

KOINONIA



OUR PAINFUL PAST

Opening our archives can help healing

A DREAM COME TRUE

High hopes for our newest province

FIGHTING FEAR AND LIES

The Church and vaccine hesitancy

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KOINONIA

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM USPG AND OUR ANGLICAN COMMUNION PARTNERS

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Cover: Statue of Edward Colston, former SPG member, being torn down by anti-racism protesters in Bristol, 2020
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USPG is the Anglican mission agency that partners churches and communities worldwide in God's mission to enliven faith, strengthen relationships, unlock potential and champion justice.

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The Rev'd Dr
Duncan Dormor

EDITORIAL

By the Rev'd Dr Duncan Dormor,
General Secretary USPG

The turn of the year is always a time for reflection on what has passed and for considering what is to come. I am upbeat and optimistic by nature, so the prospect of a new year puts an extra spring in my step. But it is good to take stock before racing ahead. Understanding the past helps us to develop a better future.

Our Research and Learning Advisor, Dr Jo Sadgrove, has been carrying out research into USPG's earliest archives. In this edition of Koinonia, she sets out the challenges of accessing and interpreting documents that date back 300 years. Some are a traumatic read, covering as they do the shameful era when our forerunner, SPG, benefitted financially from the abhorrent slave trade. But critical engagement with our past is essential for proper understanding and opens the path to reconciliation and healing.

The dark cloud of Covid-19 will continue to linger over us during the coming year. In central Africa the Anglican Church finds itself uniquely positioned to deliver pastoral and practical help. As we explain in the following pages, the Church is addressing head-on the fears, misconceptions and downright lies which promote vaccine hesitancy. We also have details of how USPG is linking with partners in the region to support this crucial work.

The Covid cloud has had some silver linings. The need for virtual rather than face-to-face gatherings prompted USPG to provide webinars on a range of topics. The result has been a series of rich, global conversations. We have details of our next series of webinars which begins in February. Looking further ahead, 2022 will see the delayed 15th Lambeth Conference finally take place. Bishop Emma Ineson brings us up to date with how the organisers have been building relationships between bishops as they prepare for the event. There will be much more about the Lambeth Conference in our next edition.

This past year saw several changes at USPG. We said goodbye to our Global Relations Director, Rachel Parry, after 24 years. Rachel was a highly-respected member of our team and an extraordinary ambassador for USPG. I wish her well in her new role at the Anglican Communion Office. We have also been reviewing our communications work. As part of that review, we have decided to focus more on our website and social media in 2022, and to make Koinonia a twice-yearly rather than quarterly magazine. Our prayer diary and Lent course will be unchanged. As ever, we welcome your feedback.

Finally, as I write this, the first Anglican Communion Day of Prayer has just come to an end. It was an extraordinary, wonderful, and incredibly diverse event which brought together Christians from around the world in an online 24-hour wave of prayer. It was a privilege as USPG to co-ordinate the event and I want to thank all our partners, and our team in London, for their part in making it happen. This was very much a pilot. We will now reflect on how it went and how to improve as we plan for the Day of Prayer 2022.

Whatever your plans for 2022, I hope it is a year of rich blessings for you.

The Rev'd Dr Duncan Dormor,
General Secretary USPG

CHALLENGING VACCINE HESITANCY



Dr Anne Richards

The rollout of Covid-19 vaccines in the UK over the last year may have been successful, but the rollout of vaccines worldwide is far behind. As of December 2021, 88% of over-12s in the UK have received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, and jabs are readily available for anyone over 12 who wants one. By contrast in Tanzania, only 3% of the population have received a first dose, with vaccination rates of 7.4% and 6% in Malawi and Zambia respectively. But whilst vaccine supply is an issue, vaccine hesitancy is also keeping vaccination rates low in these countries.

Vaccine hesitancy is a global phenomenon. The Church of England's National Adviser for Mission Theology, New Religious Movements and Alternative Spiritualities, Dr Anne Richards, has been dealing with enquiries from people in the UK who are nervous about having the vaccine.

'Alongside fear and anxiety about what we might be letting into our bodies, a swell of resistance has broken out about personal autonomy and choice,' she says. 'Such resistance has swelled into a political and social stance, with T-shirts announcing 'Unvaxxed, Unafraid' and other similar messages. A new evolution in vaccine hesitancy and outright resistance has been the creation of an unvaccinated subculture, with people seeking each other out through a new fear that vaccinated people can actually do harm to others. Unvaccinated people are meeting via their own social media groups for dates, meet-ups and social outings.'

Countering concern

In central Africa, churches are working together to counter vaccine hesitancy as the Rev'd Dr Duncan Dormor, USPG's General Secretary, explains:

'There is a clear need for reassurance about vaccines. Across much of Africa, churches are best placed to provide that vital reassurance. Churches and their leaders are trusted because of their long-standing commitment to the care of mind and body, as well as spirit.'

That is why Anglican leaders in Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are taking decisive action within their communities to address the issue of vaccine hesitancy.

They are bringing a message of encouragement to their members, who trust and respect the church, to have faith and to place their trust in the vaccines.'

To support the work of partners in these four countries, USPG launched a vaccine hesitancy appeal late last year. The aim is to raise £46,000 to fund four vaccine uptake programmes.

Each programme will include:

- Facilitation of Church leaders and medical experts who are trusted in the community
- Promotional campaigns to combat the wealth of misinformation
- Social media campaigns to restore vaccine confidence
- Vaccine outreach programmes
- Food hampers and PPE for people living with HIV in Zimbabwe where loss of livelihoods and food insecurity is a very real risk from Covid-19

The world is in a race against time to rollout Covid-19 vaccines. USPG are standing in solidarity with the global Church in their fight against vaccine misinformation. To join us, visit www.uspg.org/vaccine-hesitancy to donate to our Vaccinate Together appeal. ■

VACCINE HESITANCY IN TANZANIA

Dr Frank Haji, Director of Health in the Anglican Church in Tanzania, looks at how myths and social media are hampering the uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine there.

The World Health Organisation-backed Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) scheme has been supporting many African countries with their vaccine distribution efforts since February 2021. However, the process has been wrought with logistic inefficiencies and mismanagement, including issues around equitable access and distribution.

As African countries accelerate the deployment of Covid-19 vaccines, the issue of vaccine hesitancy looms. There are multiple drivers of vaccine hesitancy: concerns about the safety and potential side effects of the vaccines are widespread in Tanzania, as is the belief that the vaccines aren't effective in preventing transmission. These myths are prevalent among healthcare staff as well as the public.

Misinformation has been a major barrier to vaccine uptake across Africa. False messaging and conspiracy theories discouraging people from getting vaccinated are spreading rampantly on social and mobile media platforms like WhatsApp. A CDC Africa study found that people who are vaccine hesitant are more likely to use social media and be exposed to disinformation. Half of those surveyed in South Africa believed the virus was linked to 5G technologies. In another South African study, approximately a third of those who would refuse the vaccine trusted social media as a primary source of information. A small study in Addis Ababa showed that vaccine hesitancy was 3.6 times more likely among those who received their information from social media compared to those who relied on television and radio.

With each myth comes an additional layer of challenges towards minimizing the transmission and further spread of Covid-19 and increasing vaccine uptake. In January 2021, the late Tanzanian president John Magufuli claimed: 'Vaccines are not good. If they were, then the white man would have brought vaccines for HIV/AIDS.' Misinformation is also being broadcast by some of Tanzania's influential religious and political figures. Josephat Gwajima, a politician and well-known preacher, was barred from parliament after alleging government officials had been bribed to allow Covid-19 vaccines into the country. During his sermons, he has urged followers to reject the jab saying, 'It would turn people into zombies'.

Religious beliefs also inform vaccine acceptance. Close to 90% of individuals surveyed in Niger and Liberia said that prayer was more effective than vaccination. A Geopoll survey in six African countries showed religious beliefs as key determinants of hesitancy.

Some of the prevalent myths and misconceptions around vaccines in Africa are:

- Vaccines cause infertility in men and women
- Different vaccines are being developed for Africa that encourage depopulation
- The Covid-19 vaccine is not safe because it was developed so quickly
- The vaccine contains aborted fetuses.

