

TRANSMISSION

News and features from the Anglican Communion

Summer 2018



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† UNITED SOCIETY
PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

USPG[†]

Cover: Ellen Gano, secretary of Dagadag Farmer's Association, Philippines.

Credit: USPG/Leah Gordon

USPG is an Anglican mission agency supporting churches around the world in their mission to bring fullness of life to the communities they serve. Theologically, practically and financially, we encourage and enable churches within the Anglican Communion to act as the hands and feet of Christ. Together, we are working to improve health, tackle poverty, put children in school, challenge discrimination, nurture leaders, give a voice to women, and much more. Founded 1701.

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CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL

Bold, confident and joyful in the gospel, even in the face of significant challenges: that was the note struck by our speakers from Malaysia, the Seychelles and Jerusalem, as well as the UK, in a packed Birmingham Cathedral in March for USPG's Rethinking Mission conference.

This note is echoed in the great joy on hearing that Bishop Carlo Morales, a bold advocate for social justice, supported by USPG, has been released from his unjust imprisonment in the Philippines.

Again and again, in our encounters across cultures and contexts, we experience as Christians this sense of confidence and possibility of transformation.

This was the experience of a USPG-sponsored ordinand attending the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute in Arusha who speaks of 'the joyfulness and vibrancy of African spirituality' renewing his faith. And it is a regular refrain of those who participate in the USPG *Journey With Us* programme.

That sense of joy and personal transformation also comes through in articles looking at the community work of our partners in Bangladesh and the Philippines. All bold confident expressions of practical faith in our risen Lord.

The Revd Duncan Dormor
USPG Chief Executive

If you'd like to receive *Transmission* on a regular basis, please email eunicek@uspg.org.uk

New chaplain in Calais will support refugees and migrants

USPG with the Diocese in Europe and the Diocese of Canterbury are launching a new project to support refugees and migrants in the Calais-Dunkerque area of northern France.

Over the past two decades, this coastal area has become a hub for refugees and migrants who are looking to cross the channel into the UK.

The situation went largely unnoticed until the creation of the 'Jungle' camp in 2015 and 2016, which drew media attention, volunteers and donations into the area.

Since the camp was dismantled in October 2016, media attention has dropped, but there are still hundreds of people living around Calais, including many unaccompanied

and separated children who are looking to be reunited with family members who are already in the UK.

Volunteers known to the local Pas-de-Calais Chaplaincy have spoken about the inhumane conditions for those who live there – including reports of blankets, sleeping bags and tents being destroyed daily, even in the cold weather.

Brother Johannes, who has been in Calais since 2015 and worships with the Anglican Church, said: 'There are lots of physical needs but the biggest need is to be recognised as

a human. You do that by sharing a meal, by praying with them. We want to be here with them.'

The Diocese in Europe, Diocese of Canterbury and USPG are working together to support a Chaplain and Refugee Project Officer in the Pas-de-Calais Chaplaincy. The postholder will provide a long-term stable presence in the area, offering support and



care to migrants and volunteers. The role will also be an advocate for the migrants and help facilitate legal safe passage, especially for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

In addition, it is hoped the postholder, who is due to be in place by the end of the year, will provide a focus for church communities that want to respond to the needs and concerns of those in Calais. ■

Pictured: Sudanese migrant in The Jungle refugee camp, outside Calais.

Credit: Michal Bělka/Wikicommons

USPG at House of Lords for interfaith forum

Emma Bridger, from USPG's Global Relations team, was among a group of interfaith campaigners invited to attend a networking event at the House of Lords in March.

The event was co-hosted by the Three Faiths Forum charity and Lord Sheikh, who is an active interfaith campaigner.

Emma reported: 'There are a lot of people in the UK – especially young people – who are doing fantastic work, but who are not always connected.

'Meeting at the House of Lords was a chance to make connections and begin to collaborate so we can support each other and reach more people with a message of peace.'

Emma is currently spearheading an initiative that encourages faith communities in the UK to engage more deeply with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

She said: 'It's interesting that most work is being done by young volunteers. What we really need is for faith communities and organisations to support us at a more formal level so we can really influence harmony and co-operation among people of faith.'

