

Prayer Book

PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING



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July - September 2014



The Council for World Mission (CWM) is a worldwide partnership of 31 Churches, committed to sharing their resources of people, skills, insights and money to carry out God's Mission.

AFRICA

FJKM – Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
UCCSA – United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
UCZ – United Church of Zambia
CCM – Churches of Christ in Malawi
UPCSA – Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

CARIBBEAN

GCU – Guyana Congregational Union
UCJCI – United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

EAST ASIA

HKCCCC – Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
GPM – Presbyterian Church of Malaysia (Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia)
PCT – Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
PCS – Presbyterian Church in Singapore
PCK – Presbyterian Church of Korea
PCM – Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

EUROPE

CF – Congregational Federation
UWI – Union of Welsh Independents
URC – United Reformed Church
PCN – Protestant Church in the Netherlands
PCW – Presbyterian Church of Wales

PACIFIC

CUNZ – Congregational Union of New Zealand
KPC – Kiribati Protestant Church
UCPNG – United Church of Papua New Guinea
PCANZ – Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
CCCS – Congregational Christ Church in Samoa
EKT – Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu
NCC – Nauru Congregational Church
UCSI – United Church in Solomon Islands
CCCAS – Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa

SOUTH ASIA

COB – Church of Bangladesh
CNI – Church of North India
CSI – Church of South India
PCI – Presbyterian Church of India



OUR VISION

“Fullness of life Through Christ,
for all Creation”

OUR MISSION

“Called to partnership in Christ to
mutually challenge, encourage,
and equip member churches to
share in God's mission”

GENERAL SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

As we hurtle towards the second half of the year, many of us experience a sense of time passing us by too swiftly, with mounting pressure to complete tasks assigned for the year. In these challenging and cloudy moments of unease or stress, prayer is often the answer.

The Council for World Mission conducted its 2014 Council meeting in June this year, and our theme for reflection was *Dare to hope when everything says "no"*. What gives us this defiant, daring spirit; this immovable certainty in the face of life's many trials? It is our conviction about God's unconditional love – our sure knowledge that God will always take us through safely to the other side. We hope persistently, against the odds; and we often do this through prayer.



Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer
That calls me from a world of care
And bids me at my Father's (Mother's) throne
Makes all my wants and wishes known
In season of distress and grief
My soul has often found relief
And oft escape the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer

Our conversations with God are often limited though, to asking for God's hand on our lives and the lives of our families and loved ones. A prayer book, like this one, gives us an opportunity to pray with and for our larger family in Christ – in reading their stories and experiencing their joys and sorrows we strengthen our prayer life and deepen our relationship with God.

It is my prayer that as we read this third volume of the CWM Prayer book we truly experience renewed hope to face life's situations, praying together, with our brothers and sisters around the world, – and believing that no matter how dark the rain clouds are, blue skies are just around the corner.

Rev. Dr. Collin I. Cowan
General Secretary of CWM

PROGRAMME SECRETARY'S MESSAGE



For the past weeks, the pastors of my church have been preaching from the letter of James. And last week, the sermon was on the topic of "Prayer," based on James 5:13-20. There were

three points he shared with the congregation of which I will share two in this message. One, praying is for all times, whether one is in trouble, in ill health or in joy (James 5:13-16). Two, praying is for everyone because "Elijah was a human being like us." He prayed that rain would not fall on the earth and it did not rain for 3 years and 6 months. Then, he prayed again for rain and it did rain and the earth yielded harvest. In sum, praying is for all and at all times, a similar refrain to Paul's call to the Thessalonians to pray at all times and in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:17-18)

As we go through each page of this volume daily, may we lift that particular person or organization in prayer at all times and in all circumstances. This is an affirmation of what James is asking his listeners/readers to do, "Faith without action is dead" (James 2:26b).

The production of this volume would not be possible without the contributions of our partners-in-mission, General Secretaries of our member churches, and ecumenical partners. A special word of thanks to Mr. Santono Yap for his support and assistance in putting this volume together.

Tan, Yak-hwee (Rev. Dr.)
Programme Secretary, Reflection and Research

Tuesday, 1 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 47; 1 Kings 18:36-39; 1 John 4:1-6

Ms. Hilda Asukile was sent by the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) to the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) for her missionary appointment. She teaches English to the local teachers in FJKM Institut de Formation Et de Recherché Pedagogique (IFRP) so as to enable them to teach English themselves.

Hilda's missionary journey began on 11 April 2006. She first came to Madagascar alone but a year later, her husband Japhet joined her in missionary service. Japhet works with SAF/FKJM, a development department of the FJKM Church. He helps out in the Disaster Humanitarian Relief Services Department of the church.



Hilda and Japhet have four children; the first born is a girl, Melody, followed by twin boys Tumbone and Anganile, and the youngest being a girl named Ipyana. Since Madagascar is a French-speaking country, they decided to leave three of their children to continue their studies in English in Zambia. Ipyana was going into Grade 3 when they first started their missionary service and so they decided to bring her with them to Madagascar. Finding a suitable English language school for her was and is a challenge. Currently, she is being home-schooled as they are still looking for an appropriate school for her special education needs. God has been so gracious that she is coping well with home-schooling.

Hilda is very thankful for the missionary gatherings organized by CWM. These meetings provide spiritual enrichment, refreshment and sharing experiences with other missionaries. Moreover, they were fruitful and beneficial, exposing them to other nations, sights and cultures as well.

Besides teaching English so as to equip the local teachers to teach English, Hilda also preaches at FJKM churches and also at radio broadcasts. She writes, "I believe that God has a purpose for my life. With the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, I was able to prepare each sermon."

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for their children, Melody, Tumbone and Anganile in their university studies that they will be successful in their studies and also for God's financial provision.
2. Pray for good health, education and healing for their daughter, Ipyana.

Wednesday, 2 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 47; Isaiah 51:1-3; Matthew 11:20-24

(Source: <http://shareaverse.wordpress.com/2012/05/22/praise-to-god/psalm-47-2/>)



Thursday, 3 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 45:10-17; Genesis 25:19-27; Romans 7:1-6

Building an Inclusive Community - Moving beyond Accommodation to Affirmation and Advocacy for People with Disabilities.

Often on the margins of society, people with disabilities (PWD) are often stigmatized as “invalid”, “useless”, “abnormal” & etc.. Images of a wheelchair or someone with a stick are often used to depict PWD. But are they really any different than a “normal” person? Such thoughts and imageries of PWD have been etched in our society and ultimately discriminate and negate the image of God in a person. If we are sincere about inclusiveness in the church, we must rethink and reshape the communications and practices; and how we are ministering with PWD. Merely providing accessibility within a building is insufficient. It is imperative that more positive measures are adopted to move beyond accommodation to affirmation and advocacy.

CWM is taking a decisive step in the inclusion of PWD among its member churches by partnering with EDAN¹ to provide resources in the advocacy. The collaborative effort is seen in a seminar - “Liturgy, Theology and Disability – Reshaping the Conversation and Ethos” held at Zambia in November 2013. Perspectives of PWD in theology, mission, sociology and economics were presented and provided insightful and practical thoughts to the participants. A collation of the presentation is available on CWM website. CWM will further strengthen its engagement and advocacy for and with PWD in a global seminar in Malaysia from 20-25 July, 2014. It will bring together representatives from its 31 member churches to produce a common statement, a policy booklet and a framework for action for advocacy for PWD.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for the development of the policy which is intended to be a guide to enable and provide information to member churches for their own definitive course of actions.
2. Pray that the seminar will benefit each participant in their own interest and advocacy for PWD.

Data from World Report on Disability.

Prevalence	Health	CRPD
>1 billion	50%	155
people in the world have some form of disability	of disabled persons cannot afford health care	countries signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

¹ Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) <http://www.edan-wcc.org/>

Friday, 4 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 45:10-17; Genesis 27:1-17; Romans 7:7-20



The Inter Faith Mission at Community House, **Presbyterian Church of Wales (PCW)**, Maindee, Newport started as the result of a vision of Rev. Cyril Summers, minister of Community House from 1954 to 1985. The typical Welsh chapel building needed to be demolished in 1962 and a decision was made to build a community center instead. This was to be, in the words of Rev. Cyril: “A centre of compassion, A centre of reconciliation, A refuge of comfort, A centre of happiness, A place where people as always treated as people, A centre of Christian Life and witness.”



The Community House, with the chapel at its heart, has witnessed the transition of the local community from one which is majority Welsh Christian to one which is very much multi-cultural and multi-faith. This is because of the influx of people from Pakistan and Bangladesh in the late 1960s and other immigrants from Eastern Europe. Therefore, the activities in the Community House were changed to accommodate the needs of the growing immigrant community. And 50 years later, the Community House remains true to its vision of building *shalom*. In 2008, PCW, at the request of Community House, employed a worker to develop inter faith. This has enabled the development of strong, friendly relationships with many people of other faiths in the immediate community of Maindee Newport, Wales and also in other countries of the world. Some initiatives and activities of the Community House are:

- Becoming the first Peace Mala community centre, believing that ‘Everyone Deserves Respect’ and teaching through the making of Peace Mala bracelets
- An annual Peace Event, ‘A Celebration of Diversity’, on the anniversary of the opening of our Peace Garden. This has attracted many people to share their talents, food, crafts etc.

Prayer Request:

1. Thanksgiving for the witness of the Community House to be a center of compassion, reconciliation, comfort and happiness for all who come.

Saturday, 5 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 45:10-17; Genesis 27:18-29; Luke 10:21-24

Heavenly Father,

We bring to you in prayer people who are suffering in mind and spirit.

We remember especially those facing long and incurable illness;

Those cast down by the cares and sorrows of daily life;

Those who have lost their faith and for whom the future is dark.

In your mercy maintain their courage,

Lift their burdens and renew their faith,

That they may find in you their strength,

Their comfort and their peace;

For our Saviour's sake.

(Source: Prayers for Today by Frank Colquhoun)

Sunday, 6 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 45:10-17; Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Romans 7:15-25a

ROMANS 7:15
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT I DO.
FOR WHAT I WANT TO DO I do not do,
BUT WHAT I HATE I DO.

(Credits: <http://reversingverses.com/2013/01/22/romans-715/>)

Monday, 7 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Genesis 27:30-46; Romans 1:18-25

Rev. Derek Silwenga was sent to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) from United Church of Zambia (UCZ) in April 2010 for his missionary appointment. He is accompanied by his wife Edith and they are serving in the Mogoditshane congregation.

In his missionary journey, Derek experienced joys and acceptance. Being accepted by UCCSA at all levels brings much joy and enables them to do God's mission without restrictions. Since 2010, Edith has been involved in a number of church programmes during Women's conferences and this is also a source of joy for both Edith and Derek. An added joy is their housing accommodation. In December 2011, the local church members started building a four-bed roomed house (manse) on the church grounds. The house (manse) was built within a space of one year and was ready for occupation after the finishing touches were done. Derek and Edith want to give thanks to God. Though he has been away from Zambia his homeland, Derek continues to keep in touch with his sending church, United Church of Zambia (UCZ) through church updates. He was assigned to write an order of worship for the commissioning of mission partners for the UCZ worship book. This gesture gives Derek a sense of belonging to UCZ.



In reflecting his missionary journey thus far, Derek writes, *"We believe and trust that the Almighty God who started the good work in His church will bring it to accomplishment. Our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ came to serve and not to be served. He is our role model and by the grace of God, we shall walk in His footsteps."*

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for the continuing partnership between UCZ and UCCSA in God's mission in the Africa region.
2. Thanksgiving to God for God's guidance and protection over Derek and Edith in Botswana and their children who are in Zambia.

Tuesday, 8 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Genesis 29:1-14; Romans 3:1-8

Rev. Valeska Austin, the General Secretary of **Guyana Congregational Union (GCU)**, shares the following updates of the Church:

"Recognizing the need to remain relevant and effective in carrying out God's mission of reconciliation, healing and restoration, the Guyana Congregational Union embarked on a restructuring and revisioning process through a series of consultations and team visits. During the process a strategic Plan was structured to fashion the way forward. The focus of attention is as follows:

1. Vision Statement: The holistic development of God's creation as in Jesus Christ.
2. Mission Statement: The Guyana Congregational Union exists to be bearers of the Good News so that all God's creation may experience fullness of life and equip people to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the world.
3. Value Statement: We believe in God; God's love for all creation as demonstrated in the life of Jesus and that we must worship God in word and deed.
4. Mission Priorities: Five areas were identified: Congregational Renewal, Community Engagement, Leadership Foundation, Spirituality grounded in Scripture and Governance. The anticipated rate of the implementation process is challenge in many ways. However, we give God thanks for what we have done so far and the many lessons we are learning and the directions He is pointing us.

Prayer Requests:

1. That the programmes planned receive maximum support.
2. That hindrances to changes needed be removed.
3. That there would be clarity and decisiveness in communicating the steps to be taken along the way.
4. That persons with special skills and talents avail themselves to fulfil specific needs of the ministry and mission of the church.

Wednesday, 9 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Genesis 29:31-35; John 13:1-17



(Credits: <http://biblestudyoutlines.org/bible-study-lessons/new-testament-bible-study/john-13-bible-study/>)

Thursday, 10 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 119:105-112; Exodus 3:1-6; Romans 2:12-16

Mr. Reynaldo Dandan, CWM's Corporate Secretary writes, "the legal system in Singapore is primarily based in the English common law although, the country has developed its own legal structure. Subject to regulations, those who obtained legal degrees from common-law countries *may* practice law in Singapore.

The application of law in Singapore is strict and not surprisingly, the dispensation of justice is also a very swift one. Generally, litigation does not last more than a year and in some cases, it only lasts for few months.

The administration of justice in Singapore is one of the most expeditious in the region. However, similar to many advanced nations, the cost of litigation or arbitration in Singapore is not cheap. The government has legal aid bureau to assist indigent clients and community associations usually offer legal clinics to help less fortunate families on their legal problems."

Please pray for:

1. The legal system of Singapore—for wise and exemplary judges and for professional, truthful legal practitioners who would practice law with passion and integrity.
2. Court staff and other employees who help the administration of justice in all levels.
3. Expansion of the legal aid bureau to help the poor litigants in Singapore especially those with domestic.
4. Community efforts to help elderly and poor families to settle their legal problems such as insolvency, wills, domestic relations, inheritance, debt/credit recovery, inheritance, contracts, employment and other family-related legal problems.
5. The admission of more legal practitioners to ease the shortage of attorneys and lawyers in the country who opt to practice in other common-law countries such as UK, Canada and Australia.