Such vaccine myths create distrust in communities. They also foster an environment where Covid-19 is more likely to be transmitted. ■



Dr Frank Haji



Misinformation has been a major barrier to vaccine uptake across Africa

COUNTDOWN TO THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE



Bishop Emma Ineson

Bishop Emma Ineson is the bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. A key part of the conference planning process, she chairs the Lambeth Conference Working Group and is a member of the Conference Design Group. In this article Bishop Emma provides an update on the journey to the Lambeth Conference.

After a two-year delay because of Covid – and 14 years after the last gathering - the 15th Lambeth Conference will finally get underway later this year. Convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference is a gathering of Anglican bishops from every province of the Anglican Communion which usually meets every decade. The latest conference will take place in Canterbury from 27 July to 8 August at the University of Kent and Canterbury Cathedral.

Exploring the theme ‘God’s Church for God’s World – walking, listening and witnessing together’, bishops will meet for fellowship, prayer, Bible study and dialogue on matters of common interest.

As the world faces the ongoing challenges of Covid-19, the climate crisis and many other significant issues, the conference theme will provide an important opportunity for bishops from around the world to bring their voices together on church and world affairs.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has announced that the conference will run in three phases: listening together (online meetings during 2021-22), walking together (the official event in Canterbury) and witnessing together (continuing conversations and building on outcomes from the conference in 2022 and beyond).

Bishops’ conversations

The current ‘listening’ phase began last year and involves a series of online meetings for bishops. These optional Lambeth Conference Bishops’ Conversations are a space for bishops to tune in to some conference themes and get to know one another before the official event. Bishops’ wives and husbands have also been invited to participate in their own programme of online meetings.

In 2021 themes explored in Bishops’ Conversations included Proclaiming Good News, Discipleship, Being Salt and Light, the Environment and Leadership. The themes have been based on 1 Peter, the chosen Biblical text for the conference. The conference programme has been shaped by the Lambeth Conference Working Group, which I chair

and comprises representatives from around the Anglican Communion.

This year a new series called ‘Ministry in a Conflicted World’ will be running in February, March and April. The series will offer theological and practical input from theologians and practitioners on formational habits for leadership in complex times and settings. The series will be delivered in partnership with Difference, part of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s reconciliation ministry. All Anglican bishops are invited to take part.

Lambeth Conference Chief Executive Phil George said ‘Running Bishops’ Conversations during 2021 has been a real privilege and a way to celebrate the wonderful diversity of the Anglican Communion. We’ve had around 20 different groups of bishops meeting – all representing different provinces, contexts, cultures, and experiences.

‘Supported by a wonderful team of facilitators from around the Anglican Communion, we have been able to offer sessions to suit different time zones and meet language and interpretation requirements. It has been a wonderful foretaste of the conversations that will take place at the conference itself and we thank God for all who have participated so far.’

With bishops meeting in person at the conference, rather than online, planners are working to ensure that all Covid health and safety measures are in place. Meeting in person will be the most fruitful way to build relationships and discuss important themes in the life of the Anglican Communion. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, enthusiasm among the conference community to take part is undimmed.



Bishops at Lambeth Conference 2008

COUNTDOWN TO THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

Changes in travel and quarantine requirements and the challenges of equitable vaccine distribution around the world might make it difficult for some bishops to come to the UK this year. Planners are also working to enable some parts of the event to be available online. Every effort is being made to bring people together and hear all voices equally.

A historic force for good

Speaking recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby said:

‘Bringing people together and hearing all voices equally from around the world is what the Lambeth Conference is all about. We give thanks for around 500 bishops and spouses from several provinces that registered for their respective online conversations during 2021. In so doing they are deepening relationships, praying together,

building a deeper understanding of the Bible and supporting the flourishing of God’s church.

‘We encourage and invite all bishops of the Anglican Communion to take part in the pre-conference discussions and to register for the in-person event if they haven’t already done so.

‘The Anglican Communion has the potential, under God, to be a remarkable, historic force for good in the life of our world. Let us pray for all we do and especially that through this conference we will be renewed by the Spirit and sent out with determination, to be the witnesses of Christ to the ends of God’s world.’

Bishops wishing to register for ‘Ministry in a Conflicted World’ series in the 2022 should email the conference team on info@lambethconference.org and can read more at: bit.ly/ministryworld ■



UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

COP26: THE VERDICT

In the previous issue of Koinonia, we gathered global perspectives on last November’s COP26 conference. It was billed as the ‘last best chance’ for climate justice. But was it a success? Will COP26 be remembered for platitudes or progress?

Rachel Mander, COP26 Liaison Lead at Faith for the Climate

In relative terms, COP26 was a success. It succeeded in getting the Glasgow Climate Pact across the line; an achievement given the considerable diplomatic minefield faced by the UK Presidency team. Technical aspects of the negotiations which have previously failed finally reached agreement. The inclusion of the ‘phase-down’ of coal was a first for a COP meeting and has already had an impact on market prices. Countries are now required to submit revisions to their climate commitments (Nationally Determined Contributions) this year, rather than in 2025.

However, in absolute terms, there’s no escaping from the reality that global emissions are still expected to rise. To limit the increase in global average temperatures to 1.5 degrees, emissions need to drop by more than 7% a year. This is why many activists and campaigners have been rightly critical about the outcomes of the conference.

Erasto Magamba, Ugandan representative at COP26

I spent time with religious leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Central America, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Archbishop of Canada. Archbishop Justin Welby and I talked about how young people in the Global South, particularly in Africa, are suffering from the effects of climate

change. I also met the Deputy First Minister of Scotland, who encouraged me to continue working for climate justice and offered his support regardless of the outcomes of the conference.

Throughout the many events I attended, I was able to provide a Ugandan perspective on climate change. This opened a door for me to foster a collaboration between the Young Christian Climate Network and the Diocese of Kampala.

Rebecca Boardman, USPG’s Climate Lead

Many people of faith left COP26 disappointed at the insufficient ambition, justice and solidarity shown in the outcomes of the conference. Even considering the new initiatives and commitments from Glasgow, there remains a significant gap between the climate and ecological crisis and the action needed to address it. But COP is always more than those gathered around the negotiating table. Concern about the climate crisis is at a record high and civil society - including churches - are louder and more vibrant than ever.

Success at Glasgow will be determined by what happens next. For those in the UK, our government retains the COP Presidency later this year. It is their responsibility to build on the stepping stones laid down at COP26 and to fill in the gaps. This means that there is no more important time to engage your MP and make sure that they are committed to protecting our common home. ■



COP is always more than those gathered around the negotiating table

USPG WEBINARS — JOIN OUR GLOBAL CONVERSATION



Rev'd Richard Bartlett leading a webinar

Covid-19 forced USPG to take our events online. In response, instead of organising in-person gatherings, we have been providing regular webinars. But what might have seemed a temporary step, made out of necessity, has

turned into an amazing opportunity for genuinely global dialogue. And as a result, webinars are becoming a regular part of our output.

Webinars allow our global partners to participate in and lead important conversations on subjects which they experience in their day to day lives. Topics over the past two years have ranged from international chaplaincy and mission in Bangladesh and Japan to human trafficking and racial justice.

We are gradually returning to physical events, but USPG hope to continue global conversations through webinars in 2022 and beyond. A number have already been planned for January and February. To find out more details about what's on and how to join in, visit our website at uspg.org.uk/engage/events/webinars/

The Rev'd Richard Bartlett, Director of Mission Engagement, said, 'We have been able to use webinars to bring together our overseas partners and our supporters in Britain and Ireland. This has resulted in truly global conversations across a variety of important topics, which had previously been limited to annual gatherings such as the USPG Conference. Moving forward, USPG will be producing webinars alongside our face-to-face events, hoping to maintain our global conversations whilst reaching out to new supporters.'

Coming soon

USPG's next webinar takes place on 27 January and focuses on a report by our Research and Learning Advisor, Dr Jo Sadgrove. The work, 'Resourcing the crisis: Pastoral care across space and time', looks at church responses to the Covid-19



Pastoral Care report

pandemic within USPG's historical context. The webinar will offer an opportunity for attendees to share their thoughts on pastoral care during the pandemic. To see Dr Sadgrove's report, visit uspg.org.uk/research/

Rethinking Mission

Then, throughout February, USPG will be hosting four webinars as part of our work around Rethinking Mission.

