

Martin & Paula Callam



With Rev William Holder the Chairman of Antigua & Barbuda Street Pastors Initiative

We are the coordinators for the Antigua & Barbuda Street Pastors Initiative. We first became involved with Street Pastors when it started in our home town of Norwich in 2006. Martin worked in the local hospital and Paula in a local school. Since our children were grown up we had been asking the Lord about our future. We thought that there might be a call to work in Eastern Europe but He had other plans. It became obvious that there was a role for us out here and we came out to Antigua in September 2008. The leadership in Antigua is very committed to the work but they are busy people with demanding jobs and church commitments so they were unable to give the time needed to develop the work. The vision is to expand the work in Antigua and also to reach across the Caribbean. There are already a number of other islands investigating starting Street Pastors.

How can you support the work?

1. By prayer, we produce an email news letter / prayer letter at regular intervals. To subscribe just contact us on antigua2@streetpastors.org and we will put you on our list.
2. Financial, we ask you to prayerfully consider financial support. We are not funded and have to raise all our own financial support. Also there are expenses in connection with the development of the work in Antigua and to fulfil the vision of expansion across the Caribbean. Giving Online: please contact the Street Pastor office at info@streetpastors.org.uk for details of how to give either to support the work in Antigua or to support the Callams personally. If you are a tax payer your contribution can be boosted by reclaiming tax via Gift Aid. Donations by post: You can make a donation by sending a cheque payable to, Ascension Trust. PO Box 3916, London SE19 1QE. Please indicate if it is to support the work in Antigua or to support the Callams personally. If you are a UK taxpayer we can claim extra through Gift Aid but you will need to complete a Gift Aid form which we will send you together with a payment receipt.



The Antigua Flag. Red is for the dynamism of the people, the V-shape is for victory, and the sun is for the climate. Black is for the majority population and the soil, blue for the sea, and white for the beaches.

Antigua & Barbuda

Antigua & Barbuda is a small twin Island nation at the northern end of the Leeward Isles in the Caribbean. It is a place of sun, sea and sand with 365 beaches, a little bit of paradise. It is a popular spot with cruise boats, holiday makers and honeymooners. The predominant religion is Christianity with over 200 churches on Antigua. On the face of it an idyllic place to live. So why is there a need for Street Pastors here?

There are aspects of the country that are not immediately obvious to visitors. Though it is one of the more prosperous of the Caribbean islands there is quite a divide between the better off and the poor. Twenty-one percent of households' incomes are below the poverty line and a further fifteen percent are close to it. The mainstays of the economy are tourism and financial services both of which are feeling the pinch under the present global economic circumstances. A number of people previously employed in the tourism industry or by the Stanford Companies have been laid off and there is little alternative work. Being only a small nation social services provision is limited.

A portion of the population came from other Caribbean islands in more prosperous times but now with job shortages there is a degree of tension between people of different national backgrounds. This is evident from items in the local press and media and in conversations with individuals on the street.

The culture for Caribbean men is very macho with more emphasis being put on the number of children that they have fathered than the role of parenting. Traditionally Caribbean women have been seen as strong and the ones responsible

for rearing children. This tends to leave women vulnerable, many are struggling to feed and support their children without adequate support from the fathers. There is an acceptance of domestic violence and sexual abuse for fear of losing financial support. The government is campaigning against these issues but it needs a change in the mindset of society to really effect change.

Like all places there is an active sex industry in Antigua though it does not appear to centre around the visiting tourists but is mainly frequented by locals. Most of the girls are not Antiguan and a number may be victims of human trafficking having been enticed to come to the island with promises of a better job and lifestyle. Street Pastors have been able to assist at least one girl get out of the trade and into a respectable job.

Drug taking, particularly smoking marijuana, is also part of the Caribbean culture, however in the long term this leads to unemployment, homelessness and criminal activities. There are a number of men who are either homeless or sleep in inadequate shelters and eke out a living washing cars and doing odd jobs but are regularly to be seen down by the bars and smoking weed. The local police force works hard at preventing substance abuse but with a climate where it is easy to grow the plant in a back yard or with so many beaches that smuggling is easy, it is an almost impossible task. However on a positive note there is an excellent drug rehabilitation unit called Crossroads on the island sponsored by a charity set up by Eric Clapton. Street Pastors have been able to refer a number of people. The treatment is free for local residents.

What about the 200+ churches? Many people that you meet on the streets can quote the Bible

and have an knowledge of Christianity but have little understanding of a personal faith. There is a distinct divide between the church going population and the rest. Many churches tend to have a rather inward looking mentality and in some cases a condemning attitude. Although most churches run crusades etc to reach the lost there appears to be few social outreach programmes. A number of people on the street have expressed feelings of rejection by the church and on occasion that it is hypocritical. This is obviously a generalised statement and by no means applies to all churches or church members. There are few interdenominational movements with Street Pastors being the exception with members from right across the spectrum of churches.



This could appear as a picture of doom and gloom but Antigua is a really friendly place with many people who have a heart for their nation. The government is determined to improve the country despite its limited resources and is a huge help to Street Pastors providing an office and a minibus. Many of the Street Pastors have a great heart for the work despite often having difficult circumstances in their own lives and are seeking to "make a difference in the lives of our people"