Friday, 11 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 119:105-112; Deuteronomy 32:1-10; Romans 15:14-21

Rev. Nixon Constance Chiwala was appointed by the Churches of Christ in Malawi (CCM) to serve as a minister in the Botswana Synod of United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). Rev. Chiwala served in Botswana on two separate terms for his missionary appointment. In his first term in 2003, he was with Kasane Congregational Church. In 2008, Rev. Chiwala was invited by the Botswana Synod of UCCSA to come back and work as a Moderator of the region and also as a Minister-in-charge of Serowe Congregational church. He served the region and the church till 2011. While he was in Serowe, he led in the organisation of the Centenary celebration of the church building that was built in 1912 by King Khama III and his community of Bangwato.

Besides his pastoral responsibilities, Rev. Chiwala is also involved in life of the community. He sits in the Ministers Fraternal of Serowe which is a forum of ministers from different churches that meets for a common purpose. He also serves as the chairman of the Patient's Social Welfare Committee at Sekgoma Memorial Hospital. The Committee seeks to help admitted patients who are in need and also to provide for some of the necessities that the hospital does not provide. Rev. Chiwala writes, "As a minister in the community, I am asked to offer prayers in different government offices and institutions in the morning before they resume for work. I like this programme because one is able to move from the church set up and met with different people outside the church."



The church premises at Serowe are big and bare without trees since the area is semi-desert and has not had adequate rainfall. However, in 2012, Rev. Chiwala started a programme of planting trees so as to improve the environment and to provide shade. A day was set aside for this tree planting exercise. Civil leaders and a village headman came to be with us on that day. The 100 trees that were planted that day are still doing fine.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for Rev. Chiwala as he reaches out to the people in his community.
2. Continue to give thanks for God's goodness and faithfulness to the churches of United Congregational Church of Southern Africa.

Saturday, 12 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 119:105-112; Isaiah 2:1-4; John 12:44-50

Our Father,

As we thank you for the gift of life,

We thank you also for the faculties which enable us to enjoy it:

Our eyes to see the wonders of your world,

Our ears to hear speech and the sound of music,

Our lips with which to talk and sing,

Our hands for working and our feet for walking.

Make us daily grateful for all your gifts and help us to use them all for your glory.

(Source: Prayers for Today by Frank Colquhoun)

Sunday, 13 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 119:105-112; Genesis 25:19-34; Romans 8:1-11



(Credits:

<http://www.christianglobe.com/Sermons/lectionaryPowerPoints.asp?theDate=4/6/2014>)

Monday, 14 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 142; Micah 1:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Mr. Donald and Ms. Christi Samuel are Partners-in Mission from Church of South India (CSI) to Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa (CCCAS).

Christi teaches Physics and Chemistry at Kanana Fou High School (KFHS). Donald is responsible for ministry courses of study at Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (KFTS), such as Youth Ministry, Leadership Formation, Pastoral Counseling, Ethics, Educational Ministry of the Church, Major World Religions, Psychology /Philosophy of Religion etc. He supervises students in writing their theses and academic papers.



Christi and Donald care for the youth of American Samoa. The youth encounters challenges such as alcoholism, violence and the lack of parental guidance but they seek spiritual support and are in need of mentors and role models in their parents and church leaders. Listen to the third part of their story regarding the youth. The first and second parts could be found in the 1st and 2nd quarters of the Prayer Book:

"Encouragingly, there are parents and pastors who realize this progressively, and avail themselves to youth, in their quest to become responsible witnesses for Christ at home, school and society. Together with Christi and some teachers of KFHS, the seminary students interview, survey, observe and identify the expressed needs of the youth. They try to dialogue with their local church youth groups to prioritize their needs, based on God's perspective of the identity of youth, their inclusiveness in the church and mission of God. They set up possible outreach and relevant program of activities for the youth together with pastors and the Youth Department of the CCCAS, with the motto "Ola no Keriso" ("Live for Christ"). From our life and experience here, we learn the vitality of prayer-life, patience, and perseverance that moves us onward in God's mission."

Prayer Requests:

1. Youth to be equipped as individuals and groups to relate and live the gospel values in daily life.
2. CCCAS's efforts to reach out parents and peer-groups of the youth (particularly in KFHS), towards bridging the gap between the youth and adults.
3. Youth Groups of the CCCAS to build more meaningful partnership with school teachers, governmental and non-governmental staff, towards nurturing youth leadership.

Tuesday, 15 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 142; Jeremiah 49:7-11; Ephesians 4:17-5:2



The following is an excerpt of Rev Eric So, the General Secretary of Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC) reflection on Justice, Peace and Reconciliation. There are at least seven ways for the churches in Hong Kong to implement justice, peace and reconciliation:

1. To teach all church members to recognize that justice and peace are interrelated biblical concepts.
2. To encourage churches to proclaim and practice the good news of justice and peace. Peace builds mutual love and understanding which can eventually cause conflicts and fights to cease; and justice provides equality and fosters mutual respect and sharing.
3. To nurture the culture of forgiveness, of loving enemies, of non-violence, respect, kindness and compassion among people so that all may enjoy harmony and happiness with others.
4. To promote the education of justice, peace and love in the Christian families and schools so that they may influence the whole community, recognizing that justice, peace and love as virtues for the well-being of all.
5. In order to realize true peace, encourage victims to express their sufferings and pains so that the truth of their wrongs may be addressed. The courage of confession is the first step of reconciling the oppressed and the oppressors and which further creates a platform for the transformation of all parties concerned.
6. Humankind should urge for justice and peace including the whole of creation. Human beings should learn to act with justice and peace towards all creatures so that the will of God on universal love will be fulfilled.
7. Churches, Christian schools and organizations should collaborate to foster justice, peace and reconciliation in wherever they live and whenever they are. For example to encourage Christians to support fair-trade business in their workplaces, and also to encourage Christian families to build harmony with their neighbours and empowering every Christian to become a reconciler in their communities

Prayer Request:

Pray for the churches of HKCCCC to make a Christian impact in their local communities, showing Christlikeness and advocating peace and justice.

Wednesday, 16 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 142; Obadiah 15-21; Matthew 13:10-17

Psalm 142

A maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.

I cry aloud to the LORD;	1
I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.	
I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble.	2
When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way.	3
In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me.	
Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me.	4
I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.	
I cry to you, O LORD; I say,	5
"You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."	
Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need;	6
rescue me from those who pursue me,	
for they are too strong for me.	
Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name.	7
Then the righteous will gather about me	
because of your goodness to me.	

(Source: <http://pastorted.wordpress.com/2007/08/24/psalm-142/>)

Thursday, 17 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Isaiah 44:1-5; Hebrews 2:1-9

Mr. Samoelijaona and Ms. Parfaite R. Rasolonjanahary are Partners-in Mission from Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) to Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC). Samoelijaona serves as a teacher whereas his wife, Parfaite serves as a dentist. They are currently based in Kiritimati Island, located in the Republic of Kiribati. Samoelijaona shares his experience as a partner-in-mission as follows:



"As missionary, we must live in a state of readiness for action in any situation, especially in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. In August 2013, at the end of the CWM partner in mission gathering in Nadi (Fiji Island), I and my wife found ourselves waiting for our plane to take us back to Kiritimati Island. We attended the Sunday service in the Rotuman Methodist Church close to our hotel as we did the previous Sunday. Usually they have their service in their native language but due to foreign presence, they used English; I still feel gratitude to those brothers and sisters for that. The service leader approached us and appointed me to preach the Good News on the spot that morning, knowing that I am a minister of the church. I took up the challenge and I got prepared for a few minutes. I gave them the message which sent them as missionaries in the community where they are. I do not boast about the fact but I just want to tell you that we must always be ready to share a message from Jesus. That time I did not chose the text; the leader gave it to me. Praise God for what was done! Be ready anytime and anywhere!"

Prayer Requests:

1. That every Christian worker remembers that he or she works for Christ and for his people.
2. That every believer be always ready to act whenever and wherever for Christ.

Friday, 18 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 139:1-12; Ezekiel 39:21-29; Hebrews 6:13-20



Elder Mok of **Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia (GPM)** shares with us the following update of a Church in persecution:

"60% of the population of Malaysia are Malay-Muslims, while Christians make up about 9-10% of the population. Just like many other countries in the world where Muslims are the majority, the Christians are under persecution.

Throughout the years since the independence of Malaysia, persecutions have been quite subtle. It was only in the recent 20 years that the conflicts became more pronounced. In the 1980's, 9 states out of the total 13 had instituted state enactments that prohibit non-Muslim from using 36 words that are commonly used among the Christian and Muslim Malay-speaking communities, such as Allah, Injil, Firman Allah, Fatwa, Iman, Imam. This is despite the fact that the Federal Constitution provides for freedom of religion. The prohibition in the use of these words affects the indigenous churches more than any other.

The National Language Act 1963/67 reiterates the Malay language is the national language and the government aggressively changed education policy to make the Malay language as the lingua franca of its populace. Ironically, when come to religion, non- Muslims are prohibited from using the same national language words that are common between the different religions. This violation of the Constitution has caused much restriction to the Christian community, such as the distribution of Christian print media."

***He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.
(Psalm 2:4 ESV)***

Prayer Requests:

1. Unity of churches of all languages to defend the rights of the National language churches in using the language that is most close to their hearts to conduct their daily religious affairs.
2. All Malaysians to uphold the Federal Constitution, the supreme laws of the land.

Saturday, 19 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Exodus 14:9-25; Matthew 7:15-20

The Grain is Ripe
The grain is ripe:
The harvest comes!
Good seed of hope,
Your time is now
Justice will stream,
From hill and river,
More than you dream
And running over!

The righteous God
Give this and more
Grace is the mode,
Mercy the key,
God comes in truth,
The sharpest laser
To scan the earth,
To take our measure

The work of peace
Is all for all,
Face turned to face,
In open trust,
All famine gone
And thirst and bleeding –
The harvest comes
From love's good seeding

- By Shirley Erena Murray,
Aotearoa New Zealand

(Source: Dare to Dream: A Prayer and Worship Anthology from around the World)

Sunday, 20 July, 2014

**Bible Readings: Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Genesis 28:10-19a;
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

SEARCH ME
Oh Lord
AND KNOW MY HEART
TEST ME AND KNOW
MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS.
SEE IF THERE IS ANY OFFENSIVE
WAY IN ME AND
lead me in the way
EVERLASTING.
PSALM ONE THIRTY NINE
TWENTY THREE AND TWENTY FOUR

(Source: <http://meganmatronewhite.wordpress.com/2012/04/11/psalm-13923-24/>)

Monday, 21 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 139:13-18; Genesis 32:3-21; Revelation 14:12-20

Rev. Hsieh Ta-Li is a Partner-in Mission from Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT) to Presbyterian Church of Singapore (PCS) under the "Mission Partnership Agreement." Between PCT and PCS. He serves as the senior pastor of Abundant Grace Presbyterian Church.

One of the concerns of Rev. Hsieh as a senior pastor of Abundant Grace Presbyterian Church is to develop and nurture leadership for the church. Abundant Grace has two pastoral care groups. One is grouped according to age so that they could be effective for age-oriented activities such as the Sunday School. The other group is more diversified and is according to geographical location so as to give pastoral care those who are staying within the location and to gather for family worship. Pastoral care, according to Rev. Hsieh who wrote in Chinese Mandarin states, *"Shepherding and taking care of God's flock is an exciting yet rewarding experience, witnessing genuine love amongst the brothers and sisters in church and supporting one another, is indeed the greatest joy in serving's God's community."*



The worship services in Abundant Grace Presbyterian incorporate both the traditional and contemporary aspects. The first service on Sunday is conducted in Chinese Mandarin with contemporary praise songs and traditional hymns as well. However, the Hokkien (Fujian) service is conducted in the traditional Presbyterian form of worship. The two different congregations come together for a combined service when the Holy Communion is conducted.

Rev. Hsieh and his family are very thankful for the support they receive from friends and relatives in the church in Taiwan and also, for the hospitality and acceptance from the Presbyterian Church in Singapore and especially, Abundant Grace Presbyterian Church.

Prayer Requests:

1. Thanksgiving to God for friends and relatives from the churches in Taiwan and Singapore for their prayers and concerns during their years of mission work in Singapore.
2. Pray for the pastoral care groups in the Church that they continue to show care and love to members of the church and community.

Tuesday, 22 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 139:13-18; Genesis 33:1-17; Galatians 4:21-5:1



The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) has a vision of Taiwan being a country blessed by God - "a new and independent sovereign state" full of justice, peace, democracy, freedom, and equality. They akin these ideals to be like the Exodus of the Israelites, full of challenges, obstacles, and set-backs; but also with hope and faith in the Lord.

To achieve this vision, PCT has designed an "I Love Taiwan" Mission Programme for young people to experience God's grace and love and to learn and live out their faith. It is a three-week program. The young people are also challenged to devote themselves to God through the participation in mission, and be willing to be involved in ecumenical movement and construct a life of identification, devotion and growth.

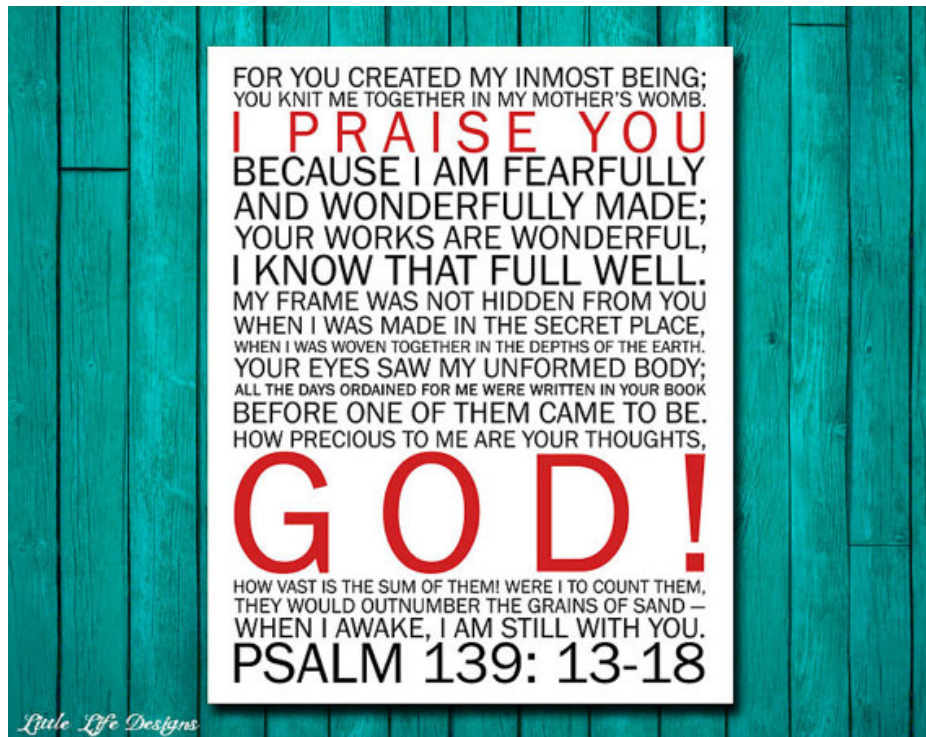


They request prayers for this three-week program that:

1. The participants will increase their knowledge and understanding about people and the church in Taiwan through mission involvement (e.g. teaching English in summer camp) in a cross cultural and multi-religious context alongside Taiwan's young people.
2. It will enable the youth to develop a network among overseas youth, Taiwanese youth and churches.
3. God guides the PCT to provide leadership training and nurturing through participation in community mission and evangelism; and motivate ecumenical involvement in local churches.