Following the success of the House of Lords gathering, USPG will host a second meeting at our offices in London this summer. ■

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

**USPG Conference 2018
2-4 July, High Leigh Conference Centre, Herts**

Discover how Anglicans in Africa, Asia and Latin America are engaging with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals which seek a world free from poverty and inequality.

International speakers include:

- Archbishop Albert Chama, Primate of the Church of the Province of Central Africa
- Jessica Richard, Campaign & Advocacy Co-ordinator for the Church of South India
- Bishop Donald Jute, Diocese of Kuching, Malaysia

FREE for students and ordinands. Attend the full conference or the Tuesday Day Conference.

For information and booking: Email Kathy McLeish on kathym@uspg.org.uk, call 020 7921 2202 or visit www.uspg.org.uk/conference

Pictured: Bishop Margaret Vertue, False Bay Diocese, South Africa, speaking at last year's conference.





Archbishop Tutu commends new USPG scheme

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has urged churches in Britain and Ireland to support USPG's new direct-giving scheme *Partners In Mission*, which is designed to help congregations engage more deeply with the world church.

Partners In Mission offers churches the chance to choose from a list of 12 world church programmes across Bangladesh, India, Malawi, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – with 100 per cent of donations going direct to the programme.

The archbishop said: 'USPG were close allies with us during the apartheid years, providing a link between parishes in South Africa and Britain so that together we could share information and pray about our common concerns. USPG helped us know that we were not alone.'

'Today, USPG continues to invite parishes in Britain and Ireland to partner in mission with churches across the Anglican Communion. 'In this way, as partners and friends, we have the chance to engage our communities in a common struggle to overcome injustice in all its forms.'

'I commend *Partners In Mission* to you as a way to make real the good news of Jesus

Christ to bring change in every community.'

Scheme co-ordinator David Brand said: 'This is about connecting the Anglican family in mutually enriching relationships. It's more than giving money. It's about creating opportunities for churches to learn from each other and support each other.'

St Anne's Church, in Sale, has chosen to support the Church of Ceylon's outreach programme to tea plantation communities in Sri Lanka.

St Anne's took up the theme with gusto, hosting an activity weekend that included singing Sri Lankan hymns, testing different types of Sri Lankan tea, and making greetings cards in Sunday School. ■

FIND OUT MORE

For more information, visit www.uspg.org.uk/pim, call David Brand on 020 7921 2210 or email pim@uspg.org.uk

Pictured: Krishna is benefiting from the Green Schools Programme, run by the Church of South India.

Credit: USPG/Leah Gordon

Celebrations at temporary release of jailed bishop

There were celebrations in the Philippines following the release from prison after 309 days of Bishop Carlo Morales, of the Philippine Independent Church (PIC).

However, the release is only temporary, pending further investigations, prompting the Most Revd Rhee M Timbang, Obispo Maximo (Primate) of PIC, to call for the full acquittal of Bishop Carlo and all peace activists who have been imprisoned by the authorities.

Bishop Carlo was arrested on 11 May 2017 on the false charge of 'illegal possession of firearms and ammunitions'.

The bishop, a peace advocate from Ozamiz, was jailed after refusing to leave the side of a human rights activist who had also been wrongfully arrested.

The arrests can be seen as part of a violent ongoing campaign by the authorities to destabilise the efforts of activists to win better conditions for marginalised

communities.

The Revd Richard Bartlett, USPG Director for Mission Engagement, who visited Bishop Carlo in jail in November, said: 'His release is good news, a marker on the road to justice for Bishop Carlo in this dreadful scenario of unjust imprisonment. We at USPG rejoice with him and his family.'

Richard added: 'We continue to pray for justice for Bishop Carlo and Rommel Salinas, the peace activist imprisoned with him, and for all political prisoners in the Philippines.'

The Most Revd Rhee Timbang said: 'While Bishop Morales is temporarily free, we cannot close our eyes to the continuing incarcerations of arrested social activists... We steadfastly call on our people to stand firm in the struggle for justice and lasting peace... We ask the government, if it still desires to be relevant, to pursue governance that leads to peace and justice.' ■

Africa youth conference offers inspiration

USPG joined 270 young people from 12 provinces across Africa for a youth conference organised by CAPA (Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa) in April.

The gathering, in Kenya, explored some of the challenges and opportunities facing young people in Africa.

