

UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 1 2010

Welcome to *UPDATE*, World Mission Council's email newsletter. *UPDATE* highlights news pertinent to our partner churches and organisations. Please feel free to share any of the following items in your newsletters, bulletins and prayer diaries. Where appropriate, please cite the original source as well as World Mission. You can contact us at wmeditor@cofscotland.org.uk. Find out more about World Mission on the Church of Scotland [website](#). Join our Facebook Group [here](#).

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Asia

Long-term Assistance Needed for Millions of Pakistanis after Floods

The Church World Service - Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS-P/A) says that relief efforts for those people affected by the vast flooding in Pakistan will have to continue for months. Covering approximately 160,000 square kilometers, the 2010 monsoon rains and glacier melting have resulted in Pakistan's worst natural disaster. CWS-P/A say that the unprecedented flooding has caused 2,000 deaths so far; this number is increasing due to the after-effects from severe food shortage and disease. As the floodwaters inundated Pakistan's rivers and travelled from northern areas to the southern coast, close to 20 million people have been affected. Millions are homeless and have lost their property and livelihoods. Approximately 800,000 homes have been destroyed while in Sindh and Punjab provinces 6.5 million acres of crops have washed away.

CWS-P/A is providing food, non-food items, and shelter in three provinces - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Sindh. Distribution is ongoing and will take place over a two month period, which includes two months ration for food items. Additionally, CWS-P/A is providing preventive and curative health services through six existing basic health units and three mobile health units in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and particularly Swat, Mansehra, and Kohistan.

Source: [CWS-P/A](#) ■ The Church of Pakistan is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Pakistan

Rebuttal of Pakistan aid workers 'murder by Taliban' story

In recent days there have been reports that the Pakistan Taliban killed three Christians delivering relief and aid to people affected by floods in Swat Valley in north west Pakistan. Our partners Church World Service (CWS-P/A) have written: "The local government, military commanders and police officials have informed our security team that this a baseless news report. All the names of the officials mentioned are fake and similarly no organisation called LIFE FOR ALL has been working in Swat area." The Pakistan Taliban has threatened Christian and foreign aid workers in the past, so this is a sensitive issue. Please pray for the safety of those involved in delivering relief to the millions of people affected by the worst floods in Pakistan's history.

Source: [CWS-P/A](#) ■ The Church of Pakistan is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Pakistan

Campaigners call for debt cancellation for Pakistan

Debt activists fear that aid will be dwarfed by debt repayments and issue warning over new loans. Anti-poverty campaigners have called on governments and international institutions to effect an immediate freeze on Pakistan's debt repayments, expressing fears that Pakistan's annual \$3billion would dwarf current levels of emergency aid. They also expressed concern that international institutions like the World Bank had promised nearly \$3 billion in new loans to Pakistan to withstand the disaster, rather than giving grant-aid. Jubilee Debt Campaign says this will only add to Pakistan's enormous and unsustainable debt of \$49 billion debt.

Source: [Jubilee Debt Campaign](#) ■ The Church of Pakistan is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Pakistan



Indian forum says state agencies colluded in anti-Christian violence

A 'people's tribunal' that heard testimonies from victims of anti-Christian violence in India's eastern Orissa state in 2008 has criticised state agencies for aggravating the suffering of those caught up in the attacks. "There is a shocking level of institutional bias on the part of state agencies (including police) leading to their collusion in the violence, connivance in efforts to

block the subsequent process of justice and accountability," said the jury in New Delhi at the end of the unofficial 22-24 August National People's Tribunal on the violence in Orissa's Kandhamal region. All the jurors were non-Christians with the exception of Ruth Manorama, who is a member of the Church of South India.

While the Orissa government acknowledged 42 deaths, activists presented affidavits to the tribunal stating that more than 90 people had been killed, and 300 churches and 5400 Christian houses had been looted and destroyed, creating more than 54 000 displaced people in Kandhamal. The tribunal accused the Orissa administration of "underestimating the magnitude" of the violence in Kandhamal that continued for weeks with the state government making few apparent attempts to curb it.