Wednesday, 23 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 139:13-18; Genesis 35:16-29; Matthew 12:15-21



(Source: <https://www.etsy.com/listing/156003278/christian-wall-art-childrens-home-decor>)

Thursday, 24 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Genesis 29:1-8; 1 Corinthians 4:14-20

Rev. Zauva Zaidarhzauva was a Partner-in-Mission sent by the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI) to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT). He was accompanied by his wife, Sapi and their two sons. They first served in July 1987 amongst the aboriginal people, such as the Bunun tribes who live in the central part of the country.

After completing over a year of Mandarin language study they moved to a mountain village called Chiomei in central Taiwan. Their main work there was to visit the 19 surrounding churches and proclaim the gospel to the unreached people. In Chiomei, they learnt more about the life of the mountain people. By 1991, they were back to their ministry in Taichung where they worked until 1997. On 1 March 1997, they began a new assignment with the Fenygyuan Presbyterian Church in Kaoshiung County. Zauva was the first ordained pastor to minister the church and its preaching stations in the Kaoshiung area. They then moved to their next assignment, a small preaching station named Youtsang at Nandz, in the outskirts of Kaoshiung City to minister to adults belonging to aboriginal tribes.

Rev. Zaidarhzauva returned to Mizoram, India in July 2012 and settled down at Aizawl to construct a house for his family. While during construction, he received an invitation from Interserve India to join the ministry in Pune. He and his wife joined as volunteers, known as “On Trackers.” They left the unfinished house and moved to Pune, a city in the state of Maharashtra which is in the western part of India to join the ministry.

Prayer Request:

Thanksgiving to God for Rev. Zaidarhzauva’s ministry in Taiwan. Also pray for Rev. Zauva and his wife, Sapi as they serve in Interserve India and are involved in the local community.

Friday, 25 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Genesis 29:9-14;
Acts 7:44-53



The CWM Reflection and Research's Programme Area held an international workshop, *Liturgical Music of the 21st Century. An International Proclamation through the Art of Music* in Kingston, Jamaica, in May 2014. Fourteen international musicians, composers and liturgists gathered to reflect on the state of liturgical music in the 21st century and to actualise their identity, tradition, heritage and spiritual narrative in liturgies and music. The composition of the group included some who were "well regarded and experienced" and others who were rather young and "willing to learn."

One of the purposes of the workshop was to articulate CWM Theology Statement, using local cultural expressions in liturgical music and tradition in worship. Participants were divided into five working groups to create worship resources based on the five themes, "peace," "fullness of life," "violence," "ecological concerns," and "justice." The liturgies and songs or hymns are created for different groups, such as children, young people and adults for varied worship contexts. The outcome of the workshop is the publication of the worship resources created, possibly in 2015.

Prayer requests:

1. Thanksgiving for safe travel of all participants. Also for the productive and creative contribution of the participation that made for an intense, albeit an enjoyable workshop.
2. Pray for the editorial team as they collect, collate, and edit the materials for publication.



Saturday, 26 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Genesis 29:31-30:24; Matthew 12:38-42

The grounds shook
Fear grasped my heart
Yet I felt calmness within me
Overflowing like soothing water

The shaking stopped
Serenity spread once more
The land became still again
As a cat lying down for its nap

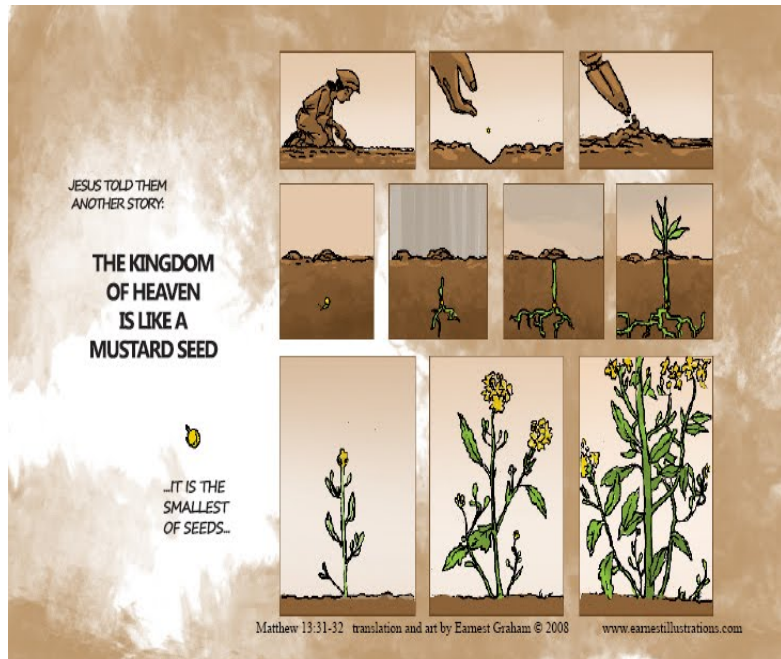
As I glanced upward
A mountain of great beauty
As I looked at the great spectacle
I came across a thoughtful message:

Fears and troubles may arise
To shake my heart and mind
But with God to lead me on
I can stand firm on my ground

(Source: *Poems of Peace* by D.Kagiso Malar Samuel)

Sunday, 27 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Genesis 29:15-28; Matthew 13:31-33



(Source: <http://lookbothwaysartandfaith.blogspot.sg/2011/07/this-weeks-bible-comic-matthew-1331-33.html>)

Monday, 28 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 65:8-13; Genesis 30:25-36; James 3:13-18



Regarding the ferry ship *Sewol* disaster

Korea is still struggling in their deep sorrow following the *Sewol* ferry disaster on 16 April 2014 that killed so many people on board, especially the high school students and with many still missing. The General Assembly of the **Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)** has been urged to serve the victims and their families with love. To put their intentions into actions, they have established a supporting center for the *Sewol* disaster victims, and opened a seminar at the Ansan Jeil Church on May 12 and 17. This is to explore ways to offer care, support and healing to help victims and the families of the missing, survivors and neighbors to cope with their lives. The General Assembly has also appealed to all the churches to collect 10% of the Easter offerings for the families of victims of the *Sewol* ferry disaster.

Regarding Peace of the Korean Peninsula

The General Assembly has announced a special prayer movement for national healing and reconciliation, and peaceful reunification on 27 July 2014 as the year of the 60th anniversary of the Armistice of the Korean War. All the churches across the nation will join in the prayer for 54 days, from 23 June-15 August. The General Assembly has published the meditation booklet titled “the National Healing and Reconciliation, Week of Prayer for Peaceful Reunification,” and made it available on the smart-phone app, to encourage people to pray together.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for the families of victims, missing and the neighboring communities, and the people of the Republic of Korea who are suffering due to the *Sewol* ferry disaster. Please pray for the smooth ongoing activities.
2. Please remember the week of “Healing and Reconciliation of the Koreans, Peaceful Reunification Weekly Prayer” (23 June- 15 August), and pray together for the reunification of the Korean peninsula and peace of Northeast Asia.



Pictures of the General Assembly/Presbytery prayer meeting on the 22nd of April

Tuesday, 29 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 65:8-13; Genesis 30:37-43; Ephesians 6:10-18

Mr. Liton Mozumder is a Partner-in Mission from the Church of Bangladesh (COB) to the United Church of Zambia (UCZ). He is accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Laya Mozumder, and both of them are working at the United Church of Zambia Chipembi Mission Station under Central Province of Zambia. It is a rural area in Chisamba district.

Liton was previously an accounts clerk for Mwandi Mission Hospital before working at Chipembi College of Agriculture as an accounting officer. His responsibilities are to handle all the financial matters and document together with two other accounting colleagues. Working in the accounts department, Liton says that it *“needs God’s guidance and need to be very trusted.”*

The agriculture college provides training to the less privileged people, such as youths with disabilities and the able bodied in the society. Hence, it charges less fees compared to market prices. This poses financial challenges for the institute, who are also facing costs in the college infrastructures. Therefore, Liton is encouraging well-wishers to come on board to support the activities of the college.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for Liton and his wife, Laya as they experience God’s wisdom and guidance through in their ministries.
2. Pray for Liton in his work with the college that he continue to bless and encourage the trainees who are there to learn.

Wednesday, 30 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 65:8-13; Genesis 46:2-47:12; Mark 4:30-34



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(Source: http://christiancliparts.blogspot.sg/2011_02_01_archive.html)

Thursday, 31 July, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Isaiah 14:1-2; Philippians 4:10-15

An article, written in memory of John Penry was featured in the Union of Welsh Independent (UWI)'s website in May 2014.**.

John Penry was born on a farm of Cefn Brith, near Llangamarch in south Powys in 1563. He was educated in the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford before beginning a crusade to improve the standard of preaching the Gospel in Wales.

He said: *"Thousands of our people who do not know anything about Jesus Christ as God nor man, nor a king or preacher or prophet. O sorry state!"* and placed a proposal before parliament in 1587, only to be jailed for a month at the request of John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, who will eventually become an adversary to John Penry throughout his short life. John was constantly criticising the failure of the Church of England to preach the gospel to the people of Wales, and published numerous books and pamphlets on secret press. He had to flee to Scotland soon after, which was an independent country at that time. However, upon returning to England he was betrayed and imprisoned for a crime in by the Act of Uniformity in 1559.

On May 29, 1593, John Penry was hanged in London as a traitor - a charge he denied. He was 29 years old and a married man, leaving behind four little children. His name is honored among UWI, who have named their Union's office in Swansea after him.

For more about him visit:

<http://yba.llgc.org.uk/cy/c-PENR-JOH-1563.html>

**Extracted from UWI's website at <http://www.annibynwyr.org/6350.html>



Friday, 1 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Isaiah 41:8-10; Romans 9:6-13

Ms. Rebecca Lalbiaksangi is a Partner-in Mission from Presbyterian Church in India (PCI)/Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) to the Presbyterian Church in Wales (PCW). She has been working at Llanfair Uniting Church in Penrhys, S. Wales from July 2011, working alongside her husband, Miara Rabearisoa who also serves as a volunteer in the church.

Penrhys is a small village on the top of a hill with a population of only about 800 people. People know each other and care for each other. Everyone is very friendly and supportive. Rebecca and the family enjoy getting involved in so many activities and find it rewarding at the end of the day. They need to be versatile and flexible in their ministry. Rebecca writes:



"Being a mother, it is sometimes challenging as Hannah needs to follow us with all the activities as we work till late at night on weekdays. We (Rebecca and Miara) are thankful to God for blessing Hannah with good health and giving her such energy."

Rebecca is also involved in the ministry with young mothers. There are many mothers in Penrhys who are raising their child/children under challenging circumstances. Being a mother herself, she understands how difficult life is to raise a child or children as a single person. She is present to give them a listening ear, supporting and encouraging them and also at times, counselling and prayers. Recently, several mothers are involved in church activities by becoming volunteers. This boosts their confidence and self-esteem. She hopes that God will bless her ministry with them.

Prayer Requests:

1. Their activities be blessed by God so that everyone who comes in and out of the church will find God's love and peace and comfort.
2. Those who come to church regularly to have strength in believing God.
3. For the children and young adults who come to church that they will continue to find God's love and have the need to be with God always.
4. For the workers and volunteers to have hope and strength continuously in their ministry.

Saturday, 2 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Genesis 31:1-21; Matthew 7:7-11

Let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream

- (Amos 5:24)

Father, you are a God of justice and compassion.

Your compassion drives you into the world to seek justice for the poor, the hungry, the oppressed, the victims of cruelty, the vulnerable and the unprotected.

You do not come amongst us blind-folded,

Impartially holding at arm's length the scales of justice:

You come as fierce love,

Standing at the side of those whose cause you plead and whose deliverance you seek.

Forgive us, Father,

When we are deaf to the cries that ring in your ears,

Blind to the misery that you see,

Inactive in an unjust world you seek to change,

Helpless against the evil that you have conquered.

Father, may our prayers never be a form of escape or our worship a shutting out of the world:

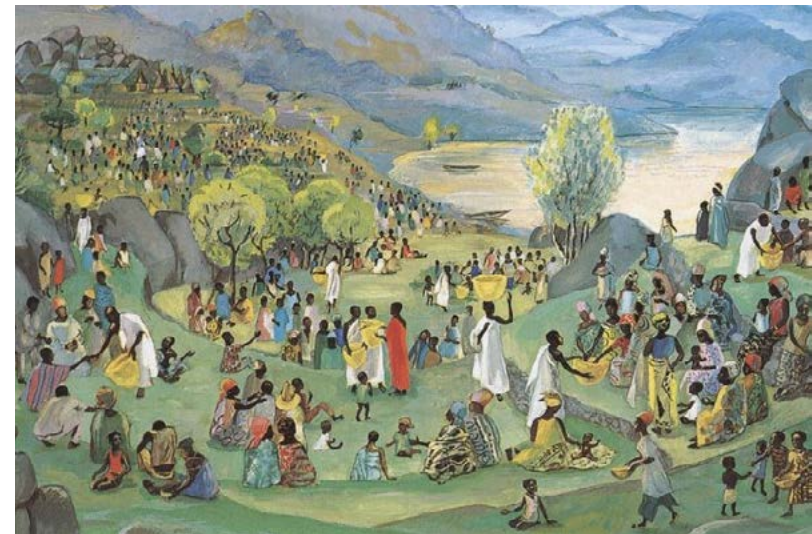
To behold you in prayer and to praise you in worship is to stand face to face with a justice that seeks the liberty and well-being of every man and woman.

