- ⊗ Pray for the Lund family as they settle in to life in Zambia.
- ⊗ Pray for the ministry of Revd Eddie and Mrs Susan Sykes. Giving thanks for the joy of ministry and asking for grace during times of anxiety.
- ⊗ Please pray for the growing together of the Methodist Church Bahamas /Turks and Caicos Islands District and the Bahamas Conference of the Methodist Church; for the victims of crime and those suffering from HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas.
- ⊗ Pray for the high school construction project in Belmopan, Belize, that work will be completed in time for the first intake of students next September.
- ⊗ Please pray for the joint Nationals In Mission Appointment in Estonia, that God will continue enabling them to share the gospel in Estonia.