

ONE MISSION MATTERS



Summer 2016 • No 45

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Dear friends

The Connexional Engagement Team brings together our work to conserve and use our heritage for mission, to develop dialogue with the Connexion and promote our publications and campaigns, and to encourage response.

Your willingness to pray, to offer your time and talents, and to support the work of the Church financially is truly humbling. See pages 8-9 for a breakdown of the income received this year and the grants made. In particular, THANK YOU for more than £60,000 towards Methodist Refugee Support and £100,000 to the Cumbria flood appeal.

We seek to engage both our congregations and wider communities through our heritage. Follow the redevelopment of the smallest Methodist preaching place in the world (allegedly!) as a gateway museum for Cornish visitors (on page 13). We may even make history; Wicken Methodist Church has placed a *One Mission Matters* magazine in a time capsule in their foundations (see page 5)!

The work of our local churches reflects a message of welcome and acceptance. Your support for the mission funds has facilitated projects as varied as supporting homeless people in Clacton (page 11) to redistributing food in Blackpool to the people who need it most (page 6). While your generosity towards the World Mission Fund enables partners to make a difference in China and Papua New Guinea, Mozambique and New Zealand.

This edition of *One Mission Matters* highlights the wide variety of ways in which connexional grant funds are being used to equip and grow the Church. These inspiring stories illustrate how these funds make a difference. We want to say THANK YOU for the ways in which you have supported that work, and to encourage you to continue to live generously.

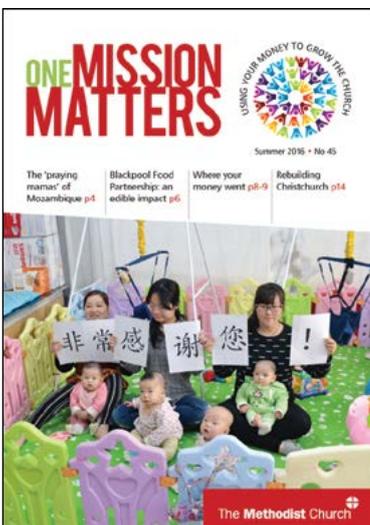
THANK YOU for helping the Methodist Church engage with mission.

Jo Hibbard

Jo Hibbard
Director of Engagement

“XIÈXIE!”

Staff and children at the Grace Angels' Garden in China say a big “XIÈXIE!” (“THANK YOU!” in Mandarin) to *One Mission Matters* readers for your support over the past year.





The layout of the Grace Angels' Garden orphanage

Angels without wings

Yiye Liu



In China, we usually call infants angels, and regard disabled infants as angels whose wings are broken. However, there are also angels without wings: disabled infants who have been abandoned by their parents!

In 2014, Christians in the town of Xi'an in China's Shaanxi province found that many young parents were abandoning disabled newborn infants. The economy was poor and unemployment rising. Some parents didn't think they could afford the cost of raising a child, let alone pay for the treatment of a disabled one.

Many believers wished they could do something for these infants, and this was how the Grace Angels' Garden came to be established, on the East 11th Lane in Xi'an. The Garden offers the infants a warm-hearted family, daily care, rehabilitation training and special needs education.

The Grace Angels' Garden currently has 12 infants in its care. Some have severe learning disabilities, some have

congenital heart disease, one is deaf and another was born prematurely. One of them is two-year-old Chong, who was born with congenital pulmonary hypoplasia. Chong is so clever, he could already say words like "Dad" and "Mum" when he was 10 months old! He cannot say words clearly and cannot form long sentences. However, he can understand all the things that the nurses say to him, and he is learning new things.

The Garden is working together with the Centre for Children's Welfare and Adoption to find adoptive parents for the children. Grace Angels' Garden hopes that through their service, the adoptive families and their communities will get to feel God's unconditional love.

WHAT ARE YOU #thankful FOR?

This summer we are sharing what we are **#thankful** for.

Join the conversation. Send us a photo of yourself and what you are thankful for.