May our praying be a true sharing of your burden and our worship a sacrifice of love offered on behalf of the whole world.

(Source: More Everyday Prayers by Henry McKeating, John Reardon and Michael Walker)

Sunday, 3 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Genesis 32:22-31; Matthew 14:13-21



(Source: <http://officetipsandmethods.com/algomareflections/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Matthew-14-13-21.jpg>)

Monday, 4 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Genesis 31:22-42; Romans 1:8-15



The **Congregational Federation** is a federation of independent or Congregational churches formed in 1972. It came into being following the apportionment of the assets of the former Congregational Union in England and Wales. The object of the Federation is the advancement of the Christian faith. The Federation offers a wide range of mission and outreach initiatives, both locally and globally. Two examples of the Federation's local mission and outreach efforts are the "Back to Church Sunday" and the "Big Welcome" projects.

The "Back to Church Sunday" seeks to unlock the potential in personal invitation. It is an opportunity for the churches to act together each year and take the simplest and shortest step in evangelism; inviting someone they already know to the church.

"Back to Church Sunday" continues to have a significant impact when one sees not only tens of thousands of people come back to church on one Sunday in September, but it also sees many becoming regular attenders and active members of their local churches.

Similarly, the "Big Welcome" project is an opportunity for Christians to invite someone they know to something they love. This Free Church initiative is about making people feel really welcome in any church activity. Churches are encouraged to be really creative about what they invite people to – a meal, a concert, a quiz night, a coffee bar or even a church service. The theme for 2013 was about journey of faith in which we have questions. And by offering a Big Welcome, churches enabled visitors to ask their questions about God and helped them grapple with answers.

Prayer Requests:

1. Thanksgiving to God for those who attended the "Back to Church Sunday" and the "Big Welcome" projects and pray that God's blessings on them.
2. Pray that the seeds of the gospel of Jesus Christ sown will bear fruit in due course.

Tuesday, 5 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Genesis 32:3-21; Acts 2:37-47

Rev. Charles Chua is a Partner-in Mission from Presbyterian Church in Singapore (PCS) to Presbyterian Church of Wales (PCW). He is an ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church in Singapore and was sent as a mission enabler to Wales in December 2002 for his missionary appointment. His wife, Molly and their daughter Annabel join him in Wales.



Rev Chua shares the following update of the Church's ongoing activities in Wales:



"Since end of last year we in Tabernacle Church started a monthly "Messy" church to outreach our community in Gorseinon. We thank God that we have been able to see children and parents & grandparents coming for Bible story, games, art & crafts and food. The "Messy" church team led by Tim & Sam Hodgins have also visited local school to take assembly and to invite children to

"Messy" church. Our prayer is that children and adults will embrace Jesus and seek to be His disciples.

The "English Corner" continues to provide us contacts and some seekers come to church worship and Bible study. Recently Agata from Poland was baptized and becomes a member of Argyle & Rhyddings Chapel."

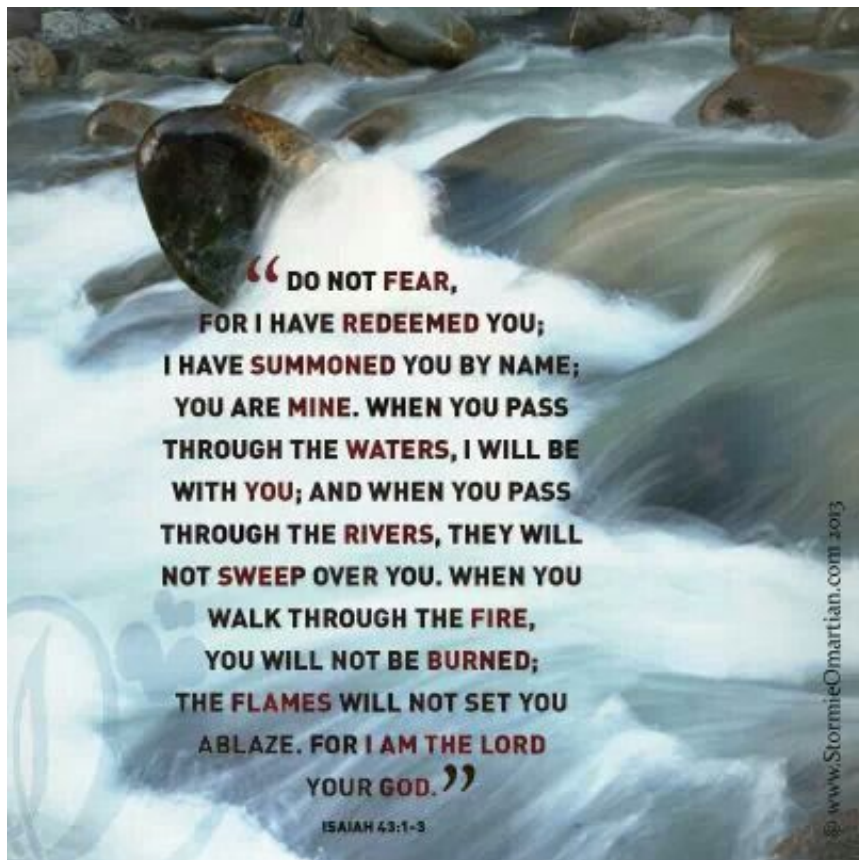


Prayer Requests:

1. Thank God for the many opportunities to connect people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Risen Saviour and Lord.
2. Pray for God's guidance, blessings and provision of fund as the 2 chapels take on building extension/ renovation work for mission and ministry outreach to our communities.
3. Pray with Charles and Molly that God will send them co-workers/ labourers to help them in their ministry in the 2 chapels.

Wednesday, 6 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Isaiah 43:1-7; Matthew 15:32-39



(Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/221591244138555744/>)

Thursday, 7 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b; Genesis 35:22b-29; Acts 17:10-15



The **Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN)** is the largest church in the Netherlands in terms of membership. The Church has 2.1 million members, with nearly 1800 local congregations and over 2200 ministers. These local churches are faith-based communities of people who are united by their belief in Jesus Christ. The vision for the life and work of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands is expressed in four themes, one of which is political body in the society as expressed in *The heartbeat of life. Memorandum concerning the vision for the life and work of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands*.

The first Christians expressed themselves by living together in the midst of the society at that time. The term 'ecclesia' had a political setting: it was used for the meeting of the voting members in a Greek city (polis) who governed that city. The church is a society of people belonging together as sisters and brothers in Christ's name. This church is a political body, because it is subject to the authority of Christ and not submissive to the power of other rulers.

The church is God's policy. God's policy is creating a society of reconciliation between people, of love and willingness to serve. In this society people learn the sometimes difficult lesson to accept one another as equal members of the one body; members all having their particular gifts and talents. In addition, the reconciliation in the congregation is searching for reconciliation in the wider society. The care for one another is also directed towards people outside the proper community. Whole population groups live on the fringes of society, feel disconnected and disenfranchised. Who is observing this dry-eyed, hasn't understood much of Jesus. We are invited to answer the question: "are you your brother's keeper?" in the affirmative.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for the congregations of PCN to be 'salt of the earth' - for human beings and society to be saved from greed, materialism, wastefulness, lack of care and aggression.
2. Pray that the good life of God's kingdom becomes visible in the Church's engagement with senior citizens and strangers, for example.

Friday, 8 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b; Genesis 36:1-8; Acts 18:24-28

Rev. H. Sangkhuma is a Partner-in Mission from Presbyterian Church in India (PCI) to the Presbyterian Church of Wales (PCW). He serves his missionary appointment as a mission enabler for four rural churches in South Wales.

Sangkhuma shares the following regarding the Community Centre in Maindee, Newport whose mission is focused on inter-faith relations.



"The Community Centre is now run as a charitable trust. It has activities such as Flying Start playgroups (two every weekday), health visitor clinic, Newport Mind art, singing and drop-in, Alzheimer's singing group, Esol classes, Asian women and Asian men's groups, Job clubs etc. and a very important detached youth work project, aimed at engaging with the many disenchanted youths who have been spending their time hanging about the streets. Most of the people using the centre are from other cultures and faiths.

The church tries to bring people together, building caring communities and building Shalom. This is done through the inter faith worker..... Even with the retirement of the inter faith worker, Community House sees that it is important to continue to its ministry because of the escalating diversity in our community. To this end, it aims to develop partnerships with other churches and mosques in Newport, Wales and the World, hoping to create some kind of steering group. This group could have a hand in the continuations of the support, training management and evaluation of the work through regular reviews."

Community House hopes to continue working with other agencies, such as Peace Mala and other peace groups, such as the local Quakers, the Temple of Peace Cardiff and the proposed development of a Peace institute for Wales, the Interfaith Council for Wales and so forth.

Prayer Request:

Pray the ministry of Community House as they seek to build partnerships with other agencies, in bringing *shalom* to all in the Newport area.

Saturday, 9 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b; Genesis 37:5-11; Matthew 16:1-4

There is hope

There is hope to my future
His Word, His Promises will come true
He holds my life in his hands
I have nothing to fear for my tomorrow
He does not lie
He does not change
He is always there
Enough for me
There is hope for my future
His Word, His Promises will come true
He holds my life in his hands
I have nothing to fear for my tomorrow
He is alive
He is all powerful
He is present
More than enough.

- by Hanta Ramakavelo
Madagascar

(Source: Dare to Dream: A Prayer and Worship Anthology from around the World)

Sunday, 10 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b; Genesis 37:1-4; 12-28;
Matthew 14:22-33



(Source: <http://preachrblog.blogspot.sg/2005/08/sermon-pentecost-12-matthew-1422-33.html>)

Monday, 11 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 28; Genesis 37:29-36; 2 Peter 2:4-10

Mr. Tommy Lam Chi Kin attended the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) in Seoul, under the sponsorship of CWM, and also the 10th Assembly in Busan organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC). It was held from 26 October to 8 November 2013. He is sent by his church, The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China for this visitation.

Part of the trip is to visit the National Monument in Gwangju, also known as the 5.18 Cemetery. He saw many unnamed tombs of anonymous dead. That visit revived his memories of the June 4 incident in Beijing, China in 1989. Tommy writes, *“Though this campaign was commenced as a civil disobedience against the Government, after visiting the 5.18 Cemetery, I have no hesitation to join such movement. As a Christian, I should fight not only for the official reassessment or the rehabilitation of the Tiananmen bloody crackdown, but also for the battle against the unjust monopolization of political and economic power groups.”*



For Tommy, he was deeply inspired by GETI and the 10th WCC Assembly. To him, it was not only a theological training but also a pilgrimage. It has impacted his life and calling as a Christian disciple. He has moved to a smaller church in the northern part of the New Territories. The church has a strong mission focus to serve the poor and marginalized. He is trying to walk along with the poor and hope to enact the mission of ecumenism.

Prayer Request:

Pray for Tommy as he seeks to demonstrate the spirit of justice and peace in his profession and church ministry.

Tuesday, 12 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 28; Genesis 39:1-23; Romans 9:14-29

In Council for World Mission (CWM), capacity is defined as the ability of people, organizations, congregations and communities as a whole to successfully manage their affairs leading to the fullness of life through Christ for all creation. Further, capacity development is sharing the knowledge and experiences among communities, congregations, member churches and regions to mutually challenge, to encourage and to equip each other towards prophetic engagement in God's Mission.

CWM promotes that one of the ways to develop capacities is through the **Academic Accompaniment Programme (AAP)**.

AAP facilitates advanced learning within and among our members, offering opportunities to gain further education in other contexts. **AAP** aims to build up and upgrade a theological faculty; to develop new leaders; and to acquire specific skills for emerging challenges of mission.



Photo Source:
<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/02/13/baby-boomers-flood-seminaries/2013>

Further, the **Special Academic Accompaniment Programme (SAAP)** aims to promote academic excellence in Theological Education, through the MTh. and PhD. Programmes in selected renowned institutions.

AAP and **SAAP** are being administered by the Empowerment and Training Unit of CWM.

Prayer Request

Pray for God's spirit to grant the recipients of AAP and SAAP wisdom, discipline and guidance as they continue with their academic pursuits.

Wednesday, 13 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 28; Genesis 40:1-23; Matthew 8:23-27



(Source: http://www.imagesofrevelation.com/revelations/bible_dream_interpretation.htm)

Thursday, 14 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 133; Genesis 41:14-36; Revelation 15:1-4

Ms. Sylvia Coombs was a former Partner-in- Mission and a staff member of CWM Office. She served as a missionary in the Solomon Islands for 18 years from 1972 to 1989, and then worked with CWM as the Mission Coordinator until 2008. Her missionary work in the Solomon Islands as a teacher at Goldie College has enriched her spiritual life greatly. She shares one such experience:

"One of the best lessons for me was what is sometimes called 'practising the presence of God'. Being continually aware that God is with us all the time in all parts of life. God is not just a God to be thought about and worshipped for an hour or two each Sunday. As a continual reminder of God's presence, the school which I taught at, Goldie College, was designed with the chapel in the centre and other buildings radiating out like the spokes and rim of a wheel. Almost wherever you are in the school you can see the chapel. It is called Emmanuel chapel, God with us, and it is there as a constant reminder of God's presence in every aspect of school life. This continual awareness of God's presence can be seen in the everyday life of the local people, when someone stops to pray for God's help and protection before going out fishing at night and diving into shark infested waters, or climbing a coconut tree."



Sixth form students studying in the library at Goldie College

Prayer Requests:

1. Give thanks to the brothers and sisters in the Solomon Islands who are currently living and serving God.
2. Give thanks to God for the Christians who are actively aware of the presence of God in every aspect of their lives, and their willingness to put their trust in God and be His witnesses in the Pacific.

Friday, 15 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 133; Genesis 41:37-57; Acts 14:19-28



Excerpt from "Churches challenge food poverty with latest resource on foodbanks" article taken from URC website:

The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and Church Action on Poverty have produced a three-part resource called "Faith in Foodbanks?" for churches about the growing food poverty crisis in UK.