USPG provided sponsorship to enable two representatives from the Church of England

Youth Council (CEYC) to attend the event.

Ed Cox, a CEYC intern, said: 'The biggest thing that came from this for me is hope - Africa and CAPA bring me hope'.

Shakeel Nurmahi, chair of CEYC, added: 'This has been an amazing week of sharing, learning from one another, and growing our vision for young people in the church.'

Bishop Zac Niringiye, who led bible studies titled 'Radical Christian Living', said: 'A new social order is possible for Africa: it can be done, it must be done, because if it is not done, we shall be done!'

- Ed and Shakeel will be at USPG Conference (2-4 July, see advert on page 4). ■



From left: Richard Bartlett, of USPG, Shakeel Nurmahi and Ed Cox.

Global theology programme in Tanzania challenged and inspired Cambridge ordinand

A Cambridge ordinand has explained how taking part in a global theology programme will shape his future ministry.

James Marston, who is studying at Westcott House in Cambridge, was sponsored by USPG to participate in an online programme run by the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) which culminated with a ten-day conference in Arusha, Tanzania.

James, a former journalist and businessman, said: 'It was a hugely affirming and inspiring experience that has affirmed and deepened my faith, as well as encouraging me in my vocation.'

The programme brought together 120 young Christians and 24 facilitators from all parts of the world and all major Christian denominations, with USPG Theological Adviser Evie Vernon among the facilitators.

But while the programme tackled many topics – it seemed some issues were too hot for the gathering to handle.

James explained: 'We looked at a lot of big issues, in particular gender issues and the oppression of women in various forms and situations.'

'However, LGBT-plus seemed to be



the elephant in the room. It angered me that there was so much discussion about the importance of recognising and naming the margins, yet this issue seemed too controversial to be even named, let alone discussed. It made me think how churches are oppressing this minority in plain sight.'

Another challenging moment was an 'exposure visit' to a vulnerable local village.

James said: 'The exposure visit made me think deeply about western complacency and how greedy we can be. It can be easy to forget how lucky we are in terms of our freedom of expression and comparative wealth.'

'But, at the same time, the joyfulness and vibrancy of African spirituality renewed my own enthusiasm for joyful expression of faith.'

James concluded: 'When I am in ministry I will draw on this experience as I work with other Christians and with other Anglicans who have traditions that differ from my own church.' ■

Pictured: Ordinand James Marston in Tanzania.

New appointments

Former USPG Trustee the Ven Dr John Perumbalath is to be consecrated as the Bishop of Bradwell in Essex. He said: 'I believe USPG can play a role in resourcing local churches in their mission.'

Meanwhile, USPG welcomes John Neilson, Secretary of Imperial College London, who is due to become the new Chair of Trustees for USPG. John, who also worked in Whitehall for over 30 years, said: 'USPG's work with partner churches to tackle poverty and injustice and to transform lives is inspirational.' ■

My return to Africa: the trip my ancestors were unable to make

The Revd Dr Michael Clarke, principal of Codrington College, Barbados, and a member of USPG's Communion-wide Advisory Group, reports on his first visit to Africa.

I recently had the glorious opportunity to make the return visit to Africa my ancestors were unable to make.

As a resident of Barbados and a new member of the USPG Communion-wide Advisory Group, I received an invitation to attend a meeting in Mozambique last March. As I prepared for my trip, I felt a great anticipation at the prospect of my feet touching African soil for the first time.

As an academic, theologian and student of history, I have for many years sought to understand the Caribbean experience and our connection to the motherland. It has struck me that the Atlantic Ocean has been both a physical barrier and an emotional blockage to a past that might never be fully understood.

I don't know if the whole story of the Slave Trade will ever be truly told or even appreciated. We have tried our best to move on, but there is still a gaping hole in the lives of the people of the Caribbean and, to some extent, in the lives of those from whom we were taken. We might try to fill it as best we can with our achievements and possessions, and even with the God of our former masters but, when we look inside, the hole is still there in the depths of our being. In Africa I felt a sense of belonging to something far greater than I could have imagined.