-  Tweet what you are **#thankful** for to @MethodistGB.
-  Send your **#thankful** photos to the Methodist Church in Britain Facebook page.
-  www.methodist.org.uk/thankful

Jenny Spouge, casino chaplain in Luton, sends you this "Thank You" message for giving generously to the Connexional Funds.





Mozambican Methodist women worshipping together

Photos: Margarida Ribeiro

The 'praying mamas' of Mozambique

The Revd Dr Margarida Ribeiro

Women in Mozambique face many problems, especially with violence against women, children and elderly people.

Women have reported that in some places, families in extreme poverty have put children up 'for sale' in order to survive. Also, when elderly people are no longer able to help their families with work, they are falsely accused of sorcery and subsequently abandoned.

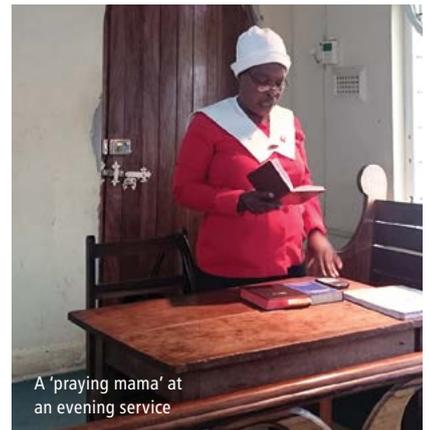
However, the Methodist Church in Mozambique has been working hard on the issue of abuse. Leading the way is a team of women known as the 'praying mamas'.

The 'praying mamas' are so called because, they say, "we pray and act". They do home visits, and if there is someone with special needs, the 'praying mamas' will clean their houses, go to the supermarket for them, or accompany them to hospital. This special care is a

full-time thing, especially with elderly and sick people. The 'praying mamas' also stay with bereaved families – not just during funerals, but until the families are ready to continue their life journey.

The 'praying mamas' dress very strikingly in black and red/magenta, with white hats. When I asked them about their clothes, they said: "Our skirts, socks and shoes are all black because we were in darkness. Our blouses (red for Wesleyans and magenta for United Methodists), represent the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed. And our white hats represent the Holy Spirit."

I met the 'praying mamas' in July last year, when I had the opportunity to work with Methodist women in Mozambique, running a course on



A 'praying mama' at an evening service

the theme *Women in the Bible and Early Methodism: Perspectives and Challenges*. The course was held in Maputo (Mozambique's capital), with 36 leaders representing 23,000 Mozambican women. It was developed by the Otilia Chaves Centre at the Methodist School of Theology in Sao Paulo, Brazil, with special support from the Methodist Church in Britain.

PRAY

Please pray for the Mozambican Methodist Church's 'praying mamas' as they reach out to women and families in need.

One Mission Matters makes history

In the summer of 2015, the members of Wicken Methodist Church were clearing out their chapel to make way for the builders when they had an idea.



"We thought how great it would be to find a 'time capsule' from 1911," says Sara Rains, a youth leader and steward at the church. "Unfortunately we didn't, but it gave us the idea of planting our own!"

"We asked the congregation to make contributions: hopes for the future, memories of chapel from their past – and their sealed offerings were slipped into the capsule. We included an issue of our village magazine and church literature – including *One Mission Matters!*"

In October the church got the call from the builders that it was time for the new dais to go down, so Norman Rains had the honour of putting the time capsule in place. It now lies under the dais (below where the organ and pulpit used to stand), below the new focal point of a Juliet Hemingray artwork. Hopefully it will be many years before it resurfaces!

Norman Rains (Sara's father) placing the time capsule under the dais in the sanctuary of Wicken Methodist Church during refurbishment in October 2015

Photo: Julie Rash

Exciting times lie ahead for 'the Spire'

Eifron Hopper

'Exciting' and 'ambitious' are just two of the words used to describe the journey of faith Methodists in Poole are currently undertaking.

Five congregations have united, four churches have been sold, and since last October, the congregation has made its home at High Street Church – otherwise known as 'the Spire'.

