



MORAVIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

HOME AND OVERSEAS
2018

FEBRUARY

Women's World Day of Prayer Service on Friday 2nd March 2018 written by the Christian women of Suriname

Theme: All God's Creation is Very Good!

Our Moravian history

As Moravians, it is wonderful to feel that we have a real connection to this country through the history of the work of our own church. The first Moravian missionaries arrived there in 1735 but, having underestimated the harsh conditions they were to find there, had died or been forced to return home after several months. But before long, others answered the call and returned to Suriname to work with the slaves on the plantations, the Arawak Indians and the bush negroes, through civil war and the emancipation of the slaves. Land was purchased by the church and the foundation for all the Moravian work in Suriname was laid. Today, almost 10% of the population of Suriname is Moravian with a membership of 40,000. We should feel a close link through this history with our sisters in Suriname who have shared in the preparing and writing of the service we will be taking part in this year.

Where is it?

Suriname is the smallest independent country in South America; a country where 94% is covered by pristine tropical rainforest and where 90% of the population live in the narrow coastal area, which is susceptible to flooding. The capital city of Paramaribo and the Central Suriname Nature Reserve, larger than the whole of Yorkshire, are World Heritage sites and the country is bordered by Guyana to the east, French Guiana to the west and Brazil to the south.



What is special about it?

Suriname has one of the most multi-ethnic and multi-cultural populations in the world, mainly as a result of its history of imported slaves and indentured labourers for its sugar, cocoa and cotton plantations and colonisation at various times by the French, Danish, English and Dutch. No fewer than 20 languages are spoken. While the official language is Dutch, the most common spoken language is Sranan, with many cultural and religious traditions existing peacefully together side by side. The rainforest is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, some of which are endangered, and the country has a wealth of natural resources.

What are the concerns we are asked to pray for?

The theme for the service is taken from Genesis and the story of God's creation. We are asked to consider how we are treating God's earth and to commit ourselves to do more in our role as stewards of his wonderful creation. Suriname women have many concerns of their own – from illegal gold-mining and logging, polluting and destroying the rainforest, to climate change causing flooding and the effects of global pollution in the seas – besides their own political and economic situation. They ask us to keep them in our prayers.

Informed prayer into prayerful action – What on earth can I do?

“We should care for God’s creation – not out of fear about what is going to happen, but out of love.....So Christians should be at the forefront of the environmental cause and movement because in our care for creation we reflect our love of the Creator.”

Rev. Nicky Gumbel

Both as individuals and as churches there is so much we can do. There are already moves from some supermarkets to reduce waste – but wheels turn very slowly and individually we must be more proactive when we shop.

- The war on plastic must be won by every one of us taking a decisive step – refuse the packaging, complain about it and shop at markets and farm shops whenever possible to avoid it!
- be very consistent with recycling
- become an Eco Church – conduct your own survey for your own church and see what you could be doing as a church to be more eco-friendly through www.arochoa.org.uk - a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world
- if your church is not doing this already, try Toilet Twinning
- when you go walking, do a little litter picking – it may be a drop in the ocean (of litter) - but lead by example!

The list could be longer, so get together and see what you can do for your church and community - and in turn, for our world.

Make sure you attend the service, praying for Suriname and God’s Creation, then go away to turn your Informed Prayer into Prayerful Action.

Wendy Hopcroft (WWDP)



God of creation and Lord of life.
You entrusted us to care for our environment, but
in many parts of the world we have failed.
Help us to realise how fragile
and unstable our surroundings are,
because we are not looking after your creation.
We need to be true stewards and to understand
how the most insignificant little flower,
the tiniest of insects,
each creature and individual people
are all part of a wondrous whole.

Maggie Pickford