Included in "Faith in Foodbanks?" besides an outline of the facts and fiction surrounding foodbanks in the UK, are worship materials, reflections, six Bible studies, prayers and action points that explore the ministry of foodbanks. The resource recognises that many churches are helping people who cannot afford to eat and therefore, looks at the reasons for the growth of foodbanks. Consequently, it suggests ways in which churches can take action to tackle the underlying causes of food poverty.

In the last five years the need for foodbanks in the UK has grown dramatically. Thousands of churches have responded by starting or supporting foodbanks within their communities. Last year Trussell Trust which helps 4 in 10 of the UK's foodbanks, fed over 900,000 people including more than 300,000 children.

The Rev. Dr Michael Jagessar, Moderator of the General Assembly of the URC said, *"The truth is the church should not have to have faith in foodbanks – but they are a sign of the times – a sign that the world is not as the God of justice intends it to be, a sign that the church will respond to poverty by taking practical measures to help those who are most in need, but also a sign that we need to ask deeper questions about the causes of poverty and inequality in our country."*
"The rising cost of essentials such as food, fuel and housing coinciding with static low incomes, people not being able to find enough work and continued austerity measures, has left many families with no alternative but to turn to foodbanks for help."

Prayer Requests:

1. Give thanks to the churches that are helping to feed the poor and hungry in their communities.
2. Pray that the churches would come together to address the underlying causes of food poverty and to undertake a proper action.

Saturday, 16 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 133; Genesis 42:1-28; Matthew 14:34-36

As a river never ceases
Your steadfast love is never ending
As a mountain reaches to the heaven
Your love is infinite, O Lord

The sufferings I deserve
The burden of sins on my back
All these pains leave me
As your love gives me life, O Lord

Though the seas and the wind rise
Your love protects me, O Lord
Though the world fills with darkness
Your infinite love shines on me, O Lord

Like you love us always, O Lord
Help us to love you and others wholly
Help us to follow you in your path
And lead others to your everlasting love

(Source: Poems of Peace by D.Kagiso Malar Samuel)

Sunday, 17 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 133; Genesis 45:1-15; Matthew 15:21-28



(Source:

<http://www.christianglobe.com/christiandramas/lectionaryPowerPoints.asp?theDate=4/12/2015>

Monday, 18 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 130; Genesis 43:1-34; Acts 15:1-21



Below is an update written by the General Secretary of **Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC)**, Rev. Mareweia Riteti:

"On South Tarawa the capital we are planting 6 new Church centres. This means that we have increased the number of Pastors on South Tarawa from 12 to 18. The arrangement is that the 3 big villages (namely Uean te Bangota, Rotin Erim, and Tabukin Tion) will have two more Pastors beside the already established one, meaning they have three Pastors. For the three villages mentioned, we have 5 new Pastors installed. The sixth Pastor started a brand new Church in Tanaea village. The Tanaea village is situated between Buota and Bonriki village. On the 11th March this year, the new Pastor was installed in this village with only six families with a small meeting hall. Now Tanaea is counted to have a Church of its own although without a formal Church building but a small meeting hall.

We have said in the other issue that we are beginning to concentrate on empowering missional congregations by increasing the number of Pastors where the need is high or where members are great in number. The six new Pastors were received differently, some villagers fear the increase in stipend for the new Pastors while others have a positive response looking at more care takers for their spiritual formation."

Prayer Requests:

1. That the Mission Outreach of KPC be strengthened.
2. KPC Education be strengthened to uplift the quality of teaching and learning for the students.
3. Continuous search for God's guidance in the midst of the changing Kiribati.
4. Ask for God's leadership as KPC prepares for its General Assembly from 17th- 31 August, 2014 coinciding with the Centenary, 100 yrs Celebration of the Church Building on Roreti Village on Arorae Island. This is the first Church Building build in Kiribati in 1914. Arorae Island is where the LMS Missionaries first landed in the Southern Kiribati.

Tuesday, 19 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 130; Genesis 44:1-34; Romans 11:13-29



Ioelu Onesemo shares with us the following updates for CCCAS:

The **Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa (CCCAS)** was established in the latter half of the twentieth century when it became an autonomous church from the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa. Presently, with God's great divine providence and grace the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa is rooted and spread across the whole of American Samoa, Hawaii, Alaska, Pacific Coast of the United States, New Zealand and Australia.

In July 1980 church adherents of Tutuila and Manu'a Region of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa established their first *Fono Tele*-General Assembly in *Kanana Fou*-New Canaan. On August 1, 1980, Tutuila and Manu'a region was officially affirmed to be recognized as the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa. From July 25 to August 3, 2014, church members and delegations from different regional conferences of the C.C.C.A.S. will come together for their 30th *Fono Tele* in Carson, California since 1980. The *Fono Tele* specified by C.C.C.A.S. constitution is "...the supreme meeting of the Church. It is the fellowship of the Family of God, those faithfully trusting in Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church; engaging in worship, Bible studies, workshops and deliberations for the development of the CCCAS." (*O LE FA'AVAE, ILOILOGA VI* 2010, 17)

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for Spiritual Wisdom and discernment for CCCAS to understand God's will and fruitfulness of God's mission through the CCCAS.
2. Pray for Unity in Christ and Guidance of the Holy Spirit for the CCCAS *Fono Tele*.

Wednesday, 20 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 130; Genesis 45:16-28; Matthew 8:1-13

A Testimony: Baptism at a Presbyterian Church in Swansea

"Hello everyone. My name is Agata. I'm from Poland. I live and work in Swansea for 6 years. I was born and raised in Catholic faith. Since I was 15 I totally lost interest in God and church. I'm from broken family. I grew up without a father. He left us when I was 3 years old.



I came to Swansea in 2008 and for the first 4 years I was heading the wrong direction. As I didn't have a father figure in my life, I was seeking love and was jumping from one relationship into another. At the end I was left hurting and feeling lonely. I knew that God exist but I often asked myself if there is God up there, "why is He treating me like this sending only bad thing?"

Then in June 2013, after 15 years, I went for the first time to Christian Church for service. It hit me how the worship service was simple, reverent and dignified. I could easily focus on the sermon and God's Word. I realized what was missing in my life. It was Jesus and His love. It's really amazing that God gave His only Son to die for our sins. I had a broken relationship with God, but He never forgets me. I started reading Bible regularly. It shows me how powerful, great, merciful and awesome God is.

Previously if someone were to tell me that I needed to change! I just laughed at him and said that it's impossible. But now with God and His Holy Spirit, I started to change. I finally found peace in my heart. I'm much calmer than I was before. And the most important thing is that I learn to trust Jesus more each day. Proverbs 3:5-6 say to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." Whatever happens in my life, with God's mercy and grace everything will be fine.

Today is Easter Sunday. Jesus rose from the grave proving that He is truly God. Also today is my birthday and baptism day; my normal birthday and my spiritual birthday.

I have waited 16 years to follow Jesus once again. I thank Jesus for giving me a new life in Him."



Thursday, 21 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 124; Genesis 49:1-33; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Mrs. Laya Mozumder is a Partner-in Mission from the Church of Bangladesh (COB) to the United Church of Zambia (UCZ). She is accompanied by her husband, Mr. Liton Mozumder, and both of them are working at the United Church of Zambia Chipembi Mission Station under Central Province of Zambia, a rural area in Chisamba district.

Laya is attached with UCZ Chipembi Girls Secondary School (boarding School) as a nurse responsible for the health affairs of the youth girls and the school community of about 700 populations. She has to health-screen them, provide primary treatment and give advice to the school management if there are any referral cases to the hospital. It becomes challenging when girls pretend to be sick but when actually they are not. The school management become worried of such cases but Laya thank God that the students usually recover within few minutes after she attends to them. She shares some of her experiences:



"In mission school I have to be alert to work 24 hours and that is the most challenging though sometime I could be sick but I have to pretend that I am ok and attend to the patients. But at the end of the day I am happy when I see my patients are smiling and attending classes and doing normal activities. The school management is cooperative and understanding and they provide support to my work. I am humble to my God to choose me as His servant to serve His people in Zambia."

Prayer Requests:

1. Thanksgiving to God for Laya's ministry and work in the secondary school.
2. Pray for strength and wisdom to be upon her in ministry with the students.

Friday, 22 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 124; Genesis 49:29-50:14; 2 Corinthians 10:12-18



The **Church of Bangladesh** is one of the members of CWM which is witnessing Christ in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a country where Christians are the minority but they are like salt and light of this world. COB is continuing its ministry to carry out Christ's mission and Vision.

Rev. Shourabh Pholia, the Mission Programme Secretary of COB, shares the following prayer requests for their ministry:

- 1) The Church of Bangladesh is witnessing Christ here in Bangladesh through its Mission and Ministry. The COB is witnessing Christ by being with hard-core poor, vulnerable, down trodden, oppressed and neglected people in Bangladesh. Among them the garments workers might be most oppressed of the oppressed. COB has shown its solidarity with the garments workers to establish their rights and for justice. COB has been giving human and spiritual care to garments workers at EPZ area at Savar with special focus on women. The COB strongly feels a need to do something for the care of the garments worker's children. Please pray for us so that we can continue to be with the marginalized and neglected people such as the oppressed garment workers.
- 2) Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme is going through a change again in management and for that we need your prayer support so that we can see a better future through this ministry and can serve many to glorify His name and also be able to change lives of the poor in Bangladesh.
- 3) Pray for our St. Andrew's Theological College which is training people to serve at our churches in Bangladesh. We have got a new Principal please pray for him so that he can move forward with His blessings. We need a six storied building for our college so that we can raise a bigger library, premises for faculties, necessary class rooms, and accommodation for our students, visitors.
- 4) Give thanks to God for His blessings as we have successfully undertaken our Baro Sovas (Grand revival congregation) at all the Deaneries. Many have been blessed through the prayers irrespective of religion. It has renewed us for His ministry.
- 5) We are looking forward to have our CBSDP's consultation meeting at the end of this year. So, please pray for it and for our work here in Bangladesh through CBSDP.

Saturday, 23 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 124; Genesis 50:15-26; Matthew 16:5-12

God be praised!

As sure as night and day,
As real as the ground beneath our feet,
As certain as yesterday,
So is the Lord's love to us.

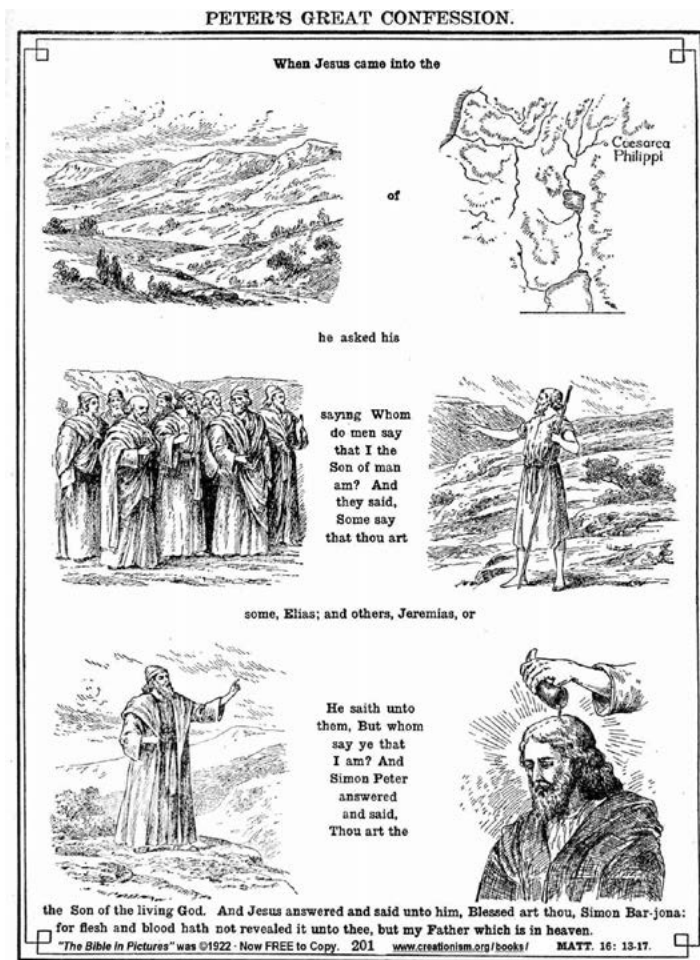
There is no greater commitment than
The taking of human flesh,
A death upon a cross,
A resurrection,
And all this God has done for us in Jesus,
Plunging into the very depths of hell itself
To bring us to the joys of Paradise.

Lord God, you let nothing stand in the way of your love:
You break down the barrier of our sin with your forgiveness,
When we stumble in failure you lift us up,
Our pride, our stubbornness, our naïve conviction that we always
Know what is best for ourselves, you bear with infinite patience,
There is nowhere that you would not come to us,
There will never be a time when your love will end.

(Source: More Everyday Prayers by Henry McKeating, John Reardon and Michael Walker)

Sunday, 24 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 124; Exodus 1:8-2:10; Matthew 16:13-20



(Source: <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/bible-image/hires/Peters-Great-Confession.jpg>)

Monday, 25 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 8; Exodus 1:1-7; Romans 2:1-11

Ms. Patricia Elizabeth Jamison who is affectionately known as Pat, is a Partner-in-Mission from Methodist Church in Great Britain to Church of Bangladesh (COB).

Patricia has been working in Bangladesh since April 2010 as a Community Health Advisor with the Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme (CBSDP). She is funded by the Bangladesh group and her lead sender is the Methodist Church in Great Britain. She is currently based in the southern region of Bangladesh in a very rural area. She lives in Jobarpar however visits seven other areas in the region. Each area has a community nurse and development staff. Some of the challenges that she faces are decent health care and nurse training. This is what she has to say:

"Not having decent health care in the local area is very challenging and a mindset of doctors who just give everybody who attends their clinics a long list of medicines is very difficult to understand. I do try to explain to patients about overuse of medications and have been successful with many."

It is great to see a change in many nurses over the past three years. Nurse training in Bangladesh is not good however I have tried to be a mentor to the nurses I have been involved with (see picture – Nurses during a training session in May 2012). I do feel they are becoming more confident as they are faced with many challenging circumstances every day."



Prayer Requests:

1. For Patricia's future in Bangladesh, the staff she is working alongside and the many patients she comes across every day.
2. She tries every day to communicate in the local Bangla language and ask that we pray that she would become fluent so as to enable her to communicate more effectively.



