



“This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”
Psalm 118:23 NRSV

PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS



Mediterranean Hope

In 2015, the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy launched the Mediterranean Hope project as a response to current migration issues. Through its ‘humanitarian corridors’ programme, teams based in Lampedusa, Sicily, Rome and Lebanon are involved in meeting people who make the journey to Europe by sea, providing shelter and support for those seeking asylum, and providing safe passage to Italy.

Mission partner Fiona Kendall is a member of Mediterranean Hope. Her work involves raising awareness of the project, and contributing to the wider debate on European migration policy. “We cannot wave a magic wand,” Fiona says, “but we can offer a secure base and a structure for moving forward

– which is often as much as highly motivated people, such as those we meet, want and need.



federazione delle chiese evangeliche in italia

“The only Italian taxpayers taking part in funding this project are those making direct donations to the charities involved, and those who have elected to allocate a proportion of the income tax they pay to projects such as this through a scheme known as ‘Otto per Mille’. This is an important point, given the delicate political and economic climate in Italy.” *(Continued on page 2)*

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Mediterranean Hope staff were at Fiumicino Airport in Rome at the crack of dawn recently to welcome two groups of migrants, all of whom had fled war-torn Syria and had been living in refugee camps in Lebanon.

“The experience of the participants should be similar whichever part of the country is to be their home,” says Fiona. “Accommodation for each person is organised in advance of arrival and they will be supported by the charities involved wherever they are.”

Testing times in Cameroon

Cameroon is a bilingual country that was ruled by different colonial powers. On 1 October 1961, the former French Cameroon and British Cameroon came together to form the Republic of Cameroon as we know it today. For years, Francophone Cameroonians have ruled the country with very little representation from Anglophone Cameroonians. In recent years, this has led to civil unrest.

Bunmi Olayisade, Partnership Coordinator for Africa, recently visited the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon (PCC). “Several incidents have sparked the current crisis,” Bunmi said. “In 2016, the Cameroonian government started sending French-speaking magistrates to preside in English-speaking courts. There were no English-speaking magistrates at state level, and no plans to recruit any. French became the primary language judges spoke, even though the Francophone and Anglophone courts run different judicial systems. English-speaking lawyers went on strike for three months in protest, but the government ignored them.

“The government also tried to harmonise the education systems in both regions. Schools in the Anglophone regions complied, but the Francophone schools are yet to budge. As a result, English-speaking Cameroonians called

for decentralisation of government and for federalism. The government is yet to respond. Civil societies, professional bodies and activities are frustrated by the lack of dialogue. Community relations are breaking down, and there has been an increase in vigilante groups, roadblocks and curfews in rural Anglophone areas.

“I met with PCC departmental heads, to hear their concerns and aspirations. Together we shared possible ways forward. Tough times do not mean we should not dream and develop our visions; however, timing is of the essence to ensure survival.”

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PARTNER CHURCHES AND ORGANISATIONS



Revd Eden and the joint choir



Exciting times

by the Revd Eden Fletcher

It was raining torrentially on 21 May 1893, Pentecost Sunday, when the Revd Charles Bone led the opening service for the first Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Hong Kong. The church was a garrison church serving both army and navy personnel, a few civilians and missionaries on furlough travelling through to China.

On 20 May 2018, 125 years later and with great rejoicing, we declared the third church on the site open. This time the weather was sunny!

Today, the church originally named as the English Methodist Church is known as the Methodist International Church (MIC). In the same way that the building MIC occupies has expanded from a single storey to a 24-storey structure, the church has expanded from one congregation to nine, with worship in four languages. Never a church to stand still, MIC exercises oversight over a new ministry amongst Filipino workers in Macau, launched in June 2017.

These are such exciting times for MIC as we explore what God is calling us to be and do in our new home with so much wonderful space to expand our mission. A hundred and twenty-five years after the opening of the first church, we believe that God still has important work for us to do, and are keen to ensure that the new building is well utilised for serving the present community of Hong Kong. We, like our forebears, are committed to proclaim Christ and to spread God's love by working for justice and serving the needs of the community.