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#) ■ The Church of North India and The Church of South India are the partner churches of the Church of Scotland in India

Indian churches hail halting of permission for mining

Churches in India have welcomed the government in Delhi's decision to withdraw its permission for a controversial mining project of the Vedanta group in the remote tribal areas of eastern Orissa state. "The decision of the Ministry of Forests and Environment is an achievement and a fruit of the peoples' struggle," said the National Council of Churches in India in a statement. Vedanta's mining project in the Niyamgiri Hills had drawn criticism from environmentalists and human rights activists who said it was destroying the area's ecosystem and would have wiped out the Khond people's sacred mountains while displacing thousands of other people. Several church groups had joined protests of tribal people and others under the banner of the National Alliance of People's Movements, which had been in the forefront of the protests.

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#) ■ The Church of North India and The Church of South India are the partner churches of the Church of Scotland in India

South Korean church council says rice needed for flooded North

South Korea's national church council has urged humanitarian assistance for people in the isolated north of the divided Asian country so they can try and cope with recent floods that have hit the peninsula. In a 26 August statement, the National Council of Churches in Korea said August that in the North Korean city of Sinuiju, northwest of the capital Pyongyang and near the Yalu River, houses have collapsed, and 2458 hectares of farmland are flooded. The council, which is based in the South Korea capital of Seoul, said that there had already been an acute shortage of food in the north and it called for rice to be provided to victims. On 23 August, the council's committee on unification had met with delegates from its North Korean counterpart, the Korean Christian Federation, at Shenyang in northeast China.

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#) ■ The Presbyterian Church of Korea and are The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea are the partner churches of the Church of Scotland in Korea

Africa

Church warns of Malawi 'dictatorship' after leader's arrest

Malawi could be sliding into a state dictatorship where it is a crime to hold dissenting views, leaders of the Livingstonia Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian have warned. The charges come after the arrest and subsequent release of the synod's General Secretary, Rev. Levi Nyondo. "We are shocked and surprised that government could arrest a general secretary of a reputable church," synod moderator the Rev. Mezuwa Banda told journalists in the northern region city of Mzuzu.

Nyondo was arrested on 20 August after speaking at the funeral of former Cabinet minister Moses Chirambo, who died just days after being dismissed from the government. At the funeral Rev Nyondo had said it was ironic for the government to praise Chirambo after his death, when it had removed him from the Cabinet. Nyondo said that the government appeared to want the brother of President Bingu wa Mutharika to lead the country after 2014, but the church opposed this and would instead support Vice President Joyce Banda. Nyondo was charged with sedition

for uttering words that could incite public anger.

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#)

>> A spokesperson from the Livingstonia Synod has written to World Mission about the matter, saying, "Rev Nyondo arrest will be discussed fully during the forthcoming Synod Assembly where we hope we will come up with an official reaction and or Press Release. However, the Synod Secretariat feels that Rev Nyondo's arrest is a deliberate attempt to suppress freedom of our young democracy, a move that will draw back to one party era. Surely, right minded Malawians and those who love peace would not want to see another dictator in our beautiful Malawi. We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from within and outside Malawi... We are calling upon all partners and friends to join us in prayers as we stand for the truth and attempt to safeguard our constitutional freedoms in Malawi. We will continue to pray our prophetic and advisory role to the government wherever and whenever necessary without fear or favour."

■ The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian is the partner church of the Church of Scotland in Malawi

Europe

Italian Protestant denominations approve same-sex blessings

The joint synod of Italy's Waldensian and Methodist Protestant churches has, as the denominations' highest governing body, agreed to authorise the blessing of same-sex couples in church under certain conditions. Synod president Marco Bouchard described the 26 August decision as "a clear and firm step forward that needs to be placed into a context that will be better defined, especially the relationship between churches and homosexual couples". However, before the synod, a group of Waldensians including a member of the Italian parliament, took out a paid advertisement in the Protestant weekly newspaper *Riforma*, warning that same-sex blessings risked splitting the churches, and affecting ecumenical relationships. Other senior Waldensians say references to homosexuality in the Bible need to be understood taking into account issue of culture and interpretation, to avoid the danger of Biblical fundamentalism. There are about 25 000 Waldensians in Italy, and about 5000 Methodists. The two denominations formed a joint synod in 1979.