The webinar series, Keeping Faith in Science? will feature experts and theologians discussing the intersections between various scientific topics and faith. Keeping Faith in Science? aims to bring together ordinands, new clergy and lay ministers from across the Anglican Communion to listen, respond and be inspired to go out together in ministry, better equipped to confront some of the most difficult challenges of our time.

Below you can find information about the webinars, which will be taking place at 7.30pm every Thursday in February. The full list of speakers will be confirmed nearer the time.

Week 1. 3 February: Health

- Dr Anne Richards, the Church of England's National Adviser for Mission Theology, New Religious Movements and Alternative Spiritualities.

Week 2. 10 February: Technology

- Professor Jolyon Mitchell, Director at the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Edinburgh.

Week 3. 17 February: Climate

- Dr George Zachariah, Wesley Lecturer in Theological Studies at Trinity Methodist Theological College, New Zealand.

Week 4. 24 February: Distributive justice

- Dr Kortright Davies, Professor of Theology at Howard University's School of Divinity.
- Dr Eve Parker, Postdoctoral Research Associate in Theological Education at Durham University.

For more insights from the speakers taking part in the 'Keeping Faith in Science?' series, visit uspg.org.uk/blogs

We would love to hear your feedback on USPG webinars, which topics you would like to hear discussed and how you think the experience could be improved. If you would like to get in touch, please email communications@uspg.org.uk



DAY OF PRAYER REACHES AROUND THE WORLD

USPG's Communion Day of Prayer reached out across the world on Tuesday 30 November. Christians around the Anglican Communion journeyed together from province to province over 24 hours using Zoom. The day, which incorporated worship, music and dance from 36 Anglican provinces, highlighted the beautiful diversity of Christianity across the world and the importance of sharing our faith with each other. There were over a thousand views of the Day of Prayer livestream on Facebook and hundreds participated via Zoom.

The event began with worship from Melanesia, featuring singing from the St Barnabas' Cathedral Choir, and closed with a reflection from the Most Rev'd Linda Nicholls, Archbishop of Canada. Highlights of the 24 hours included stirring music from Ghana, a strong meditation on power and COP26 from Scotland and a 'sermon through dance' from South India. No two contributions were the same, with Christians across the world expressing their creativity through acts of prayer and worship celebrating local traditions and voicing global concerns. Important themes emerged as the day went on. Care for creation, the need for mission and the struggles for gender and racial justice were emphasised by many different churches.

The Day of Prayer received strong support from USPG's partners across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Churches in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India held watch parties for the event whilst individuals from the West Indies, Brazil and many other countries took part via Facebook and Zoom.

The day also attracted the attention of churches in Mexico, a country USPG has no formal links with. As this event showed, the power of prayer knows no boundaries.

The Rev'd Davidson Solanki, one of the organisers of the Communion Day of Prayer, said:

'The Communion Day of Prayer was a great success for which we are grateful to God. Thirty-six provinces

across the Communion contributed prayer videos and seven more contributed prayer requests. Hundreds of churches and individuals watched on Zoom and Facebook. We are deeply grateful for the overwhelmingly positive response and support from our partners around the world, who made the day such a success.' The event would not have been possible without Day of Prayer volunteers.



Mark Lawson-Jones and Tim Tunely, Chaplains from Mission to Seafarers, and Alice Myles, a staff member at the Intercontinental Church Society, all helped out. USPG employees also got involved, with Habib Nader – our long-serving Regional Manager for the West Indies – staying up for the whole 24 hours!

USPG's Communion Day of Prayer demonstrated the importance of prayer, the joy of gathering together to worship God and the love shared by provinces across the Anglican Communion. The inaugural event was fully embraced by churches across the Communion and USPG hopes to build on this success for the Day of Prayer later this year.

Unless you stayed up for 24 hours, you will have missed some contributions to the Day of Prayer. You can now watch these films on USPG's YouTube channel.

If you were inspired by the global collaboration shown by the inaugural Communion Day of Prayer, why not get involved in this year's edition? Email communications@uspg.org.uk if you have any questions or ideas.

Finally, keep an eye out for news about the 2022 Communion Day of Prayer on USPG's website and social media channels. ■

TRUSTEE PROFILE

CATRIONA DUFFY



Catriona Duffy

Catriona Duffy has been involved with USPG since 2013 and became a trustee in July 2019.

'I first heard about USPG because my local church was signed up to the Partners in Mission scheme' she says. 'Then when I was 18, I went to Belize on a USPG Journey With Us placement. I served at All Saints

Church in Belize City, helping with the youth and music ministries of the church and as a teaching assistant at All Saints primary school.

My time in Belize was a transformative experience for me. It shaped my attitude to life. As a young professional there are so many pulls on your time and attention, but my Christian faith reminds me to steward my time well. Being a trustee is an opportunity for me to give something back.'

'I guess that what I bring to the table as a trustee is a fresh perspective,' she says, '....a new way of looking at the sort of things that engage young people today - social media, for instance. Then there's the technical financial side, where I have professional knowledge of the accounting standards required to manage a charity's finances. And then there's my Journey With Us experience: my story of being an outsider who hadn't heard of USPG before and then discovered them and is now one of their trustees. I believe that as we look to engage new supporters, there are things USPG can learn from perspectives such as mine.'

Catriona undertook a few speaking engagements on behalf of USPG on her return from Belize. 'The scripture that came up repeatedly during those times was John 10:10 - about how Jesus came so we could have life and have it to the full,' she says. 'I was really struck by that. Life is not for just getting by; life is not about doing the bare minimum to survive. God has created us to live life to the fullest. That's something that USPG really champions.

Being a trustee has also given Catriona a new understanding of the world church, as well as of USPG's position within it. 'The biggest thing I've learnt since

becoming a USPG trustee is how active the world church is,' she says. 'It's easy to be stuck in a mindset of just what's happening in the UK. But actually, the world church is thriving. During the conference at which I became a trustee, it was shared that the most common Anglican is a young African woman. If you look at the demographics of the world church, it is so different to our experience of the church in the UK. Within that, there's a whole range of views and simply of ways of being a church, but the world church is vibrant, and it is growing. That's the biggest thing I've learned: Christianity around the world is not on the same path as Christianity in the UK.

'I think the real challenge we'll face over the next few years will be just communicating our message: communicating our vision and what we're about as an organisation. My hope is that we would really step into a new role of facilitating dialogue within the Anglican Communion, and that with a new generation of leaders rising up, people will still look to us for support and we can maintain those strong relationships we have.

'I do believe USPG has a great vision and that we're well placed to bring the world church together and to get the whole Anglican Communion helping each other through this time. Our challenge is communicating that to everyone; letting the public and the Anglican Church in the UK know what we're about and really drum up support so that we will be in the best place to help people. I am confident that we can do it.'

Introducing Trevor Sargent

The Rev'd Trevor Sargent is USPG's newest trustee. He is a minister in the Church of Ireland and former leader of the Irish Green Party. Trevor, who represented the Dublin North constituency, served as Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. He is also a keen gardener and author of 'Trevor's Kitchen Garden: A Week-by-Week Guide to Growing Your Own Food'.



Trevor Sargent

'A DREAM COME TRUE': USPG MEETS LEADERS FROM COMMUNION'S NEWEST PROVINCE

'A gift from God in difficult times' is how Bishop Carlos Matsinhe sees the creation of the Anglican Church of Mozambique and Angola (Igreja Anglicana de Mocambique e Angola). Bishop Carlos is the Acting Presiding Bishop of the new province and met USPG alongside his fellow bishops from IAMA. Read on to find out more about their hopes for the province and how they have found the journey so far.

Bishop Carlos said, 'God does difficult things in difficult moments; he raises people to meet challenges. It is an exciting time but we know that there is still much work to be done to get the province to where we need it to be. The province has grown from the seeds of the Gospel spread in Mozambique and Angola many years ago – these seeds are now bearing fruit! We have grown from a single diocese to a whole new province.'