The Revds Edén Fletcher, Dr Lam Sung-che and Dr Lo Lung Kwong receive the key to the church from the builder's representative.

May God continue to bless this great and mighty work that he has called us to, and may he pour out abundantly the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower us.

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European Methodist Festival 2018: When dreams become reality



The national flags of the Staunen! participants' countries, in front the souvenir shop



Barry Sloan, a mission partner working in Germany as Secretary for Evangelism in the United Methodist Church of Germany



A large group of Wesley Scouts participated at Staunen! Here they are, listening during the opening worship.



During the opening worship, Staunen! participants were invited to present their home country's flag on the stage

Some 850 people from across Europe and beyond attended the European Methodist festival 'Staunen!' (the German word for 'amazed'), which took place in the town of Dünenhof in Germany over the Ascension weekend.

In the past, Staunen! was a festival of the North Germany Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the majority of steering committee members and volunteers still came from this area. But the Church wanted to make the festival more diverse, and so included people from other parts of Europe in the preparations.

One of the highlights was the outdoor worship service, right on the beach of the North Sea. Methodists from many different countries thought about "getting out of the boat and daring to walk on the water". Residents, tourists, and people just relaxing on the beach curiously joined the huge Methodist family. Sandra Vanevska and Branka Naskovski from Serbia loved the music and how the leaders had prepared the worship services. "It is so touching to pray with one another and to worship Jesus together," they said.

Coptic Christians Emad Bhnan and Awatif Wesa, originally from Egypt and now living in Germany, said: "We feel very well here, and we enjoy the fellowship with so many Christians."

"For our small Methodist Churches in Europe, such a festival is an important experience," said Bishop Sifredo Teixeira from Portugal. "We can see and feel that we are part of a much bigger family. We could never organise such an event by ourselves, but to participate in it is a wonderful experience for us."

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Death of the Revd Dr Colin M Morris, Past President of the Methodist Conference



The Revd Dr Colin M Morris is pictured (right) with Dr Richard Vautrey, a former Past Vice-President of the Methodist Conference.

The Revd Dr Colin M Morris, renowned preacher, author and broadcaster who served as President of the Conference in 1976, died on Tuesday 22 May.

The son of a miner, Colin was born in Bolton and educated at the universities of Oxford and Manchester. He served as a missionary in Zambia from 1956 to 1969 and was elected as the first President of the United Church of Zambia. He was known for his passionate and outspoken views on political and social issues and was a close friend of President Kenneth Kaunda, with whom he worked in the negotiations for Zambia's independence.

He became minister of Wesley's Chapel, London, in 1970 and General Secretary of the Overseas Division of the Methodist Church in 1975. In 1978, he joined the BBC and became widely known for his contributions to *Thought for the Day*. He became

Head of Religious Broadcasting and from 1987 to 1991 was Controller of BBC Northern Ireland.

Colin was a prolific writer on preaching, popular theology and the media, author of the books *Include Me Out* (1968), *Raising the Dead* (1996) and *Things Shaken, Things Unshaken: Reflections on Faith and Terror* (2005).

The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell, Secretary of the Conference, said: "Colin Morris was one of the most effective and thoughtful communicators of a generation. He took the task seriously, was alert to the contexts in which he served, and above all, he waited on God.

"In Colin, Methodism was faithfully and passionately represented but more than that; the gospel was proclaimed with integrity."

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This is the monument to national reunification in Pyongyang, North Korea. On 27 April, the leaders of North and South Korea committed themselves to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. In an official statement, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) said: "Today we are deeply moved by the step made towards a new history of reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula."

PRAYER POINTS



Pray for all those involved in the Mediterranean Hope project: staff members, volunteers, government officials and, of course, the migrants.

Thank God for the European Methodist Festival. Pray that Methodist communities may continue to marvel at the work of God throughout Europe.

Pray for unity, peace and political stability in Cameroon.

Thank God for the new Methodist International Church building. We pray "the Holy Spirit may be abundantly outpoured upon European and Chinese staff, that converts shall be multiplied a thousandfold, and the church of Christ become a mighty regenerating power and praise in this land of China".

Thank God for the continued progress in relations between North and South Korea.