Aside from attending to my USPG duties in Mozambique, I visited two USPG-supported theological colleges, in South Africa and Ghana. In South Africa, the energy of the staff and students at the College

of Transfiguration, in Grahamstown, was all consuming. While I didn't understand a word of the several languages spoken during worship, this in no way devalued the experience of being at home with the rhythm and deep energy of engagement with the divine. And this experience was taken to another level when I visited St Nicholas Seminary, in Cape Coast, Ghana.

These were two colleges in different parts of the continent, but both held for me something that is truly African, namely a deep sense of total response to God, body, mind and spirit. Indeed, this is what struck me most during my visit – an expression of worship that goes beyond language and, indeed, makes words and formulations insignificant.

TRANSCENDENCE

In these moments of transcendence, I realised how we in the West have become dependent on cognition – on the thinking mind – which means we can only engage in worship when we approve of the words being said. But in Africa it was my body, my whole self – not my mind alone – that gave thanks to God! I could feel myself moving with the rest of the bodies, dancing and swaying, and I knew my body was giving thanks to God, even if I couldn't put what it was saying into words.

During our discussions in Maputo, Mozambique, we all came to the conclusion that it was essential for the so-called global south to be engaged directly in the process of facilitating better understanding and resourcing in our part of the world.

This is in contrast to the current dominant understanding of development which sees the global north setting an agenda that is focused on financial hand-outs, often at the expense of growing dependence on that money. Rarely is there a sense that the south has much to offer. Put another way: development in Africa often robs Africa of its autonomy.

ALTERNATIVES

An effective alternative could come through exploring south-south engagement whereby, due to a lack of finances, the emphasis would be on the exploration of true wealth, such as community, respect for the earth, and joyous free expression.

We need to redress the balance. For too long, the north has been taking raw materials out of the south, then reselling them to us in the form of technologies that represent a consumerist approach to life that did not originate in Africa. The developed world could learn a lot by focusing instead on the reverence for the environment that is a part of traditional African life.

Coming home to Africa underlined for me how the church would benefit from stepping back from western doctrines and engaging instead with African and other perspectives that understand and experience God in different ways. Perhaps this will help us to chart a new and sustainable path that will give us back a reverence for the earth. ■



Pictured: Dr Clarke at Cape Coast Castle, Ghana. Slaves went through the infamous 'Door of no return' before boarding ships. Recently, the descendants of slaves were invited to symbolically return through the same door, renaming it the 'Door of Return'.

‘Our mission is to participate in the saving acts of God.’

Fr Herbert Fadriquela, Anglican Chaplain to the Filipino Community in the Diocese of Leicester, writes about the advocacy work of the Philippine Independent Church.

A group of urban Filipinos in Manila devised a unique Easter procession that re-envisioned Jesus’ ‘seven words’ on the cross. Processing in the midday heat from one community to another, the celebrants carried seven wooden crosses, each one representing a different challenge faced by poor Filipinos.

For example, one cross symbolised President Duterte’s new Tax Reform Law, which is seen as the cause of huge price rises for basic commodities and transport.

The other crosses symbolised the massive building of infrastructure that is displacing urban poor communities, the demolition of urban communities, forced resettlement, extra-judicial killings of human rights protesters, an inadequate justice system, and Charter Change [government proposals to change the constitution that some fear could lead to the possibility of dictatorship].

DISPLACED COMMUNITIES

The Philippines’ rural indigenous communities are a major source of income for Philippine society, but these people have seen little benefit from the so-called improvements in the economy.

In fact, the opposite is the case, with rural communities seeing their lands taken and used for large-scale agri-business and destructive mining operations. Land once planted with rice and corn is being used by big business

to produce crops such as asparagus, palm oil, pineapples and bananas. Communities have been displaced from their homes and farms, leaving them landless and facing food insecurity.



Pictured: Villagers on land ruined by limestone mining, Cebu Island.

Credit: USPG/Leah Gordon

Re-enacting the Easter Passion in the streets is one way of raising awareness about what the government is doing. But churches are doing more than this; they are refusing to close their eyes to these many injustices.

DRUGS TRADE

In response to the government's violent efforts to stem the illegal drugs trade, the Philippine Independent Church (PIC) expressed sorrow 'for the harrowing spate of drug-related summary killings in the country' which it described as 'an all-out war against the proliferation of drugs', with hundreds of alleged suspects being killed, most of them poor.

