

Monday 29th June – ‘Signs of Growth’



We asked our World Church Partners and Methodist Women in Britain:
“What does Kingdom Growth look like where you are?”

Our prayer is that as you read these stories of what God is doing, even through the challenges, you will be inspired in prayer and faith to step out in mission, be that across the street or across the world.

BREAKING BREAD AT THE KITCHEN TABLE – from Revd Leonardo E Paredes, De la Puerta Methodist Church, Momboy Valley, Venezuela

On Palm Sunday 2019, inspired by the early church in the book of Acts chapter two, the burning heart of John Wesley and the depth and sensitivity of Susana Wesley, we celebrated our first Methodist church service in the kitchen-dining room of our house. We were praying for the Holy Spirit to move the hearts of those people we had invited. That first celebration sparked a desire to live the gospel as Christ and the first Christian community had lived it: "they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God..."

It became customary to share bread at each celebration, to wish each other peace, and to speak of the kingdom of God. Upon reflection, there is a need to live by example, to be the salt and light of the earth. That every Sunday celebration becomes a weekly sharing together of our joy. That love for God and obedience to his word be summed up by the new commandment: "love one another". In a hopeless society, we want to live together by sowing hope in the light of the gospel.

El domingo de ramos del 2019, inspirados por la iglesia primitiva que nos relata el libro de los Hechos capítulo 2, por el corazón ardiente de Juan Wesley y la profundidad y sensibilidad de Susana Wesley, dimos inicio en la cocina-comedor de nuestra casa al primer culto metodista. Estuvimos orando para que el Espíritu Santo moviera los corazones de aquellas personas que invitamos.

Esa primera celebración dio inicio a un querer vivir el evangelio tal como Cristo lo asumió, tal como en sus inicios la comunidad cristiana lo vivió: “compartían el pan, comían juntos con sencillez de corazón, alababan a Dios, veían por sus necesidades”... Se hizo costumbre celebrar la eucaristía, compartir una comida después de cada reunión, desearnos la paz y hablar del Reino de Dios... Desde las reflexiones se orienta la necesidad de ser ejemplo, de ser luz y sal de la tierra, de que la celebración cada domingo es el compartir juntos la alegría

de lo vivido cada semana, de que el amor hacia Dios y la obediencia a su palabra lo resume el nuevo mandamiento: "ámense los unos a los otros". En una sociedad desesperanzada queremos convivir sembrando la esperanza a la luz del evangelio.

WELLSPRING and IN TOGETHER – from Manchester and Stockport

In Stockport there is a building called Wellspring, opened ten years ago with the purpose of serving vulnerable people of the area. It opens every day of the year with someone always on duty. The main hall is also used as a dining area, and there are meeting rooms, toilets, showers and a kitchen serving free meals each day. Advice is given on benefits, employment, mental and physical health, drug and alcohol abuse. Clothing, toiletries, rucksacks and sleeping bags are available, and some have been helped off the streets and into accommodation.

One day in the week there is a meeting upstairs for women only, organised by women from the Methodist District. The women can participate in a variety of hands-on crafts and activities and discuss issues that are of interest to them. Some have become helpers themselves.

At another Methodist church in Handforth, Cheshire, members prepare one day a week for the arrival of people with Dementia and their carers. They are welcomed and offered hot drinks and then the session starts with singing favourite '50s and '60s songs accompanied with musical instruments. This is followed by a chair-based Keep Fit session which usually ends up with dancing to '60s music, often waving crepe paper shakers or silk scarves.

Everyone then goes into the church hall for games and activities such as billiards, dominoes, painting, jigsaws and skittles. Sometimes we can also offer hand massages. The afternoon concludes with everyone returning to the meeting room for homemade cakes and cups of tea. The carers enjoy the sessions as much as those with dementia and are pleased to participate fully.

GRACE PLACE – from Newcastle upon Tyne

"We call it the shop, but we don't sell anything!"

The four Methodist churches of the South Shields cluster of Bede Circuit run a coffee drop-in in the centre of South Shields. We offer free hot drinks and a scone or cake, a place of warmth in simple surroundings, an opportunity to talk to each other or with one of us. Booklets on Christian themes – hope, bereavement, prayer etc – are freely available, as is the opportunity to ask for prayer (written on luggage-tags and left on the prayer wall), and information on soup kitchens, food banks, housing and homeless charities, as well as volunteer opportunities, are available.

The main work of the project is to befriend the vulnerable, to provide a safe place for people to socialise, to listen to any problems (and where possible to offer help or to act as a signpost), to integrate people with others, and to show God's love without any coercion to believe. This in turn helps persons regain some self-esteem. We are already on first-name terms with many who are coming to trust us, and to bring their companions or other people in trouble that they feel we can help.