

Andy Dye's Prayer Letter from Grenada : May2011

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Teachers

This month, as all teachers know, the pressures of coming exams, finishing schemes of work and achieving targets all come to bare. Some things are very different here from a UK school. In the UK targets are set as to the number of passes above a certain level and also individual targets for each student are recorded and monitored. Here there are no individualised targets but students are set a bar to achieve in order to progress to the next year group. In the UK teachers tend to use databases of questions to put together tests, here teachers have to develop their own new questions. However just as in the UK, there are pressures from and on time, children, exam boards, principles and governors. Teachers can feel very squeezed in the middle of all of this, especially if they have children also going through the process. I have been reminded this month that the staff of Wesley college are doing their best, under all of these pressures, in difficult working conditions and with very few resources.

Door to Door

How would you feel if a couple of people turned up at your door and asked, 'We are from the Methodist church up the road, do you have time/would you like us to pray with you?'. To be honest if it were me I would probably mutter something about being too busy and shut the door quick. However this month in Grenada groups from the Methodist church have been doing just this. The aim has not been to proselytise any one but it has been to (re)connect with the community and offer prayerful help. The response to our visits has been incredibly encouraging. Almost everyone has invited us in to their house, shared concerns and allowed us to pray along with them. I had a very moving experience in being able to pray with a group of teenage boys just off the basketball court in one home, and then pray with the family and person who was very ill with cancer in the next. There was an openness to prayer and a sense of spirituality that was wonderful. The lady who was ill with cancer had her friends around her and she was openly expressing her deep trust in God, while being honest in her pain.

Visitors

Just after Easter two friends of mine from the Isle of Wight, Tim and Ken came to Grenada on holiday and to visit me. It was great to have some visitors to show round. Here are a few thoughts from Tim with 'fresh eyes' on Grenada:

We travelled at the end of the 'dry' season but were told that the 'dry' season had not this year been particularly dry. Although we obviously knew we were going to a tropical island, it was the heat and high humidity that really hit us on arrival. Andy met us at the airport taking us to our



Tim on Grand Anse Beach

hotel, which was lovely, at the far end of a sweeping sandy bay. We had a view from our room of the main town, St Georges with the forest-clad mountains behind. The sea was a beautiful colour, very warm and clear, and there we could have stayed.

Andy operates in different world to this tourist world. He took us round the island, during the times he was not working at his school or involved in other church work. We saw his school with its corrugated roof, no insulation or air conditioning and heard about his experiences. He helped us grasp just a little of the world in which lives and works.

We were in Grenada for two Sundays, the second Sunday was the church harvest. It was strange to see the fruits around the pulpit and in the windows, instead of apples, plums etc., there were of course bananas, mangoes, sweet potatoes and other exotic fruits. Even more strange to me was the style of the service which was like the Methodism I grew up with here on the Isle of Wight and they use the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book. We were officially greeted and made to feel very welcome. On the Bank Holiday after we arrived Andy took us to another Methodist Church where they were having a harvest fair, with home made ice cream and teas, as Andy pointed out it was complete with traditional green Methodist cups and saucers.

Grenada is a beautiful island with a lot of contrasts, although poor with very high unemployment, it did not seem as poor as I expected. A very high percentage of people attend a church of some sort, but relatively few are Methodists. There are very nice houses in between very poor houses. The majority of people seemed very friendly.

While there we saw many interesting things, I saw Leatherback Turtles laying eggs at night on a deserted beach on the north of the island, we visited a nutmeg processing station where women sort and grade the nutmegs for very low wages, and on the other side we saw the cruise ships arrive for a day and disgorge their passengers into the 'Mall' and the awaiting Grenadians touting their wares.

Support Andy and his work in all the ways you are able and do go to visit Grenada if you can, you'll like the island and I know he'll be pleased to see you.

- For the principle, teachers and students of Wesley College, facing pressures from all directions.
- For the tourism industry in Grenada which is a big source of income, pray for those who come to experience this island and those who work in the industry.
- For the problems that can arrive with increased tourism, pressure on limited resources such as water and energy, development which can destroy the very environment people come to experience.
- For the family of the lady who had cancer and sadly passed away in the last few days.
- For the young people of the Methodist church here and vision for the group there.

Please feel free to e-mail or write to me at the address above.

God bless,

Andy Dye

Mission Partner for the British Methodist Church in Grenada, South Caribbean.