Years of prayerful consideration revealed to us the vision of showing God's love to those around us and helping to meet the many serious needs of the area. We knew that we couldn't do it all ourselves, so we are travelling with a growing number of partners and community groups.

We are now two thirds of the way through a major refurbishment and rebuild. We are hugely grateful for money from connexional funds and some trusts, which have added to individual giving to get us this far. Exciting times lie ahead. Find out more at www.poolemethodists.org.uk.



Photo: Peter Smith



Receiving a BFP food parcel at the Salvation Army's Bridge project

Photos: Beantphoto

An edible impact

The Blackpool Food Partnership (BFP) was set up to coordinate efforts to address food poverty in Blackpool.

helped the BFP in its development. Together with the Blackpool Wellness Service, the BFP is training church volunteers to run 'cook and eat' sessions where people can learn how to cook cheaply and to budget properly. But the biggest impact they have made is in the connections between church projects, including coordinating the Christmas and cold winter provision across Blackpool last winter.

"The church provision is recognised by the public and private sector as well coordinated and providing a valuable service," Nikki said. "It is now committed to helping service users tackle the underlying issues of poverty and to help them move forward."



Above: Volunteers ready to deliver bread

Organised by Methodist Action (North West) and supported by the resort's Springfield Methodist Church, BFP collected over £77,000 worth of surplus food from local supermarkets and wholesalers last year, which it redistributed to children's centres, community kitchens and hostels.

"We started off collecting from Sainsbury's and now we also collect from Booths, Morrisons and My Local," said Project Manager, Nikki Hart. "It's making a huge difference to people in poverty in Blackpool. The extra vitamins in fresh food make a huge difference to families at children's centres."

"Thanks to an increase in room space available in the church, we now have fridges for the first time, and more freezers. We now collect fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as cheese, butter and other frozen dairy products."

A Connexional grant from the Methodist Church in Britain has also

GIVE

With your support, we can champion projects like the Blackpool Food Partnership. Donate to Mission in Britain via www.methodist.org.uk/give or via the enclosed giving form.

Right: Gwen teaching Steve to cook at North Shore Methodist Church



Photo: dreganajkmanovic/istock/Thinkstock



1



2



3

THANK

YOU

!



4

1. Revd Thla Sung from Myanmar was able to study at the Asian Rural Institute, thanks to donations to the World Mission Fund.
2. St John's Church Hurst Green, winners of an Eco Church award last year.
3. Children at Play4All in Zambia thank you for your support.
4. Jenny Spouge, casino chaplain in Luton, thanks you for your support throughout the year.
5. From the garden of their temporary office, in Christchurch, members of New Zealand's Connexional Team say thanks for support during the earthquakes.
6. Thank you from the Connexional Team at Methodist Church House.
7. A "Thank You" from Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism, who received £30,000 to help make the site wheelchair accessible.



5



7



6

THANK

YOU

One key way in which the Methodist Church responds to God's generous provision is by giving to funds that enable money to be directed to where its use can be maximised in mission and ministry.

Across the Connexion there are churches and circuits working faithfully as God's witnesses – some from a position of financial challenge, but others seeking to discern how they should use reserves that are greater than their immediate need. The Methodist Council is deliberately

reducing levels of planned reserves, releasing additional money for grant-making for all kinds of projects.

Thank you for giving generously to Methodist mission over the past year. Every Methodist who gives (be it their time or finances) is an essential part of God's mission.

These graphics outline how we used your donations to the Methodist Church Fund, the Mission in Britain Fund, the Fund for Property and the World Mission Fund.