Tuesday, 26 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 8; Exodus 2:11-15a; Romans 11:33-36

The **United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)**, member Church in the Caribbean Region concluded its biennial Convocation on 27 April 2014. The biennial gathering is a one-day worship service that brings together members from over 200 local churches across Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Ms. Marsha Nathalee Martin, Coordinator, Communications and Information Technology shares the following:

*"Our overarching focus was our Synodical Theme; **Renewal and Transformation for LIFE (Liberty Integrity Faith Environmental Stewardship)** and the motif for this Convocation was **Renewal and Transformation: Bread for LIFE!** The objective was to reaffirm our commitment to pursue Renewal and Transformation and be inspired to offer 'Bread for LIFE'.*



We celebrated the presence of the approximately 6800 persons across the regions in both Jamaica and Cayman including over 500 children. It was a very powerful and meaningful event in a number of ways for those in attendance. We were richly blessed by a thorough exploration of the theme Bread for Life through the sermon delivered by Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey, Minister at the Parkdale United Church in Ottawa Canada.

*We are grateful to God for another movement of God's Spirit within our United Church, giving flesh and bones to our Synod theme **Renewal and Transformation for LIFE.**"*

Prayer Requests:

1. That UCJCI members will continue to offer Bread for LIFE.
2. The strength of UCJCI Ministers – the task of Ministry is great and some of them lead as many as four (4) Congregations.
3. The Ministry to Children Programme dubbed '**5 Star Ministry**'

Wednesday, 27 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 8; Exodus 2:15b-22; Matthew 26:6-13



(Source: <http://lisalessingcounselor.wordpress.com/page/2/>)

Thursday, 28 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b; Exodus 2:23-24; Ephesians 5:1-6

Rev. Thang, General Secretary of the **Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM)**, shares a brief history of PCM and also updates the recent activities of PCM:

“Formerly known Presbyterian Church of Burma (PCB) now Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM) was born on 5 Feb.1956 in Chin-Hills (presently known as Chin State). It came into existence through the initiative of 42 lay people. In the early period of its formation, the church faced several problems in terms of trained leaders and acquiring estate. In spite of despise and critics from local animists, they choose to look to God with living faith, and proclaimed the Good News to their own tribal people and fellow citizen in the country. As a result, the church that had started from zero was blessed in all aspects. Within a span of seven years, the church was able to officially form a national church under one General Assembly, becoming self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. At present the General Assembly comprises of 9 Synods with 7 main different ethnic dialects.

Presbyterian Church of Myanmar launched its soul-winning mission outreach through proclaiming the Good news in 1968 in the midst of animism. However the pioneer missionaries were untrained and uneducated; but on account of their faith and strong commitment, God used them as his weapon and instrument to save the lost souls and today PCM could carry out her mission outreach programme in 4 areas in Myanmar.”

Prayer requests:

1. Pray for the secure process of genuine democracy in the country.
2. Pray for the development of women's role in church and community.

Friday, 29 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b; Exodus 3:16-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

More than half of the 2014 calendar year has gone, but not without challenges and lessons learned, enriching experiences and memories shared as well as partnerships built and strengthened, the **Mission Enabling Team** has so much to be thankful for:

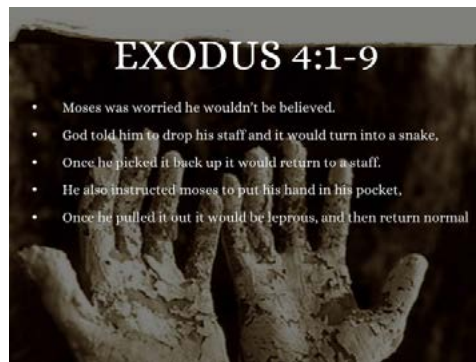
- Member churches who willingly committed their time and resources to host the Team Visits, particularly: the Nauru Congregational Church (NCC), Congregational Federation (CF), Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia (GPM) and United Church of Zambia (UCZ).
- Member churches who spared and shared their ordained and lay leaders to take part in said programme, namely: United Church of Zambia (UCZ), Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), United Congregational Church in Southern Africa (UCCSA), United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Congregational Federation (CF), Union of Welsh Independents (UWI), United Reformed Church (URC), Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (HKCCCC), Presbyterian Church in Singapore (PCS), Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (EKT), Congregational Union of New Zealand (CUNZ), Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ), Nauru Congregational Church (NCC), Church of North India (CNI), Church of South India (CSI) and Presbyterian Church of India (PCI).
- The successful launch of the Mission Toolkit (www.cwmission.org/missiontoolkit) ; and
- The approval of MSP4 Allocation Formula and Budget.

Prayer Requests:

1. That the learnings from the team visit programme will help member churches as they chart their path towards becoming transformative and life affirming churches in their contexts.
2. That the participants of the team visit programme will continue to share the lessons and stories of their experience to inspire their own congregations.
3. That the Mission Toolkit be a useful resource for member churches and their local congregations as they continuously reflect on their life and witness and their engagement with the community in which they are located.
4. That the MSP resources will continuously provide opportunity for member churches to strengthen their mission programmes and strategies.

Saturday, 30 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b; Exodus 4:1-9; Matthew 8:14-17



(Source of image: www.haikudeck.com)

Meditation on Exodus 4:1-9

Moses was commissioned by the LORD to go back to Egypt to lead the people out from the slavery in Egypt but he tried to evade the call to mission and gave a number of reasons, even though the LORD promised to be with him. Moses asked for further 'signs' from the LORD. Three 'signs' were given.

The serpent staff was one of the signs. When Moses threw his staff down, it became a serpent but when Moses put out his hand and caught it by the tail, it became a staff again. The second was Moses' leprous hand. The LORD asked Moses to put his hand inside his cloak. When he did and pulled out his hand, it was leprous. The LORD then told him to put his hand back into his cloak. When he did and withdrew it, it was restored to health, like the rest of his flesh. If Moses does not believe in these two signs, the LORD gave the third. That is, to take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water taken from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.

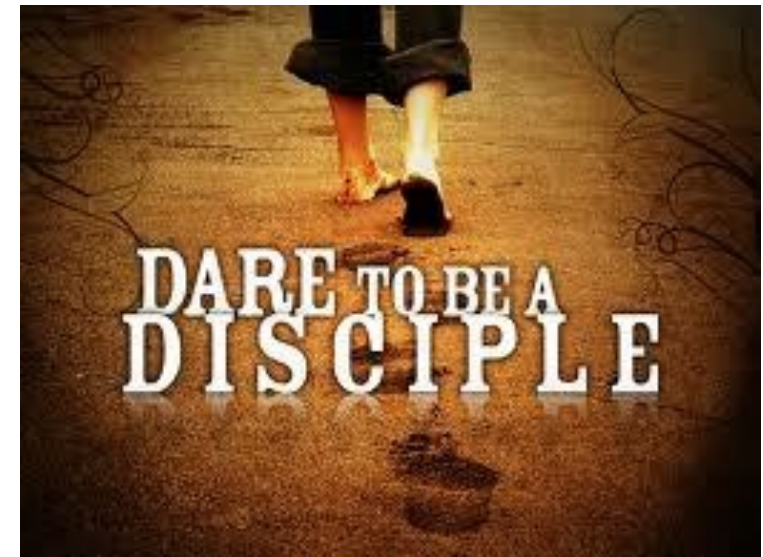
The 'signs' given were meant to encourage Moses and the Israelites to believe and his message. But they speak of the LORD who is a God greater than Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. The LORD reigns over the enemies of God's people and is able to deliver them.

The Psalmist says,

"Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;
Make known among the nations what he has done." (Psalm 105:1)

Sunday, 31 August, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b; Exodus 3:1-15; Matthew 16:21-28



(Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/218917231856795194/>)

Monday, 1 September, 2014

**Bible Readings: Psalm 83:1-4, 13-18; Exodus 4:10-31;
Revelation 3:1-6**



Rev. Nicole Ashwood, the Education in Mission Secretary of CANACOM shares a brief overview of CANACOM:

*"The **Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM)**, is a fellowship of 14 denominations in the Caribbean and North America basin, exploring the wonderful opportunities for partnership, education and empowerment in the body of Christ. Although our membership includes four denominations in Guyana and Suriname, our mutual history of colonialism has kept the link and both nations have been considered part of the Caribbean.*

Our very strong ecumenical ties with the Council for World Mission (CWM) has influenced our maintaining the round-table model for ministry, where every Member Church has equal opportunity for representation and participation at Council, as well as equal access to resources - human and material.

In recognition of the potential for continuity through our youth and young adults, our major outreach is a triennial young adults in mission workcamp, hosted by one of our Member Churches. The projects are varied, and there is scope for personal development and teambuilding during our two-three weeks together.

Using Acts 1:8 as our mission statement, we continue to affirm the call to be witnesses to the Good News through Sharing of People, empowerment of our Member Churches and education in Mission throughout the region and in collaboration with all our ecumenical partners."

Prayer Request:

Pray for the work of CANACOM in the Caribbean region, empowering member churches through education in Mission.

Tuesday, 2 September, 2014

**Bible Readings: Psalm 83:1-4, 13-18; Exodus 5:1-6:13;
Revelation 3:7-13**



Rev. Fei Taule'ale'ausumai Davis is the Regional Secretary of **CWM Pacific Region**. The CWM Pacific region is the largest, geographically and also in terms of member churches. Rev. Fei shares the following prayer requests:

Overcoming violence against women, especially domestic violence

We pray that:

- Amongst our churches and communities that we speak for the silenced, the voiceless and raise with men their awareness about violence and its impact on women.
- Educate and empower women speak up against violence. Create safe places for victims of violence to tell their stories and received support.

We pray that we:

- Encourage and ensure gender balance within our institutional make up particularly within our member churches.
- Lessen the shaming of the other in front of people.
- Educate both men and women about the changes we now have, and how society's norms have changed.
- Address issues of cultural bondage of women: for example - virginity in marriage for women and not for men is not OK.

Break the barriers that stop women from being creative leaders in the churches.

We pray that we are given the courage to:

- Name the institutional and cultural barriers that stop women from ordination as elders and ministers.
- Encourage and empower women to claim the power they have to create the balance in families, churches and community.
- Encourage Women's Rights as Human Rights and promote equality in communities.
- Encourage listening that helps men understand that life has changed. Women are now working for economic reasons so follow the change of roles in the families.
- Greater participation of women in leadership in the church.
- More women are free to choose ordination as a way of serving.



Wednesday, 3 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 83:1-4, 13-18; Exodus 7:14-25; Matthew 12:22-32



(Source: <http://mimaryvee.blogspot.sg/2010/09/first-plague.html>)

Thursday, 4 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 149; Exodus 9:1-7; 2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Smith Memorial Congregational Church is a member church of **Guyana Congregational Union (GCU)**. It was built in memory of Rev. John Smith.



Rev. John Smith is often referred to as the “Demerara Martyr” and arrived in Guyana in February 1817 to replace Rev. John Wray at Bethel Chapel, a house of worship which was erected by Hermanus Post, the owner of Plantation Le Resouvenir. Smith immediately commenced his service in earnest and sympathized with the plight of the enslaved Africans, much to the displeasure of the colonial elites.

In 1822, Rev. John Smith wrote to the London Missionary Society on the state of the enslaved Africans in British Guiana. In 1823 the enslaved Africans in Demerara rebelled against the oppressive system. Smith was charged with inciting the insurrection.

Following his conviction by a local military court, Smith was pardoned by the King. He died on February 6, 1824, before the pardon arrived.

On November 24, 1843, twenty years after Smith had been sentenced to death, Smith Memorial Congregational Church was consecrated as a tribute to his word by Rev. Edwin Angel Walbridge, a London Missionary Society Minister.

Prayer Request:

Give thanks for the faithful witness of partners-in-mission who stood for justice and peace in their Christian ministry.

Friday, 5 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 149; Exodus 10:21-29; Romans 10:15b-21

Thirty-seven New Zealand leaders from health, education and the churches put their names to a Call for Action on Alcohol Statement to the incoming New Zealand government of 2014. The group includes heads and representatives from leading medical and nursing colleges and organisations, universities, the Heart Foundation and the Cancer Society. Rev Ray Coster, Moderator of **Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ)** is one of the initial signatories.

The Statement calls on the next government to enact legislation in four priority actions related to the marketing and pricing of alcohol:

- Phase out alcohol advertising
- Phase out alcohol sponsorship
- Institute a minimum unit price for alcohol
- Increase the tax on alcohol.

Dr. Geoff Robinson, the medical spokesperson for the organization, Alcohol Action NZ that initiated this statement, states that the continuing damage alcohol misuse is a cause for concern. "It is both impressive and exciting to see this group of eminent New Zealanders boldly supporting these interventions, which, when taken up by the next government, will bring about a dramatic improvement to the health and safety of all New Zealanders." Prof. Doug Sellman also has this to say, "Previous Health Sponsorship Council research has shown that over two thirds of New Zealanders with an opinion supported the banning of alcohol advertising and raising the price of cheap alcohol."

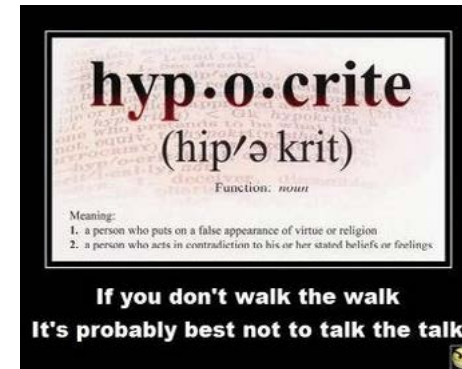
Other national and community leaders are and will be invited to sign the Statement.

Prayer Request:

Pray for all the churches to be united so as to have a greater impact in the local community, starting with the Action on Alcohol Statement.

Saturday, 6 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 149; Exodus 11:1-10; Matthew 23:29-36



(Source: www.whatshotn.wordpress.com)

Meditation on Matthew 23:29-36

Matthew 23 is known for the seven woes that Jesus declared to the scribes and the Pharisees in the temple precinct in his last days in Jerusalem (23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29). The scribes and the Pharisees erected monuments over the burial places of murdered prophets as an act to disassociate themselves from their forefathers who have persecuted and killed God's prophets. However, Jesus indicted them of the very crime that their forefathers have committed, that is, they harbored in their hearts the same spirit as their forefathers.