Bishop Andre Soares
Photo: ACNS

Bishop Carlos Matsinhe

The perspective from the other country in this partnership, Angola, is just as enthusiastic. Bishop André Soares of Angola, the Dean of IAMA, added, 'The birth of this new province is a dream come true and we give thanks to God for making this happen. Over the last 20 years, many parishes and congregations have been planted in Angola. So, it is natural that we have grown into a province. It will be a challenge for us to lead and coordinate the work of the province but we believe that God will enable us to do whatever we need to do.'

The new province was officially created on 24 September at the conclusion of the provincial synod of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, which Anglican churches in Mozambique and Angola used to be a part of.

The vision of the new province is 'a province standing on its own feet, steeped in evangelism and focused on sharing the love of God', according to Bishop Carlos. He added, 'I hope this province is driven by discipleship and evangelism. Part of our plan is to build a provincial theological college so that we can equip our clergy and lay people. Communities

in Mozambique and Angola face issues such as climate change, political unrest and income inequality, and we hope our new province will be able to practically serve these communities'

The new province is made up of the second and third largest Portuguese-speaking countries in the world and joins provinces in Brazil and Portugal as the only Lusophone provinces in the Anglican Communion.

Bishop Andre said, 'Our identity as a new province allows us to primarily communicate in Portuguese, which means that our members feel more at home.' Bishop Carlos added, 'We have close links with the Igreja Lusitana Católica Apostólica Evangélica (the Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church in Portugal) and the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil (IEAB). We communicate with our friends in these provinces most days via WhatsApp. We hope that the links between these three Portuguese-speaking provinces grow even closer over the next few years.'

All three bishops were keen to give thanks for their relationships with USPG. Bishop Andre said, 'USPG has supported us in the past through the training of clergy and the funding of St Peter's health centre in the Diocese of Lebombo. We are very thankful for this support and we continue to appreciate all USPG does around the Anglican Communion. Through good and bad, USPG has been there for us.' Bishop Manuel Ernesto of Nampula added, 'As we grow the church in our new province, we hope to learn from USPG's expertise and knowledge of mission. We are very thankful for the friendship and guidance USPG has given to us. Thank you for including us in your mission family.'

Bishop Carlos echoed these messages of thanks, saying, 'USPG has been involved in missionary work in Mozambique for over a century. We are grateful for this ministry and praise God that USPG still exists over 300 years after its foundation. I would like to say thank you to all USPG's supporters and invite them to travel together with us in the early stages of our new province.' ■



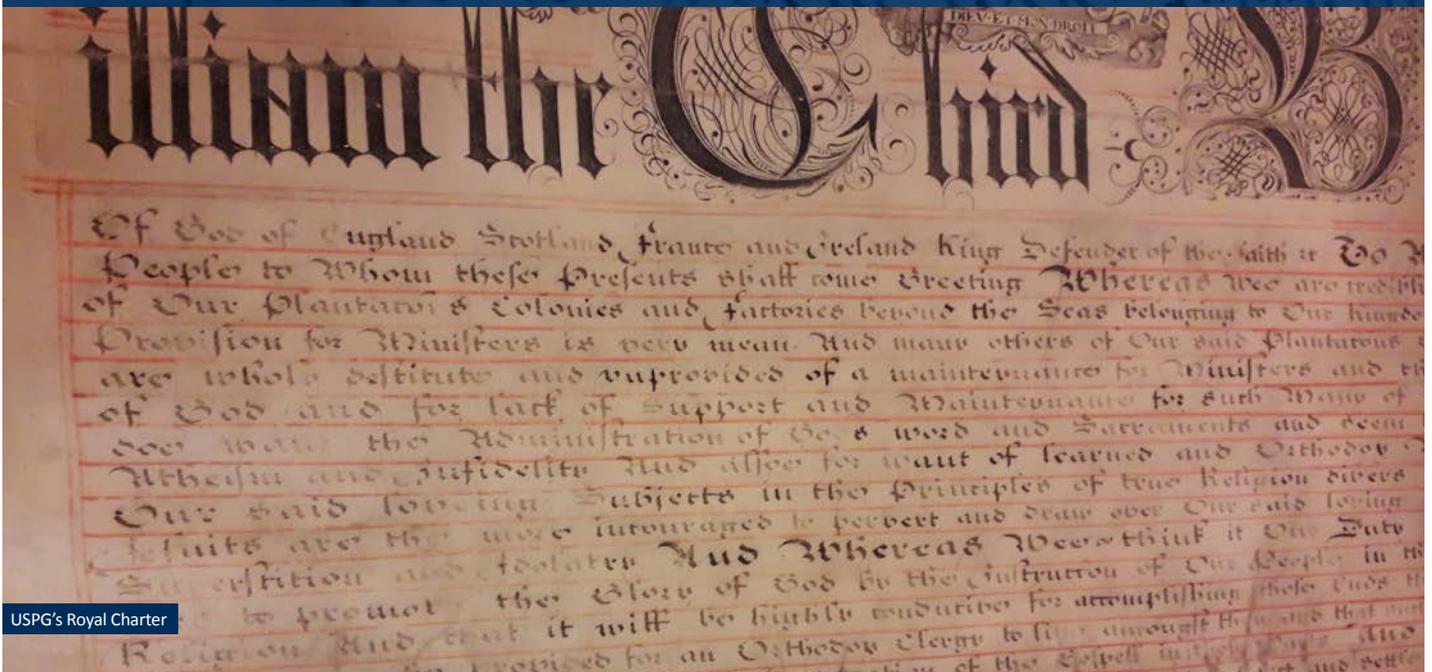
Bishop Manuel Ernesto
Photo: MANNA



God does difficult things in difficult moments

UNDERSTANDING OUR ARCHIVES

WHY ENGAGING WITH HISTORY IS ESSENTIAL BUT PAINFUL



USPG's Royal Charter



Dr Jo Sadgrove

Uncovering history can be illuminating but also disturbing. USPG's past includes the shameful era when it was bequeathed sugar plantations in Barbados and began benefitting financially from the labour of enslaved people. The legacies of the slave trade and colonialism are still pervasive. But exploring history critically, rather than trying to gloss it over, enables us to plot a path to deeper reconciliation and better relationships.

Dr Jo Sadgrove, USPG's Research and Learning Advisor, has been leading a research project into USPG's archives. She worked with academics at the University of Leeds to relate correspondence from USPG's beginnings to the present day. Dr Sadgrove's academic background focuses on the intersection of religion and

health, making her well-equipped to consider issues of wellbeing and care in the context of a mission agency. Her research into USPG's archives was featured in BBC Radio 3's programme 'Archives in the Culture Wars' and was the focus of USPG's Bray Day webinar last year. Here she unpacks some of her work.

USPG's archive is a storehouse of historical information, recorded in a variety of formats including letters, meeting minutes, financial ledgers and reports from overseas missionaries. This information relates to several distinct histories. It shines a particular light on USPG as an institution. It holds fragments of information relating to the 'birth stories' of provinces and churches around the Anglican Communion. The vast cache of information is also relevant to a national story of the Church of England and its role as a powerful and influential stakeholder in an emerging global empire.

Because there is so much material in the archive detailing aspects of the stories of diverse institutions in different places, those coming to the archive read the materials for a variety of purposes. They also bring their own cultural and political assumptions and baggage, and this informs the ways that they read and interpret the different materials. So the question of what the archive might 'tell' us is not only something over which people disagree, but it is also potentially divisive, disturbing and traumatic depending on who is reading the material, why they are reading and how they understand the context in which it the materials were written.

Improving access

For a long time, archives have been rather distant places for most people. They might be considered difficult to access - the preserve of only scholars and academics. In relation to churches around the Anglican Communion, this is further complicated by the fact that many countries do not have large comprehensive archival holdings. Often records were returned to and stored in metropolitan centres like London or Paris by the colonial powers at the time. Because of the nature of empire and the British obsession with record keeping, USPG remains the custodian of an archive whose materials narrate and are bound up in stories and church histories from around the world. But these documents belong equally to the different provinces to whose histories they relate.