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#)

Middle East

Focus on human aspect of Holy Land conflict, says churches' leader

Politicians need to focus on the human face of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and not discard it in favour of their own political agendas, the head of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has said in the Middle East. "Politicians need to act and prevent this human tragedy," WCC general secretary, the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, told ENInews after a visit to Palestinian families who have been evicted by Israelis from their homes in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheik Jarrah. He said that although there are many holy sites in the Holy Land, the people who live on the land are also holy. "This is not about political principles, this is about human beings. It is a shame that politicians are interested more in their own political interests than in bringing basic human rights." The WCC general secretary said the issue of the presence of Palestinians in Jerusalem, including Christian Palestinians, regarding their residency rights in the city needs to be addressed. He noted the need of support for local churches to keep their young people from emigrating due to a lack of economic and social opportunities, especially in the city of Jerusalem. Tveit said it is important for the WCC and local churches to foster awareness of the situation, with programmes such as the WCC's Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#)

Mission Partners

David and Rebecca Morton: Our Africa and Caribbean Secretary, Jennie Chinembiri writes, "Sadly, we have heard that Rebecca Morton's sister Barbara lost her fight with cancer last night. The funeral will take place later this week in the United States. Rebecca is currently in Seattle with her family and David will join them on Thursday. Please pray for David and Rebecca, her parents and all the family and for the hospital in Malawi whilst David is away."

Joel Githinji and his family flew out to Nepal from Britain yesterday after a period of training in Scotland. On his [blog](#), he writes, "My commissioning service was at Barclay View Forth Church and was attended by Members, Church of Scotland World Mission Council staff and others. My family have enjoyed - and we thank everyone who supported and encouraged us during - our stay in Scotland. Thanks to all Church of Scotland congregations in Kilmarnock, Irvine and Inverness Presbyteries for welcoming and being with us."

Current Mission Partners:

Staff and family members serving overseas with the World Mission Council. (EA) = Ecumenical Appointments.

AFRICA

Malawi: David and Rebecca Morton, Robert Jones (in training in Scotland), Helen Scott
Zambia: Jenny Featherstone (EA), Ida and Keith Waddell (EA)

AMERICAS

Trinidad: Garwell and Claudette Bacchas

ASIA

Bangladesh: David and Sarah Hall (EA), Pat Jamison (EA), James and Linda Pender (EA)
Nepal: Joel Githinji

MIDDLE EAST

Israel and Palestine: Ian Alexander (EA), Colin Johnston, James and Nicola Laing, Jimmy Maxwell, George and Margaret Shand, Antony and Darya Short

Mission Partners' Blogs

Joel Githinji in Nepal <http://joelgithinji.blogspot.com>

Colin Johnston in Israel / Palestine <http://colinintiberias.blogspot.com>

David & Rebecca Morton in Malawi <http://davidrebeccamorton.wordpress.com>

George Shand in Israel / Palestine <http://georgeshand.wordpress.com>

Ida and Keith Waddell in Zambia <http://idaandkeith.blogspot.com>

Tabetha School in Jaffa, where Antony Short is headmaster, has a blog at: <http://tabeethaschool.blogspot.com/>

Climate Change

Churches commit to sustainable environmental development

Churches from a broad range of countries and traditions will participate with prayers and other activities in the Time for Creation over the next 40 days. In Christianity, 'creation' refers to the whole of the natural world and all life being received as a gift of God - it is quite distinct from the recent fundamentalist belief in 'creationism', which rejects modern science and theology in favour of a magical view of human origins; one rejected overwhelmingly by mainstream Christian denominations. 1 September is known to Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic Christians

alike as the beginning of the Time for Creation, during which churches and congregations are called to pay special attention to the responsibility of humanity for the whole earth and all that lives, grows and exists.

In 2010, the World Council of Churches has proposed to extend the Time for Creation until 10 October, so as to join a global civil society movement celebrating climate solutions around the world on 10 October 2010. As 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity, many churches will give thanks for the dazzling variety of nature and pray for its preservation. Prayers and other texts and ideas that can be adapted for local use have been made available via the WCC website [here](#).