A PIC statement read: 'We share President Duterte's determination to destroy drug syndicates in the country. We believe that illegal drug trade is a social menace and it must be put to an end - but this must be done without neglecting the inherent value of human life.'

Even in terms of the war on drugs, government policy favours the rich. PIC claimed the government 'is showing a big disparity on how it treats the rich from the poor... While killings of those involved in the petty illegal drug trade are sanctioned, affluent narco-politicians are "invited" and asked to "explain", then return to the comforts of their turfs unscathed'.

PEACE TALKS

When President Duterte assumed office in 2016, he surprised many people by fulfilling his promise to resume peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front, which represents the country's communists and the New People's Army.

The government and insurgents have been fighting for five decades and the number of lives lost is enormous - so PIC is with the Filipino people in joyfully welcoming this unprecedented turn of events. Our hope is that the peace talks will bring relief to those

communities caught in the middle of the various conflicts.

A PIC statement read: 'PIC... has always been one with the Filipino people's struggle for a just and lasting peace in the country. The church is hoping that, this time, the peace talks would finally lead to the tackling of substantial issues that would address the roots of the armed conflict and spare the Filipino people of the hardships they face in their daily grind.'

GOD'S MISSION

But while we do what we can, we are reminded that this is God's mission. Our mission is to pursue and participate in the saving acts of God as they are revealed in a particular time and in a particular context. In this sense, we seek to discern and join in what God is already doing.

PIC has no land to offer the landless peasants or wealth to give to the urban poor. But we are motivated by faith to participate in the development initiatives of the communities. We are available and willing to be with the people in their dreams, aspirations and struggles for a better and abundant life. ■

Stand up for the Philippines

At this year's Greenbelt Christian arts festival (24-27 August, Boughton Estate, Kettering), our guest will be Fr Chris Ablon, from the Philippine Independent Church. He will be inviting festival-goers to creatively speak out for justice.

More at www.uspg.org.uk/greenbelt

greenbelt.
2018 * ACTS OF THE IMAGINATION



'Our children want a better life than their parents.'

USPG is supporting the Episcopal Church of the Philippines' *Receivers to Givers* programme, which is helping rural communities to boost their income through income generation initiatives and a small loans scheme. Here are the testimonies of some of those who have benefited.

WINSTON'S STORY

I'm the vicar of a church in Kalinga Province. Most people here are farmers, planting rice, raising pigs and cattle, hunting for deer and wild pigs, gathering medicinal herbs and wild vegetables. But the people were only eating twice a day due to poor rice production. So the church introduced the *Receivers to Givers* programme.

At first the loans were just used to grow rice. But the people realised it wasn't good to depend on rice because it's difficult to grow in this mountainous region. So they started clearing the slopes and the church provided seeds so they could plant beans and other vegetables that can grow in stony ground.

The people were able to grow a lot and sell the extra produce for a profit, and this is helping them to meet their basic needs, support their children's schooling, and improve their homes. The people have also made gifts to the church because they are so thankful to have received this wonderful blessing. The church uses these gifts to help provide loans to other communities that are in need - it is in this way that receivers are able to become givers.

HELEN'S STORY

I live in a village called Bugnay, in Kalinga Province, where we earn our living through farming. Through a loan from *Receivers*

to *Givers* we've been able to increase our harvest, pay back the loan, and use the extra income for our family and children. We have also given a small percentage to the church as a thanksgiving gift.

Our lives have changed for the better. We have been able to re-build our house. Before it was so simple, but now it is a little bigger and much improved. We have been able to buy things like sugar, salt and soap.

We can also buy medicines for our children and we can afford to send them to school. My children want to finish their studies so they can find jobs. They don't want the life of their parents - they want to have a better life. One of my children wants to be a policeman, another wants to be an engineer, and another wants to be a priest.

MADEGYEN'S STORY

I live in Sagada, in Mountain Province. I'm the president of the local farmers' organisation, which started in 2013.

The main crop here is rice. We also plant beans, sweet potato, corn and other vegetables, we grow bananas and sugar cane, and we keep pigs. *Receivers to Givers* has given loans to help people expand their livelihoods. The loans are made when there is a plan to develop a business. There is a low interest rate, and the loans must be paid back within six months or a year.