In recent years, there has been a move to democratise archives to make sources available to those who, due to geography or a lack of privilege, might not be able to access material that relates to their own histories and experiences. USPG has made accessible a miniscule fraction of the documents that relate to its early years (1701 – 1720) by taking images of some of the letters and sources from the Bodleian and Lambeth Palace libraries and putting them into an online exhibition so that documents that were formerly hidden away in the archives can now be seen by anyone who wants to have a look.

Improving access does not deal with the problem that the documents only relate to a particular set of human experiences or perspectives – predominantly those at the top of an educated hierarchy. Letters are, by definition, written by people who can write. The experiences of those whom the missionaries encountered, including indigenous and enslaved communities, who expressed and communicated their experiences through other

means – oral storytelling, music and dance – and in languages that were not well known or written down are not easily located within the early modern archive. The archive predominantly reflects the experiences of those in situations of comparative power and influence. In relation to the indigenous and the enslaved, USPG's archive offers only partial glimpses of aspects of community life which were noticed and witnessed by those who were able to write their experiences down. The gaps in the storytelling are therefore gargantuan. In thinking about the broader stories of colonialism, enslavement and the growth of the churches to which they speak, the archival sources need to be interpreted, contextualised and handled with the utmost care.

We hear people talk quite frequently about the need to understand the past so that the same mistakes are not repeated; that we must understand the past so we can interpret the present in a more informed way. This is particularly important for an organisation like USPG in the 21st century, seeking to reckon with its own history as an agent of empire – as missionaries carried to far flung places the values and language of an imperial Christianity which had very mixed, often violent effects on the people drawn into its orbit. If USPG is to grapple with its mission in the present, where debates about decolonisation abound, it needs to be more informed about its history and a better understanding of what is in the archive is one important starting place.

Addressing our difficult past

If we consider the current 'culture wars' affecting discussions and public life in the UK as a public wrestling over symbols, images and identity, one of the arenas in which these tensions are most fractious is the interpretation of history. The pulling down of the statue in Bristol of Edward Colston, himself a former SPG member, is an expression of the disagreements over how history is understood and memorialised and what is at stake if we fail to acknowledge and address our own histories of racism and violence. Archives, especially those that document histories of imperialism and slavery, as USPG's does, cannot avoid being implicated in national and global debates about race and empire. We are forced to ask, in new ways, who are 'we', and what is our relationship with and responsibility for 'our' past? We might ask this as USPG, as members of our national churches, as members of different nation states. Knowing our histories, we must then work out how we relate across our different stories, experiences and privileges as part of the Anglican Communion. This is the complicated, painful work of a present in which we are all more aware of the pain, disparities and damage that empire fostered.

Engaging the archive is one way of taking responsibility for the past and thinking in an informed and intentional way about what a decolonial future might look like. ■

DECOLONISING THEOLOGY - REJOICING AND WRESTLING WITH DIFFERENCE

By Rev'd Dr Duncan Dormor, USPG General Secretary

How do we make sense of the world as Christians? The answer is through theology – throughout our reflective and disciplined thinking about how we know and love God and deepen our understanding of what it means to love our neighbour. Our neighbour is, of course, global and developing an understanding of ourselves as part of a global church, as intercultural Christians, is an important part of the life of USPG.

'Theology', much like the word 'academic' is often used in Britain to mean irrelevant or abstract. But at its best theology is quite practical - it challenges our understanding, it feeds the soul and helps to transform the world through deepening spiritual practice and awareness, helping us to reimagine the world and empowering us in the pursuit of social justice.

We all make sense of our world through stories, the stories we tell ourselves as individuals; the stories we tell ourselves as a people. Naturally the latter means different things to different people – and peoples: Culture is important, and culture is tied to issues of identity and history and language.

For Christians, God is incarnate and has entered into history. The story of the people of Israel is part of our story – the power politics of the ancient world, of Egypt and Babylon, defines the experience of the Jewish refugees through the experience of the Exodus and the Exile. Centuries later these empires gave way to Rome, within whose shadow Jesus exercised his ministry. Jesus: the refugee infant who, as a colonised person is brutally tortured to death by the imperial machinery of the empire.

Experiences of suffering, injustice and violence provoke questions: why has God abandoned us? Where is God in the midst of this suffering and evil? Theology seeks to address such questions. One key question for many European theologians post-1945 was where was God in the Holocaust?

Clearly, if we are concerned with a global theology for a global church, we all need to move beyond the preoccupations and concerns of Europe to embrace the heartfelt questions and pressing concerns that arise from other cultures, languages and worldviews.

Listening to other voices is vital

Global Christianity is unintelligible without a critical engagement with the European colonialism of the last half millennium. Profound theological questions arise from the fact that our global present emerges from an imperial past. Colonialism structured the modern world – its distribution of land, its trading patterns, the shape of countries and the infrastructure of nation states. It also had a profound impact upon on the ways in which

people know and understand the world, on cultural practices, language and worldviews.

Making sense of the world as a Christian; making sense of God as incarnate, as having entered into history; simply reading the Bible or thinking about what justice might look like – all of these questions will look and feel very different to those who have experienced their land and cultures being colonised.

Giving space – not just 'allowing' other voices to be heard but paying attention to those voices – is a crucial aspect of developing a genuinely global understanding of theology. It is a dimension of loving our neighbour. This is what 'decolonising' theology is really about: embracing the diversity and breadth of voices, emerging from different histories and cultures; voices asking different and often thought-provoking questions.

These questions may touch on the words and ideas that are used to translate the Bible, on understandings of God's creation, on the ownership of property, on the nature of politics, of very different understandings of history, and many other aspects of life. The potential for a rich exchange and mutual learning across cultures is immense and potentially deeply liberating. But of course, some of those questions emerge from experiences of great suffering and deep anguish.

For many, the descendants of communities brutalised by European imperialism, either through enslavement or being dispossessed of their ancestral lands, there is the profound challenge of reconciling Christian faith and Anglican identity with that history. Why did God allow such suffering? How do you relate to Christian brothers and sisters whose ancestors brutalised them? How do the descendants of the enslaved or those who enslaved others, and their respective nations and cultures speak of their histories in ways which help a movement towards healing and reconciliation?

These are the challenge of a theology, which genuinely seeks to listen and ask the questions that matter, that really seeks to grapple with the world in which we live. ■



Protesters gather in London in April 2021



Colonialism structured the modern world

PRACTICAL FIRST STEPS TO RACIAL REPAIR AND RECONCILIATION

Eleasah Louis, Creator of ‘Visions of Colour’ – a racial justice training programme for the Baptist Union of Great Britain.



During this highly emotive season where society is engaging with racial justice issues, Christians are constantly challenged to consider how they should respond to the injustices that affect people of colour in their communities. Although these issues are centuries old, we see the promise of significant change in recent years: repentance, repair, and reconciliation.

Many resources discuss racial justice, yet, many Christians are still struggling with making those clear first steps that are a reflection of their faith as well as their social responsibilities. Conversations about social justice are often tied up in two-party political wars and conflicting ideologies that cause many people to shy away from taking sides and being seen as anti-racist.

Below are some practical tips that Christians can consider for making those first steps:

- 1 **Recognise that the Bible is clear on matters of racial justice.** Get your theology straight. Those who are concerned about getting caught up in the “politics” cannot escape the fact that the Bible is clear about the equality of all people under God (Genesis 1:26) and that it is God’s heart to see His people be people of Justice – His justice (Isaiah 1:17). Before any other step, Christians need to get their theology clear, as this should be the basis of their response to the cries for justice in society.
- 2 **Abandon a colour-blind theology.** God does see colour! Throughout our sacred text, the Bible is unapologetically colourful: people and lands, cultures, and ethnic diversity are a part of God’s revelation to us. The Bible embraces diversity, and so should we. So start reading the Bible in colour and recognise what colour we bring to our understanding of the text. What this looks like in practice is that all Christians consider different cultural perspectives on God’s word as equal to the position that they hold themselves. Equally illuminating, equally limited and equally human.
- 3 **Don’t shy away from history.** Learn about the history of black and brown peoples, specifically their history of enslavement, subjugation, and their ongoing experiences of social discrimination in Britain. Understanding this is the only way to understand the need for racial justice. It is difficult and uncomfortable, but it is necessary. And go further back. Learn more about the societies and cultures of black and brown peoples in the centuries before enslavement.
- 4 **Acknowledge that slavery is not ancient history.** Slavery is still very much a reality for people worldwide; there are substantial trafficking networks in Britain that are a part of the inhumane industry. Women, children and men are still traded as property and denied dignity and equality as human beings. Make the connection with history.
- 5 **Start or join a discussion at your church.** Is your church already discussing becoming anti-racist? Join in! If there is no such activity -start it! You do not need to be an expert on the history and social politics. Discussing what the Bible has to say about racial discrimination may produce ideas about how to become anti-racist as a Christian community. It will expose the gaps in knowledge, social influences, and internal biases that have previously affected your ability to begin this journey.
- 6 **Recognise that reparations are essential and Biblical.** Black and brown peoples have been calling for reparations since emancipation. They are compensation for wrongdoing. A Biblical approach to reparation can be drawn from the Story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19. During his encounter with Jesus, he felt a conviction to repay and compensate those he had exploited. Christians should be leading society in enacting reparation for their historical complicity with slavery and racial discrimination through their church bodies. One of the outcomes of reparative justice is the ability to establish and maintain relations that are equal and equitable - reconciliation among brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 7 **Learn from an expert.** Whether through reading a book, watching a video online or attending a talk, develop your understanding to develop your strategy to becoming anti-racist and anti-slavery.