Where your money went

Mission in Britain Fund

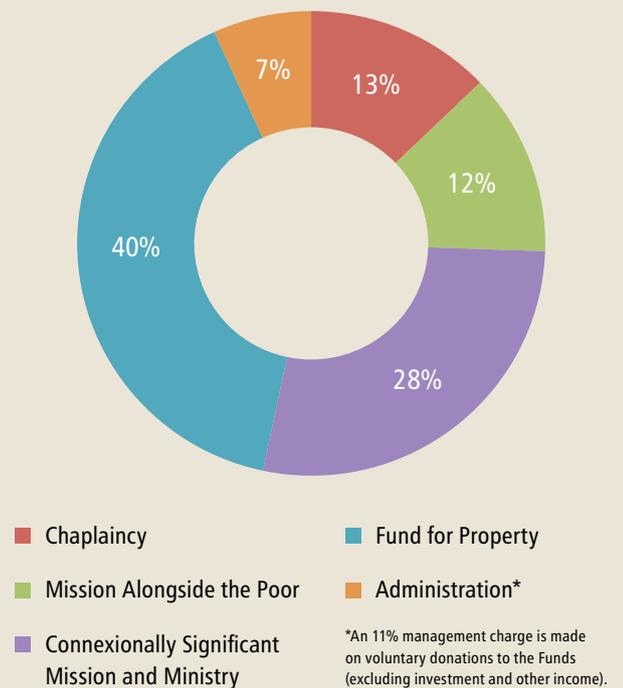
We received applications significantly in excess of the grants budget and were pleased to be able to award grants from the Mission in Britain Fund to 85% of applicants (23 out of 27 applications). Four grants were for more than £100,000.

- Other
- Investment Income
- Legacies
- Donations from churches and individuals (UK and Ireland)

Income 2014/2015 (£million)



Expenditure 2014/2015

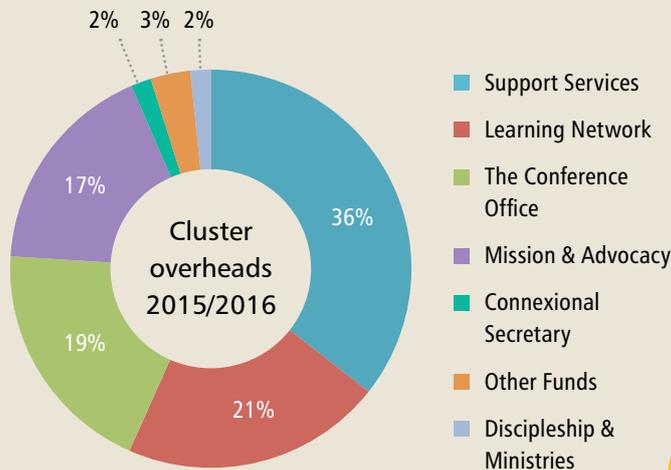


Fund for Property

We have continued to encourage churches to strengthen the mission aspects of their projects, in order to increase their chances of being funded. The total number of applications was 31. Two churches were awarded a grant exceeding £100,000, with 16 grants below £100,000.

Methodist Church Fund

The Methodist Church Fund (MCF) is mainly funded through the MCF assessment. The budgeted amount received from the MCF assessment for the financial year ending 31 August 2016 is £12.9m; the total expenditure for MCF was £14.9m.



Methodist churches raised **£429,776** through Easter Offering services in 2015.

£62,180 was given to Junior Mission for All (JMA) for our work with young people in Britain and overseas.

Legacy income in 2014/15 was **£154,726**

Methodist Refugee Support received **£61,655** in donations, resourcing our Partner Churches in Europe to alleviate the plight of refugees.

Donations from *One Mission Matters* subscribers in 2014/15 added up to **£1,400**

