



“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.”
Ephesians 4:29 (NRSV)

2018 METHODIST CONFERENCE FRINGE EVENT



Participants at the Conference fringe event

England 1, Colombia 0 (or ‘Growing Methodism everywhere’)

By Andrew Brazier

It might not have been the final score, but it raised a number of smiles as Stephen Skuce, Director of Global Relationships, announced that if there had been prayers for the football, he was grateful they had gone our way.

The tone of the gathering was more akin to the situation at the end of extra time than it was to that moment. The delegates brought waves of energy and colour from a variety of traditions. The glorious food, the extemporaneous prayer, the spontaneous singing, the sudden plunges into moments of sadness, the joy of renewal and growing numbers; all just ebbed and flowed with the slightest hint of potential anarchy. It is quite something to attend a meeting where the emotions of Pakistan’s

slums were held in the same breath as the wit of the Bishop from Gambia. She told a tale of a minister who followed some errant fishermen into Senegal and started the Methodist Church there.

Then the World Church sang. They sang a children’s song. Like baby footsteps teetering into a wider understanding of God. An acknowledgement of faith

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Papua New Guinea: rebuilding after the February earthquake

On 26 Feb 2018, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck the Highlands region of Papua New Guinea – the largest earthquake to affect this region since 1922.

Following the earthquake, the World Mission Fund gave the United Church in Papua New Guinea a solidarity grant of £10,000. The Church's Moderator, Bernard Siaj, sent the following message: "On behalf of our people in both Highlands and Hela, I express our thanks and appreciation to the Christians in the British Methodist Church for the grant of £10,000 towards the victims of the disaster. Your immediate response is seen as the hand of God to the need of our people. Our disaster team is working on plans of relief work to the site. Thank you for your hearts and prayers."

Communities in the southern highlands have been busy rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of the earthquake. Yaken, Olama and Yakenama were

perhaps the three villages most adversely affected in the Lower Mendi area as the violent ground-shake toppled the majority of homes, most of which were built from traditional 'kunai grass' bush materials.

Semi-permanent homes were not immune to the earthquake either. One family, however, took advantage of the crisis by resourcefully redesigning their living space. By salvaging the materials from two homes that had completely collapsed during the quake, Julias Komban and his family created a new 'long house'. "It was the family's idea to put two houses together," said Julias's brother, John Tira. "Our new home can now house all 30 family members under one roof. Old people and children can be together for the first time."



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England 1, Colombia 0 (Continued from p.1) stretched across continents. It is too easy sometimes to pay lip service to connexionalism, but here you could feel the realities stretching out into places many of us can only dream of. Grateful representatives stood again and again to thank the Church for the great foundation it had built, for its grounding in Wesley's

teachings and for the gospel in action.

Groups who encountered a vast array of opposition to their faith stood shoulder to shoulder. In each other they recognised that the refugees in Germany and poverty in Haiti are embraced by the bedrock, and "go not only to those who need you, but those

that need you most". As often as not now, that is the Church here in Britain.

Best of all though is that such camaraderie in the face of difficulty came with humour, music and a vegetarian option! This truly was a foretaste of a diverse heavenly banquet.

Living hope by Syntiche Dedji

At 8.15am on 6 August 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima.

Along with the great loss of human life and limb sustained on that day, there were other casualties we do not often hear about: trees. When I arrived in Hiroshima on 11 June for the Global Article 9 Conference, I did not expect to visit a number of trees, all badly affected by the atomic bomb – nor for them to become a source of inspiration to me. One in particular, a Chinese Parasol, had half of its trunk burnt to a hollow by the heat rays. The tree is still growing today as if it were protecting the burn on its trunk.

Suzuko was 22 when the bomb took both her left leg and her fiancée. She tried to commit suicide many times, but then one day she came to this tree and saw it sprouting. She felt the tree was telling her, “Keep going. I myself was hurt by the bomb and I’m doing the best I can”. This tree inspired Suzuko to keep fighting for survival, and she eventually went on to help the victims of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. The Hiroshima Methodist Central Church (as it was known at the time) was just 800 metres from the epicentre of the blast and sustained catastrophic damage. Parts of the building survived thanks to its strong metal and concrete structure, which was rare for

buildings in Hiroshima at the time. However, the surrounding buildings (which were mostly wooden) were completely obliterated.

“Though it hurts our hearts to see what has become of the once beautiful chapel, we feel like we can hear God’s voice more clearly when we pray here,” the Revd Kiyoshi Tanimoto, who pastored the church, wrote in his diary on 12 May 1946. “The atomic bomb should never be forgotten, even when generations change. We have a mission to pass on our knowledge of it.”

