

Information eXchange 24 December 2015

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John B Gosling

You don't get harmony when everyone sings the same note.

Doug Floyd

From Methodist E-News September 2015.

Hope is coming this Advent.



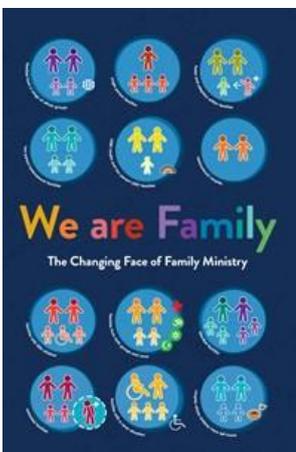
“Sometimes hope is like a candle flame that has almost gone out; it doesn't go out but I need friends to remind me that it is still there.” – Laura

Laura knows what it's like to be without hope in an unstable world. Isolated, separated from her children, and without a job – no one would want to be in her shoes. Then she met her new community of friends at the Parson Cross Initiative in North Sheffield. Today she is helping run their new music project – one of her deepest passions. What's more, she is about to become a member at her local Methodist Church.

This Advent season we will be giving thanks for Jesus-shaped hope fuelled in people like Laura and for Methodist partners like the Parson Cross Initiative for being messengers of hope. You can read Laura's story along with other beneficiaries at www.methodist.org.uk/advent.

Since last Advent, generous giving to Mission in Britain has allowed the Methodist Church to support 20 projects like the Parson Cross Initiative. We encourage you to put on an Advent Offering service this year to help even more individuals like Laura find hope. Discover more and order your Advent resources [here](#).

“The changing shape of Britain's families.”



A full report on this [new study](#) has raised questions about the common concept of 'family'.

Through a range of surveys, interviews, consultations and research, the Methodist Church and the Consultative Group on Ministry among Children have found that church family workers are engaging with a growing range of family types.

In addition to encouraging a greater emphasis on diversity in understanding what is meant by 'family', the study promotes a deeper level of ministry that embraces variety and offers support to both church going families and those outside of the Church.

“Our understanding of family needs to go beyond the concept of the nuclear family to encompass a diversity of relationships. Once we recognise this, we can adopt more inclusive language and respond more effectively to minister and support families in the contexts that they are in. “We cannot presume all families are the same. We must treat each family as unique and provide relevant support to them in the circumstances that they are in.”

“Family ministry across the UK is growing. It’s not just happening on a Sunday, but is taking place in a range of different contexts, engaging with a great diversity of families. It is essential that the Church provides suitable training and support. Our biggest challenge now is how we enable an intergenerational engagement in all areas of our ministries and not segregate them into silos.”

From All We Can (Methodist Relief and Development) August 2015.



Burundi: The work must go on.

Despite political instability and violence, All We Can’s partners are continuing to help people in one of the world’s poorest countries to fulfil their potential.

“Political developments in Burundi have pushed it to the brink of a crisis, but for now our partners are able to continue delivering their projects. We are proud to work with partners who are so committed to the communities they serve and are going to be doing all we can to support them during this uncertain time.” – Andrew Edwards, All We Can’s Partnership Manager.

Burundi is currently one of the world's poorest countries. In 1993, civil tension between ethnic groups came to a head in a conflict that lasted for 12 years. This year has seen a renewal of political tensions caused by disputed presidential and parliamentary elections

[Find out how our partners are responding during these challenging times.](#)

The most successful anti-poverty movement in history?

In 2000 the **Millennium Development Goals** were launched. These goals were designed to meet the needs of the world’s poorest people. 15 years later the world is looking back and reflecting on what has worked and what challenges still remain.

[Read the article produced by All We Can for The Joint Public Issues Team](#)

From MRDF September 2015.

A gift of oil in Zimbabwe.

The serious floods in Zimbabwe did not reach UK news screens but had a big impact on communities already struggling with poverty and food insecurity. All We Can's partner MEDRA has been reaching out to the most vulnerable with support in the form of maize, cooking oil and other essential food supplies



Refugee crisis.



As the headlines continue to be dominated by news about refugees and migrants, All We Can has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting those who have fled the conflict in Syria.

Maurice Adams, Chief Executive, commented: "As an organisation grounded in Christian principles, we believe in the God-given value and potential of every human being, so anything which diminishes that is of concern. As we have done for the last two and a half years, we will continue to provide humanitarian support to those fleeing the conflict in Syria through our work with partner organisations in neighbouring countries."

[Read our full statement on the crisis](#)

Abeer, 17 years old, is a Syrian refugee living in an informal tent settlement in Salhiyah, Mafraq in northern Jordan. All We Can's emergency response partner Medair has supported Abeer's small family with emergency shelter and supplies.