Before this programme we couldn't grow vegetables to a quality that could be sold at market, but now we can. We are no longer hungry and our children are going to school.

There are many different businesses that have been supported by the programme.



Some people buy and sell clothes, some grow Muscovado sugar, others have a piggery or a grocery store. ■

USPG is grateful to the Bishop of St Albans for choosing this programme for his Harvest Appeal 2017.

This page: Winston (top) and Madegyen (bottom).

Opposite: Helen in her garden plot.

Credit: USPG/Leah Gordon

GOING INTERNATIONAL

The *Receivers to Givers* programme is to be rolled out internationally by the Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP).

USPG International Programmes Manager Davidson Solanki explained: 'Through the programme, many communities have achieved a higher level of self-reliance. Now ECP wants to transfer this knowledge to other churches in the region, such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar. This is an impressive and significant achievement.'



‘I have transformed myself from a disorganised life.’

The Church of Bangladesh is reaching out to marginalised communities through the USPG-supported Swarupantor self-development programme. Article by programme co-ordinator Senoy Sarka.

The village of Astapukur is home to 65 families, all of whom are Christians from the Santal ethnic minority. Most are poor farmers who don't have land of their own, so many rely on menial jobs to survive.

They live off whatever they can cultivate: rice, corn, wheat, guava and some vegetables.

However, poverty means the people face food insecurity, especially during the wet

season.

The Church of Bangladesh invited the community to start a Sawrupanto self-help group (*sawrupanto* means ‘self-transformation’). The group operates using a process called Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM). CCM is about inspiring people with Christian values to become self-reliant and respectful of others so they can work together to tackle discrimination,

poverty and hunger. The process encourages people to address their most pressing needs using local resources.

In Astapukur, the Swarupantor group discussed the issue of food insecurity and devised a solution. It was decided that every Sunday each household would bring 250 grammes of rice and put it in a bamboo storage container at the back of the church – the food bank means villagers have access to rice even at times of poor harvests or flooding.

Villagers now hope food insecurity will soon be a thing of the past and their children will all receive an education to help them break out of the poverty cycle.

BIBLE STUDIES

The Church of Bangladesh started the Sawrupanto programme three years ago. At first, it was not easy for communities to grasp the concept.

It begins with a facilitation team visiting a village. The people are encouraged to ‘dream dreams’ and envision the sort of community they would like to live in. They are then invited to identify their skills and resources and work together to fulfil their dreams.

To date, 11 Sawrupanto groups have been established across four deaneries, with 20 to 35 people in each group.

The groups are helping to transform their local communities. Savings groups have been set up. Initiatives have been established to challenge gender violence, child marriage, dowry payments and drug addiction. Schemes have been put in place to respond to natural disasters, such as frequent floods. Home visits are being made to the elderly, sick and poor and those who are lonely. Income generation schemes have been established. Houses have been built for destitute widows.

In Rajshahi, the people had no church, so one of the first actions of the Sawrupanto group was to construct a simple building

with a tin roof to use as both a church and a training centre.

Life is still a struggle for these communities, but they have seen that solutions are possible. ■

Pictured: Safira was inspired by the Swarupantor programme.

Credit: Church of Bangladesh

‘Life is beautiful’: Safira's Story

My name is Safira. I’m 19 years old. I live with my parents and I’ve got a younger brother. I’m a member of the youth group at St Barnabas Church, in Paitapukur.

I first heard about Swarupantor three years ago. At that time, I didn’t have any interest in doing my homework. I felt shy and I was afraid to do anything.

But one Sunday I heard a sermon about the Swarupantor self-help group. I learned that Swarupantor means ‘self-transformation’ and that is exactly what happened – I have transformed myself from a disorganised life.

At the Swarupantor meetings we held bible studies and prayed and there were discussions about local issues, such as early marriage, gender violence, the dowry system and the dangers of drug addiction. I learned a lot. I started trying to discern God’s will for my life. I studied hard and passed my exams. This experience of success made me strong and stable, so much so that I have started to believe that life is beautiful.

In the future I want to become a nurse and serve the people. And I want others to experience the success I’ve had.