These steps start with the heart and head and end with action. It is not enough to think you are not racist – God wants us all to seek justice with action. ■



The Bible embraces diversity and so should we

WORKING FOR A WORLD WITHOUT SLAVERY

The scourge of slavery has not been consigned to the history books. The abhorrent trade in and exploitation of men, women and children continues in the 21st century. It is estimated that more than 40 million people around the world are trapped in some form of modern slavery. From Canada and Brazil to Tanzania and the Philippines, it seems almost nowhere is immune.

According to the Global Slavery Index there were 136,00 victims of slavery in the UK in 2019. They were drawn from more than 130 countries, but government figures suggest most victims of human trafficking in the UK are actually from the UK itself, followed by Albania and Vietnam. The exploitation they endure takes many forms. Many are victims of forced labour – compelled to work long hours in poor conditions for little or no pay.

There is no opportunity to escape, and victims face the threat of violence if they do not cooperate.

Cases of forced labour have been reported in car washes, nail bars, agriculture, manufacturing and hospitality. Other victims are forced into domestic servitude, prostitution or criminal gangs.

Victims of human trafficking will often arrive at their destination legally with valid visas and passports. They are lured by the promise of a better life. Last year the BBC reported the case of 'Jewel', a young Nigerian woman who was flown from Lagos to Copenhagen in Denmark apparently to work as a carer. She was not suspicious because she knew that people trafficked into Europe by criminal gangs were usually taken overland to Libya before being put on boats. But a day after she arrived, she was put to work in the sex trade.

Human trafficking will be the theme of USPG's International Consultation in Tanzania next year. The subject was chosen by the host, Archbishop Maimbo Mndolwa. The Consultation, in Dar es Salaam, will gather information on slavery from around the Anglican Communion and examine how the Church should respond. Tanzania is one of a number of countries that have become hubs for people trafficking. Boys are trafficked within the country to work as forced labour in mines or on farms; girls are trafficked to urban areas to work

as domestic slaves or in prostitution. It is reported that adults and children from Tanzania are also trafficked to at least 15 other countries while children from other nations, including Burundi and Kenya, are trafficked into Tanzania as forced labour.

Tackling slavery – signs to look for

The odds against tackling this evil global trade might seem overwhelming and exploiters do their best to disguise what is happening but there are signs of hope. In the UK, the Clewer Initiative have been working with churches and other agencies to raise awareness of modern slavery and mobilise a response. It can be hard to spot victims but there are clues. These include:

- Physical appearance: workers show signs of malnutrition and/or fear, wear the same clothes every day, wear unsuitable clothes, seem to be unwashed
- Isolation and control: workers are rarely alone and appear to be under the control of others who speak for them
- Reluctance to seek help: workers seem afraid and/or reluctant to talk, avoid eye contact and reject help when offered
- The absence of 'normal': victims bathe or shave at work, never share personal information and seem to have no life beyond work

Clewer have produced a range of resources to help identify modern slavery. These include two smart phone apps: the Safe Car Wash app and the Farm Work Welfare app. Simple to use, these enable people to report if they are concerned about staff at car washes or pickers harvesting produce on farms. They have also created online courses to raise public awareness.

'Our aim is to dramatically reduce modern slavery in our communities,' says Bishop Alastair Redfern, who chairs the Clewer Initiative. 'Our apps and our resources are a user-friendly way to find out more and take action if appropriate. Sadly, there are victims all around us, but we are determined that no-one should be beyond help and hope. I would encourage everyone to download the apps and get engaged.'

For more information about the Clewer Initiative and their resources visit theclewerinitiative.org ■



REFLECTING ON SUFFERING IN THE HOLY LAND

By Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College, Jerusalem



Dean Richard Sewell
Photo: ACNS

The peoples of Israel and Palestine, which we also call the Holy Land, have experienced suffering on a scale barely paralleled by any other nation. The sufferings of Jewish people, often at the

hands of the Church and by individual Christians, are a matter of record and a cause of deep shame. The prospect of a homeland where Jews would feel safe was a hope which took generations to be realised.

What a tragedy it has been that the creation of the nation of Israel should result in another people, the Palestinians, experiencing untold suffering and pain. The prospect of a Palestinian nation which can assure security, safety and protection, now feel like a distant hope. There is no need to enter into a futile exercise of equating or comparing the suffering of both peoples, but it certainly is necessary to understand the deep pain and profound distress of all the peoples who call Israel/Palestine 'our home'.

The power of listening

Sadly, all too often Israelis and Palestinians are deaf and blind to the stories of suffering of the other community with whom they find themselves in a conflict for land and security. There are numerous organisations in this land who are committed to bridging the gaps between the peoples in a state of conflict. They all begin with the overwhelming need to listen attentively to one another. Musalaha is a faith-based organisation which seeks to facilitate reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. It has developed a process which starts with being present and moves towards paying attention, taking an authentic interest in one another, suspending judgement about what is heard, using patience in the process and then concluding with committing to the work of effective communication. Experience over

many years has shown that when people invest in a process with deep listening at its heart, remarkable transformations can take place.

For Jews, Muslims and Christians living in the Holy Land, it is often easier to retreat into the apparent security of one's own community. From there one can develop entrenched negative opinions of other communities which will not risk being challenged by an awkward reality which might offer contrary evidence. Each community can all too easily then accentuate one's own people and their faith as superior and the others as inferior. For Christians, to seek reconciliation when entrenched conflict exists, is a divine expectation. This ministry is hard work in any context but here in the Holy Land it is exceptionally hard. I have deep respect for organisations such as Musalaha who have committed themselves to try to tear down the walls of division by engaging with people one by one. It's a ground level work which may not garner headlines but has more real effect than many high-level diplomatic initiatives.

Palestinian Christians feel they are on the receiving end of a large dose of suffering both personal and corporate. A faith which sustains people in the maelstrom of that experience must be robust to counter the pain, sense of hopelessness and anger which could creep in. It may seem that Christians might have little impact on the intractable issues of these lands. However, Salim Munayer, the founder of Musalaha, teaches a different ethos. He said: 'God puts you in a position to affect people's lives through blessing and this should not be taken lightly. By blessing with the word of God rather than cursing others, we escape a destructive cycle of negative thoughts and revenge and counter hateful thoughts in our minds and hearts'. This is a hallmark of a faith which can thrive even in the midst of suffering. It is a faith from which all Christians can learn. ■



When people invest in a process with deep listening at its heart, remarkable transformations can take place



LIVING STONES, LIVING HOPE

EXPLORING DIFFERENT THEOLOGIES IN LENT



Rev'd Peniel Rajkumar

By Rev'd Dr Peniel Rajkumar, USPAG's Global Theologian

USPAG's Lent course this year focuses on contextual theologies, that is, theologies that emerge from and engage with specific contexts. Theology is a process of human reflection on God and given that human reflection does not happen in a vacuum, all theology is inevitably contextual. However, not all theologies are explicit or conscious about their inherently contextual nature.