Jesus saw their hypocrisy. While they claimed to be obedient servants of God, they hated the righteousness of God. Each time, God had sent prophets to them but they were rejected time and again. As a result, God's righteous judgment will come upon them. Jesus teaches the reality of God's judgment upon the religious leaders then and now. Church leaders are warned not to pay lip service to God and not practicing justice and righteousness. They say that they honor Christ but Christ does not gain their deepest attention and love. They don't seem to understand the deep love of God in Christ and also the reality of God's judgment.

The Psalmist says,

Praise the LORD.
Sing to the LORD a new song,
His praise in the assembly of the saints." (Psalm 149:1)

Sunday, 7 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 149; Exodus 12:1-14; Matthew 18:15-20



(Source: http://alhatorah.org/Korban_Pesach_in_Art)

Monday, 8 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 121; Exodus 12:14-28; 1 Peter 2:11-17

Mr. Sonny Mwambe is a Partner-in Mission and was an active member of United Church in Zambia (UCZ) before he took the step of missionary service with Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC) in 2007. His family joined him in 2009 but due to the challenge of the children's education, his wife and children returned to Zambia in 2012.

One of the most challenging factors that they face is the understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the way certain things that are done in the island that are different from the church back in Zambia. He writes:

"For example back home, it is not expected to see the minister smoking or drinking anything that is alcoholic. Here it is a normal thing. Minister can smoke and drink openly (especially what is known as Yagona). This drink gets you intoxicated. A few people that I have asked why they do such things, they say this is how it has always been and we cannot change it. If you ask members of the church, they will tell you, if the minister does it, why not us. One of the ministers I met and I asked how he started smoking and he told me that he had never smoked until when he was enrolled to train as a minister, that is, when he started smoking. He actually picked up the habit of smoking from the bible college. I have seen some of my former students who never smoked while in school but they have started to smoke while in Bible College. This has been a challenge."

In addition, there is the tension between tradition/culture vis-à-vis gospel/education. For example, if there is a traditional function that is taking place, classes would be cancelled even at short notice. Similarly, church functions could be shortened so that people could attend the traditional function. In spite all these challenges, Sonny and his family have had a good time. People in the island are so good and easy to get along with.

In 2011, Alina and Lusekelo went back to Zambia so that they could attend school there. Though Sonny came back in 2013 to continue his missionary service, his wife Matilda stayed behind in Zambia since they felt that their children need one of the parents to be with them. Such is the reality of mission – separation from family.

Prayer Requests:

1. Thanksgiving for God's protection and guidance upon Sonny and the family in the midst of the many challenges that they face.
2. Pray for Sonny as he teaches at William Goward Memorial High School while his wife and children are back in Zambia. Ask God to keep them in good health and care.

Tuesday, 9 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 121; Exodus 12:29-42; Romans 13:1-7



Madagascar, one of the world's ten poorest nations, had enjoyed gradual but steady economic growth between 2002 and 2007/08. Since the illegal change of government in 2009, however, Madagascar's fragile economy has collapsed and many of the country's 22 million people have been forced more deeply into poverty. In the face of deep poverty and political instability of the country, the **Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar** (known in Malagasy as *Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara*) FJKM continues and commits itself to witness to and for God at all levels of church life.

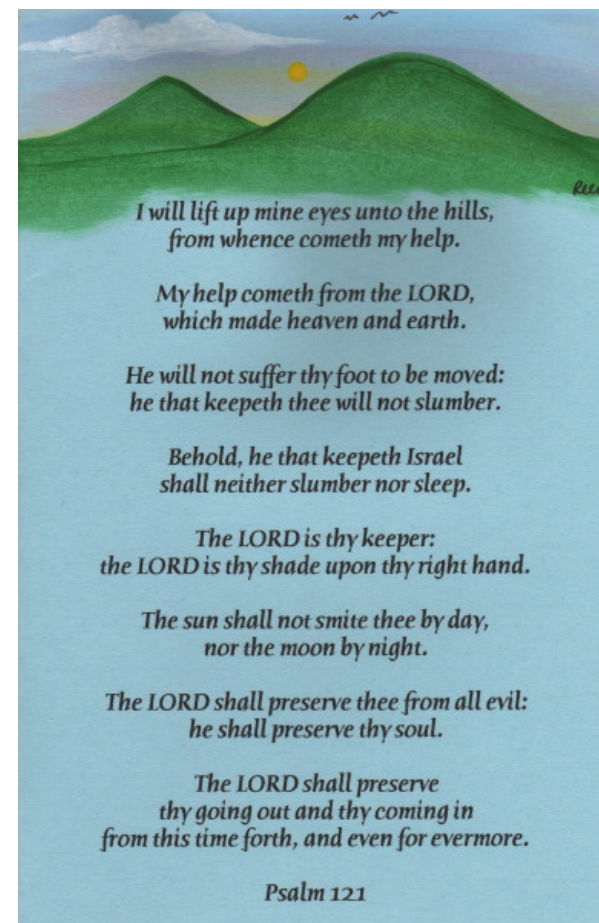
The work of FJKM also includes such as diverse initiatives as TOPAZA orphanage, an order of nuns, a dairy, a printing press, radio station which is currently closed by the regime (as at Sept 13 2013) and a chaplaincy programme. In all these projects and programmes, FJKM witnesses to Jesus Christ in the national context.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for the schools and institutions of the FJKM that they will continue to provide education and health care to the people in Madagascar.
2. Pray for wisdom and insight for the participants in the reconciliation process that they may identify fresh and creative ways of responding to the social/political crisis on-going in Madagascar that will enable all of the Malagasy people to feel that their voices can be heard in democratic institutions. And also pray for a spirit of forgiveness, graciousness and unity among the Malagasy people.

Wednesday, 10 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 121; Exodus 13:1-10; Matthew 21:18-22



(Source: <http://jesusistheword.org/2013/10/08/his-brothers-keeper-2/>)

Thursday, 11 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 114; Exodus 13:17-22; 1 John 3:11-16

CWM European Region Brings Together Mission Partners**

For the first time the European Region of CWM brought together Mission Partners serving the member churches of the Region. Mission Partners from Singapore, Madagascar, Mizoram, India and South Korea, travelled from Swansea, Cardiff, Ebbw Vale, Dudley, Manchester and Penrhys to the European Region office in Banbury where they spent time together in worship, sharing stories and fellowship. The Mission Partners were joined by the Regional Secretary who facilitated the day, the European Region Deputy Moderator and Programme Secretary for Research and Reflection who was visiting the Region at the time.

Conversations focused on the breadth of mission around four headings:

- Mission as struggle and resistance
- Mission as healing and wholeness
- Mission as freedom and forgiveness
- Mission as justice and inclusion



Together the group drew on the remembered Bible to illustrate the breadth of mission and then spent the afternoon sharing stories from their own experiences and work that showed mission in its various forms.

Wayne Hawkins, European Regional Secretary said, *"For the first meeting of all the Mission Partners serving in the European Region this was a very encouraging day spent together. We look forward to making the meeting an annual event and to sharing what God is doing in our communities with each other again."*

Rev Terry Jin, Mission Partner serving with the Congregational Federation: *"It was lovely indeed and very much encouraging!!"*

Prayer Requests:

1. Thanksgiving to God for the Mission Partners and their families who are serving in Europe.
2. Pray for the Mission Partners who are seeking God's direction and guidance for their ministries.

***Contributor: David Cruchley, Programme Associate (European Region)*



Friday, 12 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 114; Exodus 14:1-18; Acts 7:9-16

The history of the **Congregational Union of New Zealand (CUNZ)** started in 1842 when a Mr. Jonas Woodward commenced services in his home in Wellington, New Zealand. The first Congregational Church at Auckland was formed in 1851, followed by churches in Dunedin in 1862 and Christchurch in 1864. Many other churches sprang up all around New Zealand during this period of time, in main city centres as well as many small settlements. In 1863, the Auckland Congregational Union and Mission were formed to serve the needs of the northern Churches. Similarly, the Congregational Union and Mission of South New Zealand were created in Dunedin to serve the southern churches. One year later, both Unions were united in Wellington, where The Congregational Union of New Zealand held its first meeting.

On the 3rd of May 2014, Pastor Paul Allen Baines was inducted as the new Pastor for Three Kings Congregational Church. Paul and his wife Pam were previously based at Whenuapai Air force base where Paul served as a Chaplain. The Three Kings Church is based in Auckland and its specific focus is children. The congregation recognises the need for children to have a positive experience of church when they are young; and also for them to grow in faith in Jesus for the rest of their lives. Each week following their time in church, the children from preschool age to age 12 years will have their own Sunday programme.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for wisdom and guidance upon Pastor Paul Baines and his wife as they begin their ministry at Three Kings Congregational Church.
2. Pray for the children of the church that they will love Jesus more and more each day.

Saturday, 13 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 114; Exodus 15:19-21; Matthew 6:7-15

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

1 Thessalonians 5: 17

God, wherever I am, whatever I do,
Anything I experience: my joy, my pain,
In good or bad weather I go through,
My prayer goes to you without restrain.

Whether I close my eyes
Or I stand in amazement
Looking at your grace,
My connection with You is permanent.

When I think of family and friends
I always bring them to You.
When I see some strangers and fiends,
I bring them to You too.

In my success, in my illness,
In my distress, my life to You I commit.
In my intelligence, my faith I assess!
My confusion, Jesus to You I submit.
AMEN!

By Rev. Samoelijaona R. RASOLONJANAHARY
Christmas Island, Republic of Kiribati
March 30th, 2014

Sunday, 14 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 114; Exodus 14:19-31; Matthew 18:21-35



(Source: <http://hilldaleworship.blogspot.sg/2012/04/150-days-of-psalms-psalm-114.html>)

“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.”

- (Exodus 14:21-22)

Monday, 15 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 77; Joshua 3:1-17; Hebrews 11:23-29



The **Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu (Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu)** traces its origins back to 1861. The London Missionary Society (LMS) began working in the island in 1864. Tuvalu was also a mission field of the Samoa Congregational Christian Church. The church became autonomous in 1968. Its doctrinal bases are the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds. About 96% of the population of Tuvalu belongs to the Church, which plays an important role in the cultural, socio-political and religious development of the society. The primary schools and one of the two secondary schools established by the LMS have been taken over by the government. The Church has kept and revived the other secondary school, and celebrated its centenary in 2005.

The Church's mission is to "proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to advance the role of the EKT as an active partner in sharing the Gospel and to create a nourishing Christian Community of worship where Christ's love is encounter and take beyond its wall". With the threat of rising sea levels as an implication of global warming, **EKT** has worked together with NGOs to combat the current state of emergency in the nation.



Prayer Request:

Pray for **EKT** as they seek to address the problem of climate change and integrity of creation for the island and its people.

Tuesday, 16 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 77; Nehemiah 9:9-15; Romans 14:13-15:2



The **Presbyterian Church of India (PCI)** had its beginning in the year 1841, with the coming of Rev. Thomas Jones I and his wife who arrived at Sohra on 22nd June 1841 as the first missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Wales (then Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Missionary Society). From Sohra, the ministry of evangelization spread to Sylhet, Cachar Plains, the Cachar Hills of Assam, the Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) and later on to Manipur and Tripura. As the missionary work made rapid progress, the Church grew in character and membership. The Presbyterian Church of India was formally formed in 1992.

One major issue that the Church faces is the spread of HIV / AIDS in the local populace. There is an estimated 2.5 million HIV-infected people in India, of whom 20% are women and one third are youths aging around 15-24 years old. The General Assembly of PCI thus decided to adopt a Policy Statement on HIV AIDS and Strategic intervention. It is as follows:

The aims and objective of this policy statement are:

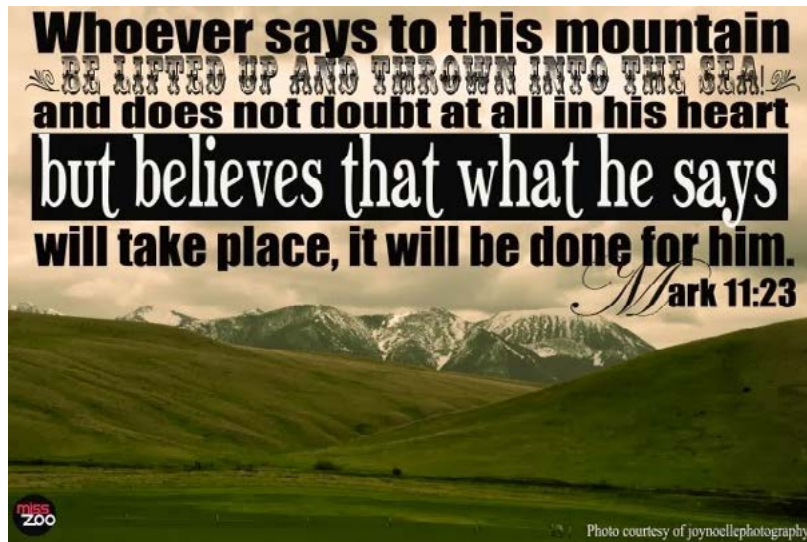
- i. To provide theological response toward HIV and AIDS consistent with the Biblical teachings;
- ii. To work for behavioral and attitudinal change toward People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA) by first assessing the awareness level with regard to stigma and discrimination;
- iii. To motivate and encourage all the Units, Women's Fellowships, Youth Fellowships, Theological Educational and health institutions, service providers and development departments to take up this mission of the opportunity ('a critical time in human history, a time when God's purposes and the human response to God's purposes are brought into sharp focus') in right earnestness with the involvement of all members;
- iv. To share in the sufferings, struggles, agonies and identify with the present predicament and state of being of the victims;
- v. To take up advocacy and prophetic roles wherever and whenever required at all levels;

Prayer Request:

Pray for PCI as they seek to alleviate the HIV/AIDS situation in India by advocating at all levels of society.

Wednesday, 17 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 77; 2 Kings 2:1-18; Mark 11:20-25



(Source: <http://godisheart.blogspot.sg/2014/01/whoever-says-to-this-mountain-of-lifted.html>)

Thursday, 18 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Exodus 15:22-27; 2 Corinthians 13:1-4



The London Missionary Society began its missionary work in today's Papua New Guinea in 1871. In 1962, the London Missionary Society, together with the mission of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand and other mission body, formed the Papua Ekalesia. A further union took place on 19 January 1968 when the Papua Ekalesia, the Methodists and the Union Church of Port Moresby together established the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In 1996 the general assembly of the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands resolved that the existence of one united church covering two independent countries should no longer be maintained. Thus, **the United Church in Papua New Guinea (UCPNG)** came into being as an autonomous church on its own.