A tale of two journeys, with God and with USPG

Judith Ware spent over eight years as a USPG Mission Companion in Pakistan in the 1980s. She then worked at USPG's College of the Ascension, in Birmingham, and was ordained in 2002. Now 65, she is in Guyana with the USPG *Journey With Us* programme.

Greetings from one who is both a very old and very new voyager with USPG: I went to Pakistan 37 years ago at the age of 28 and spent eight years working in education, and I came to Guyana one month ago through *Journey With Us*.

In Georgetown, Guyana, I am a guest of the diocese for one year. I have no 'job' as such, rather I will be watching and learning, making myself available in my capacity as a priest (currently the only woman priest), and assisting with lay training. I love being here and have already visited an Amerindian 'mission', presided in the cathedral, and linked with the Mothers' Union. It's too early to say much more.

In 1981, like most young people, I felt invincible, not bothered by risk. Now as a 'senior' I know I'm vulnerable, and am far more anxious about mosquitoes, health and possible accidents.

The internet makes the experience different too. In Pakistan I would disappear for three years at a time, which meant being completely out of contact apart from occasional airmail letters to and from those who'd taken the time to write. But here in Guyana I have the internet (intermittently): I can send and receive emails and photos and read the BBC news. However, this ease of communication means that, while I'm not in the UK, neither do I feel fully focused on



Guyana – and I'm still deciding which scenario I prefer.

But some things remain the same. There is the challenge and joy of learning a new culture – how to avoid giving offence and how to thrive in it. There are issues of language and communication: English is spoken in Guyana but my ear is not yet attuned to the local accent and idioms. There is the excitement of new experiences and occasional fear at situations I don't understand.

There is also the matter of being an outsider, and therefore dependent on others and on my own inner resources. I think this is more challenging now I'm older – more used to independence and having quick access to multiple resources.

But central to everything – past and present – is a sense of joy in knowing God has called me on this journey and will sustain me, and that my very lack of independence and knowledge in Guyana are what lead me into a place of deeper trust.

Would I recommend USPG *Journey With Us* even for pensioners? Oh yes; if God calls, do it! ■

Come to our next *Journey With Us* Discernment Weekend, 12-14 April 2018, in Birmingham. For more details, call Habib Nader on 020 7921 2215 or email habibn@uspg.org.uk

A challenge to churches in Britain to address black issues

Theologian Richard Reddie, who spoke at the USPG Rethinking Mission conference, suggests Anglicans could do more to help black Britons feel welcome in their churches.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks on 22 June 1948. The ship sailed from the Caribbean laden with 492 men and women who became a significant part of the rise of multi-ethnic Britain.

These men and women – and those who followed them – went on to establish dozens of Pentecostal congregations and denominations which cater to the spiritual, emotional, cultural and social needs of black Britons, something which many established denominations – including Anglicans – have failed to do. Indeed, these Black Majority Churches (as some call them) are perhaps the most coherent representation of the black community in Britain.

However, in more recent years, it is Islam, rather than Christianity, that is proving more attractive to young black Britons. Why might this be the case? When researching my book, I asked former church attendees why they had embraced Islam. Their responses varied: Islam enabled them to ‘walk the straight path’; Islam’s decisiveness on socio-religious matters provided an anchor; Islam gave them strength to face a world corrupted by consumerism and moral relativism. Some called Islam the faith of the marginalised and dispossessed – and cited the tragic fire at the Grenfell Towers, where many residents were impoverished Muslims.



This surge of interest in Islam is a wake-up call for all British churches – historic and new. Indeed, I have received numerous speaking requests from churches that want to know how to stop the haemorrhaging of the younger end of their congregations to Islam. One obvious solution is to ensure pastors are theologically equipped to respond to difficult biblical questions. Black Majority Churches also need to engage more fully with public policy issues that impact black communities.

ANGLICAN RESPONSE

At the same time, Anglicans need to address a marked fall in attendance among young black Christians. Having done a lot to tackle the racism that characterised the religious experience of the ‘Windrush generation’, it can be argued that Anglicans have taken their eye off the ball. The dearth of black and minority ethnic clergy, especially in senior positions, is indicative of this. Many young, black folks see this failure as symptomatic of an establishment that reflects the wider inequalities in society.