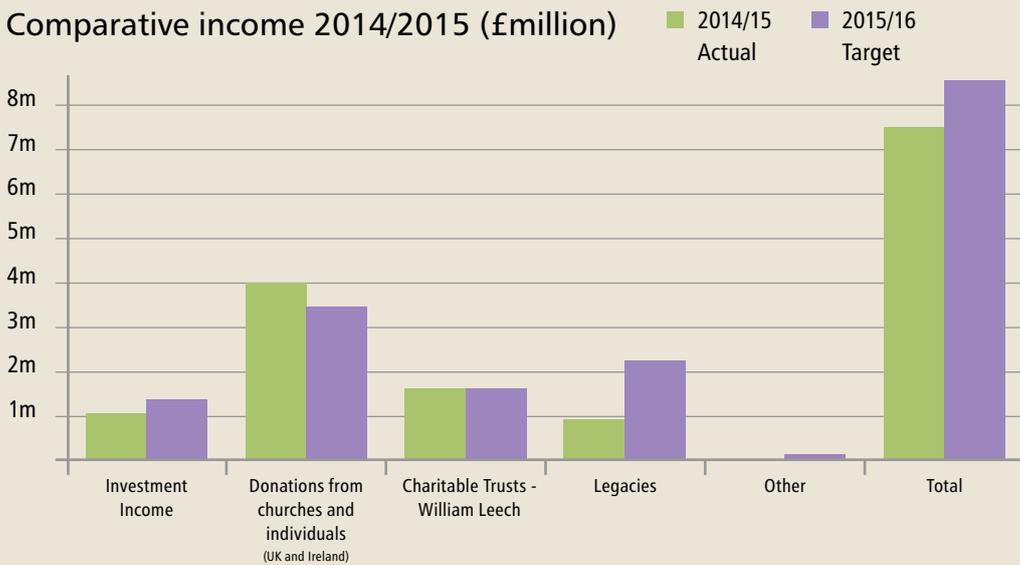
As of 23 February, Methodists gave **£105,040** to the Cumbria Community Foundation for flood alleviation work.

World Mission Fund

This past year has seen continued cuts in many public services in Britain. It has also been a time when prices of many things have risen, but salaries and investment interest have remained static. The result for many of us is a little less cash in our pockets and a reduced income from

our savings. Yet despite this, the World Mission Fund has seen a small increase in donations and legacies. Thank you all so much for this. Your gifts to the World Mission Fund really do make a difference to thousands of lives in over 65 countries.

Comparative income 2014/2015 (£million)



Expenditure 2014/2015 (£million)

- Relationship Staff and Administration*
- Scholarship Programme (SALT)
- Mission Partners
- Annual and General Grants
- NMA Grants

*The following charges are made on the voluntary donations (excluding investment and other income): 11% management charge, 7% charge to contribute to the costs of the World Church Relationships Team.

Speaking up for benefits justice

"We have listened, we have heard and we are willing to provide further guarantees."

(Lord Freud, Government Minister for Welfare Reform)



Paul Morrison

The *Enough* campaign was launched last November in response to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, which proposed enormous changes to the benefits system.



The response from Methodists and others was huge. Hundreds of people wrote to their MPs; many more wrote Christmas cards to the government minister responsible, others held meetings, church services and prayer vigils. We joined forces with other faith groups, charities and academics – and the government changed its mind in a number of important ways.

Families experiencing poverty do not have enough money. The government attempted to ignore this most basic of facts. The Bill sought to measure poverty while ignoring money completely. However it is absolutely clear that having enough money matters. If children live in a family which doesn't have enough money, they are more likely to die young, do worse at school, and experience worse health.

There are 3.7 million children living in poverty in the UK today. After considerable pressure, the government agreed to continue measuring child poverty.

Some of the key injustices highlighted by the *Enough* campaign (#enough) do

remain. For many families the link between their needs and the support available has been broken. Those with high levels of need will be subject to an arbitrary limit on the level of benefit they can receive. Those caring for more than two children will in future receive no extra support.

Some progress was made. Government agreed to exempt families adopting siblings and kinship carers from the two-child limit.

While the new laws are far from perfect, the efforts of people from within the Church have helped improve them enormously. The lives of many children will be better as a result.

ACT NOW

Join the Joint Public Issues Team in promoting equality in your community. To find out more about the *Enough* campaign, visit www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/enough/



Photos: Deacon Janet Jenkins

Volunteers preparing a three-course meal for homeless and vulnerable people

Feeding Clacton

Deacon Janet Jenkins

Working in Clacton, one of the most deprived areas in the UK, has its challenges. There are many folk who are homeless, sleeping in our night shelter or in bed and breakfast accommodation. Let me introduce you to two of them.