This is the aim of the cross that hangs in Hiroshima Nagarekawa Church, as it is now called. Built from remains of the original destroyed church, the cross was installed in remembrance of those killed by the bomb, as a symbol of repentance and atonement for our sins, and as a symbol of the quest for reconciliation and peace through prayer.

Just like the affected trees that can be seen all over the city, the rough, blackened wooden cross that hangs in Nagarekawa Church stands as a symbol of hope; of a church that suffered through, but which continues to bear testimony to, the wrongness of war.



Guatemala: Update on El Fuego

The volcano El Fuego in Guatemala erupted suddenly on 3 June and again on 5 June. More than a million people who live in the surrounding area were affected; 75 people died and 200 have been reported missing. Rescue workers and volunteers have been working hard to rescue survivors and recover the bodies of those who have died as a result of hot gas and molten rock streaming from the volcano. Ash spewed by the volcano has travelled as far as Guatemala City.



The World Church Team has been in contact with the Methodist Church in Guatemala, to discuss how the Methodist Church in Britain might best support relief efforts in those affected communities. We will update these pages with more information soon, but please do stand by our Partner Church in prayer and intercession.

“I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”

John 16:33 (NRSV)



PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We lift up the nation of Guatemala and those communities affected by the volcanic eruptions.

We cry out to you, oh God, for your hand to be upon all those who have been affected in some way by the eruptions.

May your comforting Holy Spirit embrace those who have lost loved ones.

May your healing hand heal those scarred emotionally and those who have sustained injuries.

We dare to ask that not one more life be lost as a result of the eruptions.

We pray for those many thousands living in shelters. We pray that your strong arm would sustain them, and your generous heart provide for their pressing needs.

We lift up the rescue workers and volunteers before your throne of grace. We pray that you strengthen them and lead them to every survivor by the discerning power of Your Holy Spirit. We pray for governmental and non-government relief efforts in Guatemala, that the work would be coordinated effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the victims.

We pray that you help the National Evangelical Methodist Church in Guatemala to effectively mobilise resources and volunteers, in coordination with external partners, in order to support affected communities and as witness to the love of Christ for the nation. We pray that in these dire, tragic circumstances, that the love of Christ would prevail and give hope to the hopeless.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord we pray.

Amen.

For more information, please contact Sandra Lopez at wcr.americascaribb@methodistchurch.org.uk

NATIONALS IN MISSION APPOINTMENTS

Nationals in mission appointments (NMAs): The World Mission Fund enables Partner Churches to employ local members of their Church to work in new, key mission projects in their home churches, by paying for the salary costs of an NMA post.

Walking with those in need

Camino (the Spanish word for 'walk') is the name of a project run by our Partner Church in Spain, the Iglesia Evangélica Española (IEE). Working in Alicante and Valencia, the Camino Association supports a shelter for homeless people and distributes food, clothing and household goods to about 400 families.

NMA post holder David Manzanos is the Camino Association's Social Action Coordinator. He has a degree in health technical assistance – the field in which he worked before becoming a pastor of the IEE. David works with the city council's social services, referring people to specialised care services.

Over the past year, Camino's volunteers have increased in number – both the 'sporadic' ones who work one morning a month making the batches of food, and the 'fixed' ones who commit themselves to a day or more a week to help with counselling and other services.

"Among the sporadic volunteers, we receive no less than 10 people each week," says Alfredo Abad Heras, President of IEE. "With the fixed ones, we have a stable group of 12 people who each week contribute to the distribution of food and clothing, personalised attention and advice and work guidance.

"Today, Camino is an association known and valued in municipal and provincial social services. We also provide counselling, psychological support and school support to minors."



Living alongside student ministers who were so enthusiastic about their faith has given me a new zeal for my Christian belief ... the Encounter Worldwide experience has changed my life.

Anne Baldwin,
English Teacher, Sri Lanka

ENCOUNTER WORLDWIDE offers Christians in Britain and Ireland (aged 18 and over) the chance to spend three to twelve months sharing in the Methodist Church's mission, life and culture in another part of the world as a self-funded volunteer.

Interested to undertake your own encounter? Contact Rachel Gooden in the World Church Relationships Team.
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The **Methodist Church**
World Church Relationships

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Volunteers cook for the young people's rally that was part of celebrations to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Church of Papua New Guinea.



PRAYER

Lord, we pray for peace – both within ourselves and in the world around us. We think of countries suffering from ongoing war, from the effects of past wars, or from the threat of war. We pray for peace in our natural world, thinking especially of victims of natural disasters such as those affected by the recent volcanic eruption in Guatemala, inhabitants of Papua New Guinea who are still rebuilding their lives following the earthquake earlier this year, and the people of Japan following recent floods.

Lord, give us peace – both within ourselves and in the world around us. Amen.