There has been an overwhelming tendency within modern western theologies to accord universal status to theologies that claim to be objective, while 'other' theologies which focus on contexts are reduced to secondary status.

This course offers glimpses of the embodied nature of Christian theologies by introducing different expressions of Christian theology that have emerged from specific contexts, including Zambia, Korea, Brazil, Celtic spirituality and Dalit theology. These introductions are supplemented by stories from these contexts which reflect the many ways in which contextual theologies have not only been informed by, but have also sought to transform, their contexts. The distinctive ways in which these theologies have held together reflection on God and God's word with action for God's world testify both to their diversity and depth.

It should not be surprising for a Lent course to focus on the embodied ways in which people live out their theology as transformative faith. After all, at the heart of Lent is the symbol of the cross which testifies to the power of God's transformative love in Christ. For many communities across the world the cross is a symbol of God's self-identification with them in their struggles and sufferings, as they bear their own crosses in an unjust world adept at designing new crosses for 'others' to bear.

In some ways this Lent course seeks to strengthen the 'bonds of affection' that holds Anglicans together by focusing also on the 'bonds of affliction'. This is the woundedness that persists because of unjust systems and structures such as patriarchy, poverty, conflict, and caste that various communities across the globe are seeking to heal and transform through a discipleship of the cross. What can these various theologies teach those from different contexts about resisting injustice, seeking liberation and healing

conflicts in our own contexts? How can they foster modes of learning and living that can help up become part of God's 'kin-dom' of justice, peace and love?

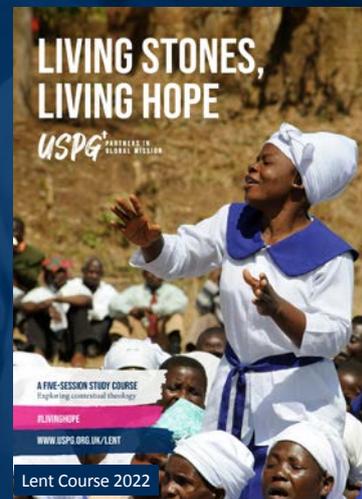
The theme of the Lent course 'Living Stones, Living Hope' is also drawn from

the main biblical text for the forthcoming Lambeth Conference from the first letter of Peter. The letter also speaks of Jesus as "the stone that the builders rejected" (1 Peter 2:7). Lent is that time of the year where we rediscover afresh what it means to affirm Jesus Christ the rejected one as the corner stone of our faith. It is about opening our lives to a faith that confounds the wisdom of the world by leading us to an awareness of God's mysterious power in the most unexpected of places – a cross on a hill outside the city gates.

'How can our faith be alive to the possibilities of God at work among and beyond us?' is that one question that this course invites us to grapple with as we seek to be built into the household of God.

For more details about our Lent Course, visit uspg.org.uk/lent

Our Lent webinars will be taking place each Thursday in March. More information on this will follow in our e-news, so make sure you have signed up! ■



LENT REFLECTIONS FROM THEOLOGIANS AROUND THE WORLD



Dr Emily Colgan

For me, Lent is a time of re-orientation, of remembering what it means to live in faithful relationship with God. It is a time to reflect on the knowledge that my existence is intrinsically and inescapably inseparable from

the divine Other; life without God is simply impossible. Recognising this dependence encourages me to confront the limits of my own capabilities. It tempers my inclination to dominate and control the world around me. To consciously acknowledge my limitations is to comprehend my insignificance in the face of the unknowable divine Other. I am reminded that to perceive God is both to know God and not to know God. To encounter God is to encounter mystery.

My Lenten reflection also reminds me that in the same way that my existence is indebted to and inseparable from God, so too am I utterly dependent upon the Earth and Earth's other-than-human communities. As my existence is bound to God, so also it is bound to Earth. I am of the soil and to the soil I will return. For me, this recognition is profoundly humbling.

The journey through Lent is an invitation to (re) connect with the holy mystery that is divine love, which in turn encourages me to cultivate a deep sense of wonder, reverence, and gentleness towards all of God's creation.

Dr Emily Colgan
Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia



Rev'd Winelle Kirton-Roberts

The beginning of each Lenten season was like the start of the annual Atlantic hurricane season - warnings, safety precautions, calls for vigilance. However, unlike the potentially dangerous storms, the path of which our meteorologist kept

us well informed, Lent was marked by the luring threat of this roaring lion who will be wandering around seeking whom he may devour.

From childhood, I recall giving increased attention to good behaviour, spiritual discipline, and conscientious living. As Lent coincided with the

sugarcane harvesting season, there was a natural increase, in my village, for mischiefs and mishaps. To complete the season unscathed brought a personal sigh of relief - thank God, Lent is over!

As an adult and as a pastor, I have come to love and welcome this once dreaded 40-day period. I am motivated, for example, to practice habits like not eating meat, bread, and sugar etc. And somehow, I have the will and strength to succeed at this up to Easter Sunday. More significantly, I am passionately committed to more focused and intense times of prayer and study of God's word. I feel spiritually replenished.

For me, Lent is the affirmation that Jesus Christ, who has overcome trials, temptations and sin, has so empowered us to live as overcomers.

Rev'd Winelle Kirton-Roberts
Geneva Moravian Fellowship



Rev'd Dr Y.T. Vinayraj

Is it not this the fast that I choose; to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? (Isaiah 58: 6)

The people of God in the Old Testament are the people chosen for God's purpose

of restoration and redemption in this world. Their previous experiences of slavery under the hegemonic power of Pharaoh had equipped them to develop a counterculture of liberation.

In the New Testament, Jesus and the other prophets endorse this justice perspective of religious practices in relation to their teachings on the coming of the kingdom of God. In a nutshell, Lent, according to the biblical tradition is the practice of keeping hope in the coming of the just community of Jesus. Unfortunately, today Lent has become merely a ritualistic practice of the Church, and thereby they maintain the symbolic hierarchy between God and the world, priest and the laity, ordained and the unordained, holy and unholy, and women and men.

Lent has to be rethought and reconstructed as the practices of justice not in terms of charity but in terms of our deep solidarity with the oppressed and the marginalized. It is here Lent becomes an apocalyptic terrain where the church becomes the community of the tortured and its theology becomes a collection of their pain and agony.

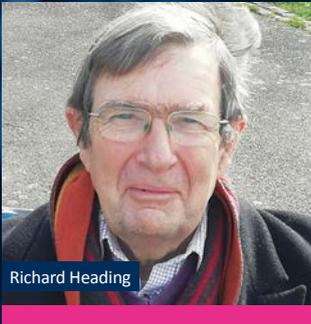
Rev'd Dr Y.T. Vinayraj
Director-Designate of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, India



Lent is the practice of keeping hope

USPG VOLUNTEER

RICHARD HEADING



Richard Heading

Canon Richard Heading's first interaction with a mission agency goes back several decades. 'When I was a child,' he recalls, 'my best friend had a UMCA elephant-shaped donation box in his house. Mission was always in the

background of my life, but it became much more prominent as I grew older.

'When I was a student, the chaplain at my college was very involved with the world Church, and he eventually became chairman of USPG's council. After university, Richard went into ministry. 'I trained for the priesthood at the College of the Resurrection, where the Community of the Resurrection is based, and the notion of prioritising community over individualism has struck a chord with me ever since. What has always attracted me to USPG is that it is essentially community-based'.

Since his ordination in 1968, Richard has always served in a parish that supports USPG. Throughout his time as a parish priest, Richard encouraged churches to tithe their income to charities, particularly USPG and CMS (the Church Mission Society).

'When I worked in the Diocese of Bristol, I was delighted to be a part of the work of a joint CMS-USPG Association,' says Richard. 'The group was comprised of different people from different backgrounds, and we worked together to encourage engagement with the world Church in our local area. We would organise events, inviting every parish in the diocese of Bristol, not in order to raise funds but rather to encourage an appetite for engagement with the world church.'