First meet Roger, a forklift driver and an alcoholic, who lost his job and ended up sleeping rough. Missing an appointment (and which of us has not done this?), he ended up with no benefits and nothing to live on. He knows his time is short, yet his goodness is such that he got a tent to provide others with a place to shelter.

Many of the folk we meet have mental health problems - like Ben, a young guy who has autism and yet despite this has conquered alcoholism, even if he is now addicted to computer games! He is desperately lonely and needs companionship and someone to feed him.

Trinity Clacton already feeds between

40-60 people a good meal every Monday, and we open our building for tea and toast on Wednesday. But we know we need to do more. This is why we have taken the bold step to open a day centre for homeless people, but to do so we need to completely change our premises, converting the sanctuary space for all the work we do with children and other groups, and physically separating the other rooms to create a purpose built space with a clinic, day bed, showers and clothes washing facilities. Hopefully the coffee shop and soft play area which we are creating at the front will raise revenue for our work. We are most grateful for our Connexional grant, which matches the commitment from our circuit, but we would also value your prayers.

PRAY

Pray for Trinity Methodist Church as it seeks support for its work amongst homeless people in Clacton.



Left: Tea or coffee? Deacon Janet Jenkins with a volunteer serving hot drinks



Connecting Disciples is the annual Methodist conference for lay employees, and children and youth workers. This year, 142 people from 27 districts attended. **Sally Cooper**, a part-time community development worker in the Farnworth and Worsley Circuit, was one of them.

Making a Connection

In the 48 hours I spent at *Connecting Disciples*, I was challenged, entertained and sometimes a little emotional. I explored the sessions *A home for every child* and *Lay workers as agents of change*. Both these sessions made us think about how our roles could support foster and adoptive families, and how as lay workers we are often in a unique position to support and bring about change in our churches and circuits. A great one titled *I sing because I'm free* allowed us to explore the origins of some worship songs, and to let off steam with some great fun songs – with actions!

I attended the session *Welfare and the Church* very apprehensively, as I have experienced life on benefits and often find people have many misconceptions. I shouldn't have worried; the session was challenging and very informative. It was a great source of data and statistics that we can use to raise awareness of the changes that are being made to the welfare state, both now and in the future. As it is often said, "forewarned is forearmed". Paul Morrison from the Joint Public Issues Team warned about how we

must prepare now to serve a community of people that will be living even closer to, or under, the poverty line.

Clean comedy from Mark Palmer and great support from our class meetings made for a fabulous conference. I can't wait to come back next year!



Sharon and Hannah give their reactions on the 10 Holy Habits workshop they had attended



The High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon

Photo: ©Comstock/Stockbyte/Thinkstock

Photos: ©Sharemedia TV



Photos: ©Tim E Photography, Pete Smith, Barry Matthews



Situated just within minutes of Cornwall's border with Devon, Wesley Cottage was a haven for travelling Methodist ministers in the eighteenth century.

Showcasing Cornwall's heritage at Wesley Cottage

John Hogarth

John Wesley stayed here on a number of occasions, and the lower room of the chamber visiting preachers stayed in, is thought to be the smallest Methodist preaching place in the world.

Wesley Cottage first opened as a museum and place of pilgrimage in 1950. Since then, thousands of visitors have been inspired by this historic site. Many visitors have no connection with Christianity and often ask questions regarding John Wesley and matters of faith today.

In 2011, a full development project was proposed and significant sums of money were raised in Cornwall for

this work. A grant from the Methodist Connexion enabled the first phase of the work to be achieved.

Through this development, Wesley Cottage will educate and provide an experience to both tourists and Cornish visitors. The mission is twofold: firstly educating people about the history of Methodism in Cornwall, and secondly as a mission centre for the Church in presenting the gospel in a new way.

John Hogarth MPhil is Curator, Missioner and Pastoral Worker at Wesley Cottage, Trewint.

Top left: Wesley Cottage from the Prayer Garden

Top right: Mark Dunn-Wilson preaches from the porch on Wesley Day 2015

Bottom right: The Wesley Cottage Management Committee has representatives from six Methodist circuits

PRAY

Please pray for all who visit our Methodist heritage sites, and for staff and volunteers sharing the good news of Jesus, our unique Methodist story, and our own faith stories.