[Find out more about life as a Syrian refugee living in Jordan](#)

From World Church Relationships Bulletin (WCRB) August 2015

From Mother and Baby Home, Uzuakoli, Nigeria.

It's been another busy year for the Motherless Babies' Home run by mission partner Mary van den Corput in Uzuakoli, Nigeria.

Last year the number of babies admitted to the home was 30 – the highest since Mary has been there. “Many babies come shortly after birth,” says Mary. “Because of the babies’ age, sicknesses - especially malaria and gastroenteritis - are a big challenge. Gastroenteritis is a killer. In the morning the child is all right, but in the evening, the child can be in a serious condition.”



Mary and her husband Hans both work as mission partners for the Methodist Church in Nigeria and with the Nigeria Health Care Project. Last November, Hans started work at the Nkechi Rosalind Colwell Methodist Hospital Imenyi. In May, the Prelate of Methodist Church Nigeria commissioned the hospital. “He was very impressed by the state of affairs and he promised to give a yearly support,” says Hans. “He also showed great interest in the future development of the hospital. The ceremony lasted for an hour but it was a great moment.”

The Prelate also honoured Hans with the title of Knight of John Wesley, in recognition of all Hans’ medical work. This is the highest title of honour in the Church for a layperson. Mary was honoured as a lady of a Knight.

“The ceremony made a deep impression on us,” the van den Corputs say. “We had a thanksgiving service in the church and a small party at home.”

Ruanda



Here's the latest news from Mattia and Elena Leoni, who live in Kigali, Rwanda, with their sons Michele and Sam.

Elena has been preparing and delivering training for teachers and mothers of severely disabled children. Given the lack of knowledge on disability or special needs education in Rwanda, the teachers’ training is badly needed; this includes Mattia’s English lessons and a speech therapy course by a VSO worker.

“At times it looks pointless given the seeming lack of motivation or of any sense of call to serve those kids,” Elena says. “It’s encouraging to see the interest and gratitude of the parents, who are happy to find out more about these mysterious problems, learning they’re not curses or faults but something that can be understood and tackled.” Elena also does some physiotherapy work - but only with school children, as there are some local physiotherapy services available. “We don’t believe in replacing the national health service, but rather empowering people to use it and complementing it with family and community based rehabilitation programmes,” she says.

Mattia continues his work with street children. Most of these children were only spending the day on the street, and so there have now been over 75 school reintegrations, between primary and secondary school, or vocational training. The few who were really sleeping rough have also been reintegrated.

“We’re doing a lot,” says Mattia. “‘Full-on’ seems a euphemism, but it’s all for Jesus, so there must be no grudging the costs. The many blessings we receive make up for it all.”

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

From World Church Relationships Bulletin (WCRB) September 2015

Benin.



What happens when a church decides to put the word of God into action? For the past three years, the World Mission Fund has supported the Protestant Methodist Church in Benin with a SALT grant, which it has used to train ministers, evangelists, deacons and Sunday school teachers.

Last year the Church undertook training on the topic of Missiology and Mission, led by the Revd Valentin

Dedji, a minister from the Enfield circuit in London. This year they have been putting what they learnt into action, evangelising and taking part in mission around the country. In January, over 400 people were converted in the north of Benin, an area which is strongly Islamic. The Methodist Church in Benin then built two buildings to serve as worship areas for the new converts. They have also carried out training aimed at improving women and children's health, and the literacy level of church members.

Other highlights of this year include a children's camp in the town of Parakou, from the 18-26 July. This brought together more than 500 children. Glory be to God!

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

From Nepal "Building back better"



Earlier this year two earthquakes hammered Nepal on 25 April and 12 May," writes mission partner Malcolm Ramsay. "A common slogan here in the weeks since then has been 'Building Back Better'. What this means is that above all, new buildings must be earthquake-proof. Better materials need to be used. Building regulations that were routinely ignored now need to be rigorously enforced. In a wider sense too, Nepal needs to be far more 'disaster-ready'. Stockpiles of essential relief materials – and plans for their distribution – need to be in place before the next big earthquake."

The United Mission to Nepal (one of our partner organisations) has been allocated parts of an area called Dhading as its responsibility for post-earthquake work. "In the first phase of emergency response we in UMN have supplied relief materials to 12,175 homes, many of which were very remote and difficult to reach," Malcolm says. "In the second phase we are now moving on to a two-year plan for rehabilitation and reconstruction. It's a privilege to be taking part in work in which we can try to demonstrate in very practical terms Christ's love for people who have suffered so terribly.

"In Nepal, the phrase 'building back better' means little unless it embraces the human heart as well as human homes. The Christian Church here is small, but growing steadily in numbers and in confidence. Surely in Christian terms 'building back better' involves not merely construction codes and disaster plans, but also the recognition and honouring of right relationships – with God, with our neighbour, and with our planet."

Clients do not come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients. Richard Branson