The good news is that there are many capable men and women of good will who can take the church on this necessary journey towards greater equality. The challenge is to ensure they are given the opportunity, resources and time to do this.

- Richard Reddie is the author of *Black Muslims in Britain* (Lion Books). ■

OUT AND ABOUT IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

USPG Volunteering Manager Rebecca Woollgar pays tribute to how churches and supporters are engaging with USPG and the world church.

CHILDREN INSPIRED BY CHURCH IN MALAWI

A bake sale run by junior members of St Andrew's, Backwell, raised funds for church work among school children in Malawi.

Junior church leader Joanne Clark reported: 'We discussed how your neighbour didn't need to live next door for you to show them love and kindness - rather we are one

family across the globe. The children then looked at a world map and chose to find out more about Malawi.'

The children learned about USPG-supported work in schools run by the Anglican Church in Malawi - and they were shocked to discover that some schoolgirls didn't have access to proper toilets.

Inspired, the children decided to raise money for schools work in Malawi, so they brainstormed ideas.

Joanne said: 'Once abseiling down the church building had been ruled out, the children decided to run a bake sale.'

The junior church baked cakes and sold them after the Sunday service, raising £105.

Junior church member Maisie said: 'It's sad to know children in Malawi don't have toilets. The cake making was fun. The chocolate cakes were my favourite.'



Top: Junior school members (from left) Seb, Sammy, Tammy and Maisie.

Bottom: Andrew Winton, Angela Larkins and Tina Everett at the Bicester Regional Day.

USPG REGIONAL DAYS

It was wonderful to meet 165 of our supporters and volunteers during our latest series of Regional Days. It was also a chance to meet people who were new to USPG, including Penny Brassell, who attended the Bicester Regional Day. She shared: 'Thank you for a great day. I have gone away inspired, challenged and encouraged.' Look out for more dates in the next edition of *Transmission*.



GOING ONCE, GOING TWICE!

Thanks to Tina Everett – USPG Parish Contact for St Mary, Garsington – for organising an Auction of Promises, raising £986 for USPG. Tina said: 'It was hard work but lots of fun. We auctioned a range of items, including gardening, walking tours, and a three-night stay in London – that one was very popular! It was great that the event was supported by lots of villagers – church members and non-church-goers alike.'

SOUP-ER LENT

Big Bertha – the enormous church soup pot – was put to good use during Lent lunches and bible studies in the Leicestershire Parish of Broughton Astley with Croft and Stoney Stanton.

The parish gathered to work through the USPG Lent course *All Things Are Possible*. Donations raised £159 for USPG. Sheila Yates, Leicester's USPG Diocesan Representative, said: 'We hope more people will join our next study groups to discuss important issues facing the world and the church today.'

INVITE A USPG SPEAKER

Thank you to St Mary, Swanley, for organising a fundraising lunch for USPG in February and donating £60. Our volunteer speaker Paul Gurnham attended the lunch and shared about the work of USPG. To book a USPG Speaker for your church service or event, call Rebecca Woolgar on 020 7921 2220 or email rebeccaw@uspg.org.uk



A HEART FOR THE MARGINALISED

A group of young church-goers in Wiltshire felt inspired to raise funds for a youth music project in the Diocese of the Amazon.

Youth leader Tim Spinney, from Minster Church of St Denys, Warminster, explained that many of the young fundraisers (pictured) have special needs and felt they could relate to the plight of vulnerable young people in the Amazon, many of whom have few employment or educational opportunities.

Tim said: 'There are about three dozen young people in our churches. About three-quarters have special needs. This means they can relate well to people whose lives are not easy.'

A total of £205 was raised by the young people, aged between 10 and 23. They held a coffee morning, a lunch for the elderly and a crumpet tea, sold Pancake Day snacks, and undertook a sponsored walk.

Tim added: 'We live in a relatively well-off part of the country, but scratch beneath the surface and you'll find there are young people with needs who aren't well served by our education and employment systems.'

In response, Tim and his colleagues have been offering courses to provide the young people with life skills – such as cooking, food hygiene and basic finance.

Tim said: 'It's fantastic to see how these young people respond when they are shown care and attention – some have been able to find work.'

He added: 'Whether in Brazil or Wiltshire, it's great to see the church reaching out to those who might otherwise be overlooked.' ■



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