Rebuilding Christchurch

Photos: Paul Titus, Revd David Bush

Right: Elaine Hassall and the Revd Jean Bruce – Woodend Methodist. Five years later this church looks the same as insufficient funds are available to restore it.



Above: David Peach and Revd Dr Mary Caygill. Decommissioning Service for Durham St Methodist Church. Three people removing the pipe organ died in the February earthquake when the damaged church totally collapsed.

Right: Christchurch North Tower is removed.



On 4 September 2010, a major earthquake hit the city of Christchurch in New Zealand. A second one hit nearly six months later. Between them, the earthquakes left 185 people dead.

“In those early days of shock and grief the messages and prayers of the Methodist family from around the world brought comfort and strength,” recalls the Revd David Bush, General Secretary of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. “To know others were praying for us was incredibly uplifting.”

Over the 18 months following the earthquakes, individuals, congregations and National Churches generously gave almost £200,000 to the earthquake fund. “Looking back it is amazing how much the gifts enabled,” Revd Bush says. “Individuals and families with special needs were the first recipients. Congregations were assisted to engage with their local communities, and counsellors were employed to work in schools to address fears and stress.”

Five years on, the city is being rebuilt and congregations are doing well, though there is still much to be done. “Initially we expected the major impact of the earthquakes would be fixed in two to three years,” says Revd

Bush. “While all the minor repairs have been completed, major rebuilds and replacement buildings are only getting started. This has caused a great deal of frustration.”

Some congregations have moved numerous times. The Revd Andrew Doubleday’s congregation has been worshipping in the local bowling club. “We have discovered something of the grace of God and that the human spirit is far more resilient than we might have imagined,” he says.

GIVE

Thanks to your kind support, the World Mission Fund is able to give support whenever disasters such as the New Zealand earthquakes happen. Please continue to give so that we will always be able to send emergency assistance wherever and whenever disaster strikes.

Photo: Wande Ebofin



Literacy class, Rarongo

“Em pinis!” (Tokpisin for “it is finished”)



Wande Ebofin

Yes – my first term as a mission partner has come to an end. I thank God for the privilege to serve the United Church in Papua New Guinea (PNG) for the past two and a half years.

It’s been great experiencing the diverse cultures, working with the nationals, making new friends and eating local produce (despite some challenges!).

One of the traditions when you are about to leave, is being roped in to speak to groups. In the last couple of months, I spoke to the Grade 10 students during their dedication, to the graduating mothers of the School of Theology and

Mission (STM) in Rarongo on their retreat, and was rotated to preach to the Rarongo community.

At STM the certificate course that started last year has now been upgraded to a diploma (Year 1) with the intention of STM reaching university status. For the second year running I was able to deliver the Mathematics and English courses I designed last year. The last batch consisted of 14 male students (no females). It was a bit challenging to start with, but by the end of the academic year, we had made some progress. I continued to lecture the women in keyboard skills and micro-enterprise. The Deputy Prime Minister of PNG was the guest speaker at the last STM graduation, and I had a picture taken with him. My status must be growing!

In agreement with all stakeholders, it has been agreed that my next placement will be in the Niu Ailan region of PNG. This is the next island to East New Britain where I am now. The assignment will be similar to what I have just completed – working with the secondary school, pastors’ college and the United Church assembly. I thank God for enablement and

wisdom. Also for your continued prayers and support. May you be richly blessed!



SUPPORT OUR WORK

Keep up to date with Methodist World Mission and Mission in Britain at www.methodist.org.uk/supportourwork or contact the Fundraising Team via email at fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk or by calling 0207 467 3532.

Thinking of how you can bless the next generation? So are we.



Your greatest gift could be to help make history.

“By leaving a legacy to the Methodist Church, you are enabling the mission of the Methodist people to continue and prosper.”

Revd Steve Wild

President of the Methodist Conference 2015/2016



The **Methodist Church** 

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