Source: [Ecumenical News International](#)

Events & Opportunities

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY On Sunday 12 September a national service to mark Racial Justice Sunday will be held at Wellington Church of Scotland, University Avenue, Glasgow. The service will begin at 6pm with a Scottish African choir singing from 5.30pm. This service will include the launch of Minority Ethnic Churches Together in Scotland (MECTIS). Members of the World Council of Churches Executive will be present at the service and Rev Dr Larry Pickens, (United Methodist Church, USA) member of the Executive will preach. For further information please contact Tom Moyes tommoyes@acts-scotland.org

MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT LECTURE On Monday 13 September, the Moderator of the World Council Central Committee, Rev Dr Walter Altmann will give a lecture entitled, 'Mission and Development: What place do they have in the life of the church?' The lecture will be held at New College, The Mound, Edinburgh and begins at 5pm. For further information please contact Lindsey Sanderson lindseysanderson@acts-scotland.org

THE XCHANGE FACTOR - WORLD MISSION CONFERENCES The World Mission Council would like to invite you to five regional day conference events being planned over autumn and spring 2010-11. The Xchange Factor - connecting globally and locally - intends to allow an opportunity for people to showcase how their church and community are involved in World Church activities and to share good practice. These events are being shaped by the locality and facilitated by World Mission Council and local World Mission Presbytery Conveners. Working over parish and presbytery boundaries, it is hoped that shared learning can lead to action for change. So please put the date of your nearest event (or indeed whichever one you wish to attend) in your diary. If you would like to have a stall on the 'marketplace' (this can be a table, a pin board, a photo album or whatever you choose) please get in touch with your WM Presbytery Convener. The dates, venues and areas are as follows:

25 September 2010	Oldmacer Parish Church, Aberdeen
30 October 2010	Inverness area (venue to be confirmed)
27 November 2010	Ayr (venue to be confirmed)
26 February 2011	Stirling area (venue to be confirmed)
26 March 2011	Melrose/Peebles area (venue to be confirmed)

Attendance will be £5 to help cover catering costs. To register by email contact agrahame@cofscotland.org.uk. (Although it is possible to turn up on the day, registering will help us plan numbers for catering.)

LUNCHES FOR LIFE Did you know over 800 million people around the world would be unable to read this message or write their own names? Feed the Minds wants to change this - with your help. So why not turn lunch into learning? [Feed the Minds](#) is an ecumenical Christian charity that for more than 45 years has been delivering a wide range of educational programmes throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. Join the new *Lunches for Life* campaign to support

these life-changing projects and learn more about the difference education can make in transforming lives and communities. By hosting a fundraising lunch or any food based event you could feed the minds of the marginalised people in some of the poorest regions of the world. It doesn't even have to be a lunch, it could be anything from a coffee morning to formal dinner party for your family or friends. Whatever you do, it will make a vital difference to the lives of those people we support. To find out more about this exciting campaign and to receive a dedicated supporter's pack full of ideas, recipes, invitations, posters and a quiz, please visit www.lunchesforlife.org, or contact Matthew on 08451 21 21 02, or simply email lunch@feedtheminds.org

Prayer Focus

Please use our news items above as a basis for prayers.

Prayers and Reflections for Pakistan from Christian Aid

These are still available on Christian Aid's website here:

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/current/pakistan-floods-appeal/prayer.aspx>

For the Time of Creation

Creator God - maker and shaper of
all that is,
seen and unseen;
You are in the expanse and depth
of Creation, and in the processes
that make life possible.
Yet we are distracted by the gods
we make ourselves and our
lives become fractured and fragmented.
In our brokenness we disturb the
Earth's capacity to hold us.
Instead we find climate uncertainty
and global injustice.
Call us back from the brink.
Help us to choose love not fear,
to change ourselves and not the planet;
to act justly for the sake of the vulnerable;
and to make a difference today
for life tomorrow.
In your name - Father, Son and Spirit.
Amen

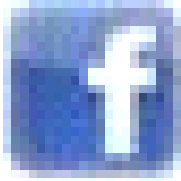
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The WMC is the channel through which the Church of Scotland responds to the command of Jesus "Go into the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16:15). The Council works in many countries worldwide, usually on the basis of partnership with national churches and institutions and always with a view to involving church members in Scotland in the development of the work. Our mission is to empower everyone to discover, experience and share the challenges and opportunities gained by connecting with the World Church.

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