The vision of UCPNG is to teach, preach and live the Good News of Jesus Christ in her faith, life and witness; in loving and caring ministries through the united participation of the people of God until he returns. The following are some of the mission goals in the light of its vision and which we could keep the Church in prayers:

- Enhance the teaching and proclamation of the word of God
- Encourage members to be prayerful and live Christian lives, expressing Christian faith in life and witness
- Provide health and education and other social services to the community
- Promote continuous communication among her people
- Promote, encourage and provide opportunities to enhance participation by all
- To be good stewards of resources
- Continue and maintain ecumenism and partnership in mission with partner churches

Friday, 19 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Exodus 16:1-21;
2 Corinthians 13:5-10



The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) was established in southern Africa by the London Missionary Society (LMS) which started work in Cape Town in 1799. Within a few years, mission stations had been established throughout the Cape Province, in present-day Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. After the withdrawal of the LMS from the Cape, the churches it had established, together with the English-speaking congregations, formed the Congregational Union of South Africa in 1859. This church united in 1967 with the Bantu Congregational Church to form the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, incorporating the work of the two bodies in South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. A further merger took place in 1972 when the UCCSA was reconstituted to include the congregations of the South African Association of the Disciples of Christ.

UCCSA is currently offering a Clergy Continuing Learning Programme (CCLP) as part of their training curriculum for church members. CCLP is “based on the principle of life-long and contextual learning; involving individual ministers, the church and community as the context in which ministry is done. It seeks to facilitate further development of ministers in the study areas of their choice. The CCLP encourages creativity, innovation, new areas and methodologies of study.” Participants of the course are required to write on a research topic of interest, ranging from Pastoral Care and Counselling to Theology and Ethics.

Prayer Request:

Pray for UCCSA that as they embark on this learning programme, its members and clergy will be able to learn more about service in their ministry, using the church and community as the context.

Saturday, 20 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Exodus 16:22-30; Matthews 19:23-30



(Source of image: www.sabbathbible.com)

Meditation on Exodus 16:22-30

After their exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness but the LORD never fails to provide their needs, manna in the morning and quails in the evening. Their provision was enough for the day. Moses said to the Israelites, “.... because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any..... so the people rested on the seventh day” (Ex. 16:25-30).

The word “Sabbath” means to cease or to rest. This is not the first time that we read about the Sabbath. We read about in Genesis 1 and 2 that God rested on the seventh day after six days of creation. And God has set humanity a pattern to follow. In the context of the Israelites who had been delivered from the bondage of slavery, the rest was indeed a welcome. Pharaoh did not give them rest but God was giving them rest. The day of rest was a gift of God.

So, do we observe the Sabbath? Didn't Jesus say some harsh things about people who practice the Sabbath. Yes, he did but his criticisms were directed to religious leaders who had turned the gift of God into winning favor with God. Jesus was not against the Sabbath. He is the Lord of the Sabbath. “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.” (Mark 2:27-28).

The Psalmist says,

“Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;
Make known among the nations what he has done.” (Psalm 105:1)

Sunday, 21 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Exodus 16:2-15; Matthew 20:1-16



(Source: http://www.thecreatorscalendar.com/images/THR_26.jpg)

Monday, 22 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 119:97-104; Exodus 16:31-35; Romans 16:1-16



The United Methodist Church in Southern Africa (UMCSA) was formed through the union of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) and The Reformed Methodist Church in South Africa (RMCSA), with a vision to be a reconciled community of Christians exercising a prophetic witness to Christ.

An emerging issue has come to the Church's attention in recent times, that is, teenage pregnancies. The Church realises that they have not emphasized on abstinence from sex among the young people in the church. This is seen in the rise in pregnancies and also a trend among the young people, having been found pregnant with child would be absent from church. After giving birth, they would return to church.

The Co-ordinator for HIV and Aids Programme of UMCSA, Rev. Buhle Mpofu wrote an "Abstinence Related Training Needs Study" that seeks to deal with this issue in the Church. Some of the recommendations in the study are:

- To instil among youths a positive perception of their bodies and their own sexuality.
- To emphasize family and Christian values and empower the youth to uphold their values, and develop strong moral and spiritual values.
- That parents, church leaders, and youth workers should earn the trust and respect of the young people under their care, so that they can be effective role models of good behaviour to them.

Prayer Requests:

Pray for the Church that they will be effective in communicating and educating the youths about abstinence.

Tuesday, 23 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 119:97-104; Numbers 11:1-9; Romans 16:17-20



The Presbyterian Church in Singapore (PCS)

is in the process of constructing the Presbyterian Hub, an integrated network of facilities that includes worship, meeting and office spaces. It will also function as the new headquarters of the Presbyterian Church in Singapore. The Presbyterian Hub will thus serve as “a platform for the upholding and reinforcing of our Presbyterian tradition, liturgy and distinctive,” states Elder Wong Pock Yeen, the Church’s Executive Director.



Elder Wong shares with us the following prayer requests to keep PCS in prayer for this Quarter of July to September. Pray that:

1. The Presbyterian Hub aimed to be a beacon to serve the local and overseas communities will receive the government's approval and so we can start our construction soon.
2. The Presbyterian Run and Walk, scheduled on 8 Nov 2014 will be well organised and attended as the 18,000 strong Presbyterian family rallies together to raise fund for the Presbyterian Hub.
3. The training programmes run by the Asian Institute of Calvin Studies for the youths, the lay leaders and pastors as well as for the post graduates will raise up and equip leaders. Our members will appreciate our history, heritage, theology, tradition and church polity more.
4. The social arms of PCS will work together under the relational Presbyterian Care Singapore – Network for better branding, identity and unity. Moreover, more volunteers will come forth to serve those in need.
5. The migrant ministry will continue to bless and equip those migrants working and living in our midst.
6. PCS has divine wisdom and favour for the Presbyterian Community Hospital and the Presbyterian International School.

Wednesday, 24 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 119:97-104; Numbers 11:18-23, 31-32; Matthew 18:1-5

Week 13→ Psalm 119: 97-104



Mem

⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.
⁹⁸ Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. ⁹⁹ I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. ¹⁰⁰ I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. ¹⁰¹ I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. ¹⁰² I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. ¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! ¹⁰⁴ I gain understanding from your precepts: therefore I hate every wrong path.

(Source: http://www.sigmasistas.com/666_500_csupload_55987432.jpg?u=3850184190)

Thursday, 25 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Isaiah 48:17-21; James 4:11-16



The news release of **World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)** of 12 May 2014 announced the transfer of its international office from Switzerland to Germany.

The WCRC is the most diverse of the world Christian confessional families, bringing together in one communion Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting and Waldensian churches. *"It is a joy and a privilege to have such a wide connection and fellowship,"* said Dr. Jerry Pillay the President of WCRC, but diversity also brings its challenges, such as:

- knowledge of vast discrepancies and inequalities through cooperation in six continents
- Theological diversity and ethical disagreements, witnessed through splits in denominations, severance of long-standing denominational partnerships, and a 'zero-tolerance' approach justifying separation and disunity
- Identifying the need to encourage a 'culture of sharing' resources, people and experiences.

2014 marks the 10th anniversary of the Accra Confession and Pillay reminded the committee that it was *"perhaps the WCRC's clearest statement on justice in the world.... A decade on, we need to assess what we have done to implement the confession.....We are an organization in transition and in need of transformation as we seek to transform the world to reflect the glory of God."*

The Executive Committee, the governing board of the WCRC, held its annual meeting in Hannover, Germany, in 11-18 May 2014. It is composed of 30 members from around the world.

Get more information on the Executive Committee meeting: wcrc.ch/executive-committee-2014

Friday, 26 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Numbers 20:1-13; Acts 13:32-41

Ms. Vanrammawii Hrahse, affectionately known as "Latei," was a Partner-in Mission from Presbyterian Church of India (PCI) to Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC). She taught at William Goward Memorial College on Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati in mid-2010, before returning to India to serve with PCI.

She narrates her experience:

"The Mizoram Presbyterian Church started this Mission Field in 1989. At present it has 41 churches and various preaching stations and fellowship centers. There are 16 schools and medical clinics at various stations that are run by the Church in Karbi Anglong. Diphu is the capital of Karbi Anglong District which has dense tropical forest covered with hills and flat plains. It is situated in the central part of Assam, India. The major tribes living in Diphu are Karbi, Dimas, Bodo, Garo, Rengma, Naga and Adivasi. The town truly exhibits the peaceful and harmonious coexistence among the different tribes, despite their differences in languages, cultures and traditional practices. The town houses churches, temples, mosques and also a gurudwara. I work in the Presbyterian Mission School in Diphu that is fully run by Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram Synod. There are 13 missionary teachers from Mizoram, and local teachers who are employed by the school. The school consists of children from Kindergarten age to Class 10. The school fee is only Rupee 150 (US\$3!) a month. There are 607 students enrolled in 2014 and they come from multiple tribes."



Prayer Requests:

1. Thanksgiving for the continuous blessings of the school by getting good results every year.
2. Pray for all the teachers and staff that they may serve with more compassionate and love for God and children in the school.

Saturday, 27 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Numbers 27:12-14; Mark 11:27-33



(Source of image: Joyfulheart.com)

Meditation on Mark 11:27-33

Jesus' authority was challenged by the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders. For the priests and scribes, "authority" is "power," "strength," "dominion" and having power to enforce laws and judgment. But for Jesus, authority is about God's loving relationship with God's children as seen in the baptism of Jesus. Furthermore, there is no other higher authority except God. Hence, Jesus' question to the priests and scribes who could not answer. "Answer me," Jesus asked twice (11: 29, 30). Jesus was asking them to distinguish things well.

Those two words, "Answer me," are also addressed to us, asking us to look into our deepest part of ourselves regarding our obedience and allegiance to him. Those words are invitation to us to humble ourselves before Jesus, recognizing our need for Jesus. The question is whether we would like to accept Jesus' authority in our lives. Are we ready to take the steps of this choice and determined to follow this through?

The Psalmist says,

"O my people, hear my teaching;
Listen to the words of my mouth." (Psalm 78:1)

Sunday, 28 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Exodus 17:1-7; Matthew 21:23-32

Obedience is Important

In one of his parables, Jesus talks about a father and his two sons. The older son is asked, "Will you help with the grapes in our vineyard today?"

This son replies, "No, I will not go and work for you today. I have better things to do."

But later, he realizes, "That was not the right thing to say to my father. I need to be obedient." And he



goes to work, serving his father in the vineyard.

The younger son is asked the same question, "Will you help tie up the trailing vines in our vineyard today?" The son joyfully responds, "I'm on it, Dad, no problem, I'll get right to it." But as soon as the son leaves the house, he forgets his promise and never goes to the vineyard.



Now, which son do you think made his father happy? The son who said, "No," but finally obeyed his father, or the son who said, "Yes," but disobeyed?

http://www.biblewise.com/archives/2011/octoberr/kids_korner/bible_characters/obedience.htm

Monday, 29 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 42; Exodus 18:1-12; Philippians 1:3-14

Rev. Kuzipa Nalwamba is an ordained minister of the United Church in Zambia (UCZ). She is doing her Ph.D. in Religion at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. Gender inequality has been a major social issue in Zambia, where social indicators such as literacy rate (64% of women compared to 82% for men*) and under-representation in ministerial or governmental bodies** points towards gender discrimination. Rev. Kuzipa shares some of her experiences as a woman clergy in mission:

“The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) is a women-majority church. That demographic, evident in worship services does not translate at synod meetings. Power-sharing is yet to happen. A woman who attains higher office leads in a highly contested male-dominated space. Covert opposition emanating from conditioned mind-sets is rife. Women are yet to be fully admitted into the leadership sphere and may experience:

- *AGEISM - Culturally, when one is considered young, immaturity is implied.*
- *SEXISM - Women clergy have male role models. Yet women are labelled as 'aggressive' when they adopt 'male styles' of leadership. The UCZ has not nurtured enough clergywomen to occupy high leadership roles to provide an alternative.*
- *THE CLERGYWOMAN AND MARRIAGE - The UCZ for a long time ordained only men. The minister's wife provided hospitality and was mother-figure. Women clergy (single and married) are covertly often expected to be minister and 'minister's wife' at once! Marriage is viewed as entry into maturity and secrets of the initiated. A single clergywoman is subtly reminded of such social distinctions.*
- *THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS: Fear, hunger, oppression and marginalisation plague rural women - they are poor and helpless. The UCZ needs to make room for their arising from feeling and wisdom – a theology of the heart and lived experience.*

Prayer Requests:

1. Thanking God for the large participation of women in the UCZ.
2. Pray for the nurturing women role models for the UCZ and wider church in Zambia.
3. Pray that the voice of rural women be evident in the theology and praxis of the UCZ.

*(Source: <http://africa.oneworld.net/campaign/uganda-citizens-to-check-voting-status-on-phone>)

** (Source: http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/Gender_Equality_in_Zambia)

Tuesday, 30 September, 2014

Bible Readings: Psalm 42; Exodus 18:13-27; Philippians 1:15-21



The **Church of North India (CNI)** is committed to announce the Good News of the reign of God inaugurated through death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in proclamation and to demonstrate in actions to restore the integrity of God's creation through continuous struggle against the demonic powers by breaking down the barriers of caste, class, gender, economic inequality and exploitation of the nature. The Church itself is spread across whole of India including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, barring four southern states.

Mr. Alwan Masih, the General Secretary of CNI Synod requests prayers for the leadership and the various activities of CNI Synod:

- 1) Kindly pray for the Leadership of the Church of North India, Moderator-The Most Rev. Dr. P. P. Marandih, Deputy Moderator-The Rt. Rev. P. K. Samantaroy, General Secretary-Mr. Alwan Masih and Acting Treasurer-Mr. Prem Masih; for all the Bishops and Presbyters and congregations.
- 2) Kindly uphold Church of North India as it continues its journey for the Dalit and Tribal people in bringing them from the periphery to the centre specifically when it is fighting for scheduled caste status to Dalit Christians.
- 3) PDS Model of Hostels for the Poor/ Needy/orphans/semi orphan Children.
- 4) Theological Education (B. Th. B. D. and M. Th. and PhD) for Pastors.
- 5) Stewardship Ambassador Ministry.
- 6) Mission Evangelism.
- 7) Sunday School Programme.
- 8) Spiritual revival meetings/programmes.
- 9) Pray for the rural churches where at places people are still not safe in proclaiming their faith.