In the 1990s, Richard became even more involved with USPG, serving as a Member of Council. Around this time, he decided to spend his sabbatical period – three months devoted to learning and development – training in psychodynamic counselling at the Christian Counselling Centre in Vellore, South India. Richard had previously pursued the opportunity to learn about this field at the University of Bath alongside his ministry. Richard remembers his trip to Vellore fondly, 'There were Hindu students from the local area, nuns from Sri Lanka and even a priest from Grahamstown in South Africa. There were young Baptists and Catholics from North India as well. There was a real variety of people studying at the Christian Counselling Centre and we learnt so much about each other's faiths in the months we spent together.'

On his retirement from the priesthood in 2008, Richard decided that he was going to focus on USPG. His desire to connect with those who he met through USPG came together with an opportunity to visit his sister in Australia, culminating in a cruise trip across the world.

'I was determined that, wherever possible, I'd catch up with someone connected with USPG. On the way to Australia, we visited the City of God in Rio de Janeiro to meet Canon Nicholas Wheeler, who was Priest Missioner in the area at the time. We met with church members in Montevideo, Uruguay, and District Six in Cape Town, South Africa. We also spent some time with the Rt Rev'd Ian Ernest, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Personal Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, whilst we were there.' On the way back from Australia to the UK, Richard and his wife visited Bethune House, a refuge for migrant women in Hong Kong, and St Paul's Anglican Church in Athens.

More recently, Richard has been involved with fundraising for USPG. In September 2019, he completed a sponsored bus trip from the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield to all of the different parishes where he served. This meant travelling from West Yorkshire to much of the southwest of England. 'You could say that USPG has got under my skin!', Richard says.

Richard notes that USPG, and the areas USPG works in, have changed dramatically over the years. 'In my lifetime, there have been many changes. Within USPG, the focus has changed from being based around what is going on in the London office to what is going on in the world church'. Richard concludes, 'It is about whether you go to tell people what you think or to listen to people.'

'Do you hear God there or do you take God with you?' ■



USPG and UMCA collection boxes

ALL IN GOD'S TIME

By Sian Harris



Sian Harris

When I was six weeks old, I flew to Botswana, returning to the UK aged seven. Some 25 years later, six weeks before I was due to fly out for my Experience Exchange Programme

placement (now Journey with Us), I started seeing the man I'd secretly been in love with for the previous two years. Everyone thought the timing was terrible. But God had other ideas.

Eighteen months earlier, my grandparents had died, suddenly, barely 36 hours apart. With their passing, I felt an acute sense of the need to grow up. I was no longer a grandchild. It felt like the final stage of my passing into adulthood.

I searched for a more meaningful job, struggling to find the right fit. Then one day I went to church, at that time St Peter's in Hunslet, Leeds, and the sermon changed my life. Our visitor spoke about USPG and the Experience Exchange Programme (EEP). I knew in that instant – this was my next step. With guidance from Habib Nader, USPG's People Programmes and Partner Relations Manager, six months later I'd packed my bags and landed back in Botswana.

I served in the Diocesan Office, visiting and talking to people about the transformative work the Church was doing throughout the country. It was humbling and inspiring. As I settled in and started to contribute, it was also challenging, frustrating, and deeply rewarding.

Over the next few months, I gained a profound appreciation of the feel of living into my calling. I discovered a different understanding of divine timing and priorities, and some very real experience of trusting God for my needs. I also rediscovered parts of myself lost through assimilating into UK culture. Those parts fuel much of how I chose to live today.

Then, about eight weeks before I was due to fly home, walking to the office one morning to plan how to roll out my work, I was struck from behind by a shiny red Audi. Bad timing.

As I lay on the ground, I had two overriding thoughts, 'I'm not going to die, but if I do, it will

be ok.' And a challenge, 'I have to live my life so that when I really am dying, I can still say it's ok.'

In the 11 years since I returned, with broken bones and an 'unfinished' placement, much has happened. I married the man who journeyed with me, over the phone and via email, for the first year of our relationship. We have two beautiful children whom I hope will one day take their own journeys with USPG. I've continued to work and volunteer with USPG, and with the church in my new adopted diocese of Edinburgh.

And regularly, Habib's challenge echoes within me, 'So you served abroad? How are you bringing that into your life now?'

I've spent years not being able to answer but I'm starting to, now. I witnessed sustainable community development, the impact of working to restore dignity at the individual level, and the importance of speaking truth to power. I'm discovering new ways to bring that into my service in the UK.

I am unfailingly inspired by my fellow EEPs and our mentors. Jo's remarkable work with Hope For The Future; Adam's extraordinary acts of solidarity, his unending strength and bravery; Evie's wisdom and commitment to intersectional justice; Habib's passion for mission and global connection.

While life and illness have kept me from maintaining friendships I made in Botswana, I'm encouraged by the hope they might be rekindled as my capacity returns. The faithfulness, joy, wisdom, commitment, vision and discipleship I was privileged to witness have stayed with me. The love I received will never leave. Eleven years on, I still regularly recall conversations with Ben, Susan, Mosidi, Mma Amanzi, Fr Mudereri and too many more to mention.

That phase of my journey started in grief and a search for meaning. I messed up many times. The process of learning to accept and forgive those mistakes is helping me get closer to understanding the grace that God extends to us all. I will always get things wrong. God loves me anyway and asks me to love myself as well.

My placement was formative of the woman I am today, a pivotal point in my journey. If I died today, it would not be ok. I have new work to do, a new mission to fulfil. And by leaning on God and drawing on what I learnt in Botswana and since, I know I can. All in God's time. ■



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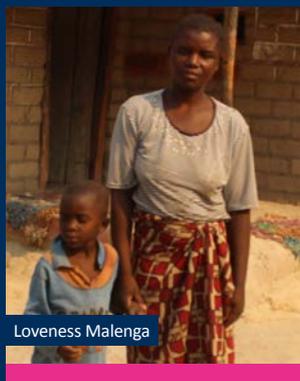
LIVING HOPE

USPG LENT APPEAL 2022

Join USPG this Lent and help us raise funds for our Living Hope appeal, supporting our global Church partners and their justice programmes.

The funds raised from this appeal will support initiatives such as The Zambia Anglican Council's Transformative Gender Justice programme, The Church of North India's Let My People Go programme and The Church of Brazil's Casa Noeli women's refuge.

The Zambia Anglican Council set up the Transformative Gender Justice Programme to raise awareness of gender issues and provide support, counselling, and skills to those who have experienced gender based violence.



Loveness Malenga

Loveness Malenga, a 41 year old mother of nine, was married to a man who physically abused her and her children.

The Zambia Anglican Council referred her to their Transformative Gender Justice programme where

she accessed counselling, a grant to buy seeds and a savings group which enabled her to live independently. The money Loveness has earned from growing and selling crops has allowed her to buy food for her children and a bicycle so that her children can travel to school more easily. "Now I feel free to do what I have always wanted to do without fear. I want to give my children what their father could not – a safe, loving home. I hope to build a new house for my family using the savings I have made."

In response to the increasing instances of domestic violence in Brazil the Anglican Episcopal Church set up the Casa Noeli dos Santos women's refuge. The refuge provides a safe haven for women and children experiencing domestic violence and enables them to access counselling, legal services and employment opportunities to establish independent lives.

The Church of North India works with people from the Dalit and Adivasi communities who are caught up in the cycle of debt slavery and poverty.

They encourage women to join self help groups and set up businesses to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.



Lakhibala

Lakhibala is a mother of three who dreamt of providing a good education for her children and a comfortable life with her husband.

Lakhibala was advised by the Church of North India to join one of their self help groups. The group provided a loan and supported Lakhibala to set up her own saree business. Lakhibala is now a successful businesswoman.

"Whenever there is any function like a wedding or a child's Annaprasan (ceremony of eating food for the first time), all of my friends call me to help them select what saree to wear and also to tie their sarees"

THIS LENT WE PRAY WITH OUR CHURCH PARTNERS AROUND THE WORLD AND SUPPORT THEIR MISSION TO BRING JUSTICE TO PEOPLE IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

Visit www.uspg.org.uk/lent to find out more and support our Lent Appeal "Living Hope"

LIVING HOPE

LENT APPEAL 2022

LENT
APPEAL 2022



Join USPG this Lent and help us raise funds for our Living Hope appeal, supporting our global Church partners and their justice programmes in Zambia, Brazil and North India.

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USPG⁺ PARTNERS IN
GLOBAL MISSION