



District NEWS

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View from the Chair's Chair

Footprints

Behind the ex President and ex Vice-President, on the platform at the Methodist Conference in Blackpool this July, was a large footprint. At the start of Conference, it was a reddish brown colour, but, as time went by, it gradually turned green. It changed colour as members of Conference checked their carbon footprint at one of the stands in the exhibition area.

A great deal of time was spent in Blackpool talking about the Methodist Church and, amongst other changes, examining the proposals in Team Focus. These were amended by some notices of motion and eventually agreed. They will, from 1st September 2008, introduce more flexible ways of working within a newly focussed and reduced Connexional Team. All the members of the Team will be affected by the changes and it is important that, in this time of change and uncertainty, we continue to pray for them.

The changes that have been agreed aim to make the Methodist Church more fit for the purpose of mission; and so the time we spent talking about our own structures and organisation was, in the end, directed towards creating an outward-looking Church that is seeking always to discern God's activity in the world and to bear witness to that activity. The purpose of all the conversation about the Methodist Church was not to indulge a liking for navel-gazing, but to equip us better to engage with God's wide world.

Nonetheless, we did talk about ourselves a lot and the changing footprint on the wall behind the platform party was an important reminder of the extreme urgency of the problems facing the planet on which we live.

There was a debate about climate change early in the Conference. Each member of Conference was challenged to examine her or his energy consumption at home and when travelling; and the Conference [Cont on p2

"The Gen inside this issue"

Spotlight on Human Trafficking . . .

Sheffield District Festival 2008 . . . Network . . .

Mission in the Peak . . . Grassmoor . . . and more

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE DISTRICT

Saturday Night Live and Healing Touch

Over the last decade Central Methodist Church in Aston-cum-Aughton (just off Junction 31), on the Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit, has held a bi-monthly meeting on a 2nd Saturday evening of the month called Saturday Night Live. It has been an oasis for those of a charismatic preference who often come tired and worn out from the busyness and frustrations of church life. We have tried to invite preachers and worship leaders which they wouldn't normally have the opportunity to hear. At the same time, at Hollingsend Methodist Church on the Sheffield South Circuit, a ministry of healing and wholeness has developed, called Healing Touch, under the guidance of Rev Peter & Rita Edwards. With Peter's move to Rotherham & Dearne Valley this summer, we are going to move to a monthly Saturday Night Live and link it up with Healing Touch, for the next year only. So, on the dates below, at Central Methodist Church in Aston, you are welcome to come and jump into the oasis at Saturday Night Live with everyone else and wait upon the Lord for his Healing Touch.

September 9th October 13th November 10th January 12th
February 2nd March 8th April 12th May 10th June 14th July 12th

WELCOME

The following are moving to new appointments in the District from September. We offer them and those that travel with them a very warm welcome and trust that their time here will be a blessing:

James Magee – Super Clay Cross
Deacon Janet Thomas – Barnsley
Andy Day – Probationer, Barnsley
Jon Bellfield – Probationer, Barnsley
Mark Cantrill – Retford (Anglican)
Colin Barrick – Worksop & Kiveton

Moving within the District are:

Peter Edwards from South –Rotherham
Stephen Pratt from Barnsley to South
Jen Mullis to be Super, Sheffield South

MY OWN FAMILIAR FRIEND

The Retford Circuit are having an evening with "My own familiar Friend" an inspiring evening with John and Charels Wesley by Mark Topping. The drama explores the John and Charles' different temperaments, their common purpose, their profound disagreements, their shared faith and vision. This will be at the Grove Street Methodist Church, Grove Street, Retford on October 21st and will begin at 6.00pm

The evening will also include singing of Charles Wesley's hymns.

District News is produced quarterly by the Sheffield Methodist District. Please feel free to copy, or cut and paste articles in your magazines as you wish. It is also available on the District web-site - www.sheffieldmethodist.org

For the next issue please direct any contributions and comments by 1st November to:

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Cont from P1] agreed to ask all Churches, Circuits and Districts to monitor and reduce their carbon emissions. We agreed to urge the UK Government to introduce robust policies in relation to carbon emissions.

We are approaching harvest time and, therefore, a good opportunity to open up conversation in our Churches around environmental issues. In the old days, harvest services were mainly about giving thanks for the produce of the earth: now we have a stimulus to reflect also about "food miles" and the carbon emitted as food is brought to us. For some decades, we have rightly focussed at harvest time on those who have no food: now we have cause to reflect on the fact that climate changes will bear most disastrously on those who have least in the world.

Change is in the air in the Methodist Church. It is very important that we are also part of changing life-styles for the sake of God's planet and all who live on it.

With all good wishes



Vernon Marsh

WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN MISSION IN THE PEAK CIRCUIT

For the second year running we have held a joint Circuit/Deanery meeting at the beginning of July. For the first forty minutes we met separately to do our own business and then after a cup of tea or coffee we listened to three presentations on examples of ecumenical co-operation.

Rev. Frank Yates (CE) spoke about Agricultural Chaplaincy and the work of our Agricultural Chaplain Graham Hinds. Lin Chilcott of Derbyshire Village Mission gave a presentation about the work of DVM and spoke about some of their work in the area. We value the support of DVM in some of our ecumenical children's and youth work. Our main speaker was Rev Joy Adams who spoke very powerfully about the work of the Terminus Initiative on the Low Edges Estate, in Sheffield.

We are very fortunate that the Bakewell and Eyam Deanery and the Peak Circuit boundaries are so close. As well as united services in many of our villages, we join together for community events such as Well Blessings and much of our children's and youth work is done ecumenically. We know there is still much we can do and it is not always easy to work together but we believe that as Christians we need to seek ways in which we can share our limited resources for our mission and ministry in our small rural communities.

Margaret Roe

SHEFFIELD DISTRICT IN FESTIVAL

As announced at the Spring Synod, the Sheffield District in Festival Day is to be held on Saturday 24 May 2008 (Wesley Day) as part of the Cliff College Festival weekend. The Saturday of the Festival is geared to celebrate the life of the Sheffield District and to provide opportunities for worship, learning and sharing, enabling churches and circuits to see what is happening in our district and to encourage mission and evangelism.

The Day runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the opportunity to stay on in the evening with a Wesley Day celebration of praise and worship. A full range of activities for children (from 3 years to 11 years) and for young people (12 years and upwards) will be available, so please encourage children and youth groups to come along. At the opening worship at 10:30 a.m., called The Gathering, it is hoped to have a procession of banners brought into the Big Tent. Each circuit is asked to bring a banner reflecting the life of their churches or to make one over the next 10 months or so.

We also want projects and activities that are in the forefront of mission and outreach in the District to have a stall in the Big Tent to display what their project or activity is all about. We have already thought of some but you may know of others. If your project or activity would like a stall, then please contact Steve Wild at Cliff College or me on revpeteredwards@hotmail.com

More information and publicity will be available at the September Synod, but for now please book 24th of May in your church and circuit calendars and start to encourage interest and think about those banners!

Peter Edwards – Convener, District Evangelism Action Group

FOUNDATION DEGREE IN THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

The Foundation Degree is a relatively new degree taught at UTU and awarded by York St John University (YSJU). It is different from an ordinary degree in that it integrates both academic and placement-based learning. The Foundation Degree is useful for Local Preachers, layworkers, and anyone who wants to learn more, and as it is taught on a part-time basis, it is possible to combine the degree with a job or domestic responsibilities. Students take 1 module (24 hours teaching time) per term, either on a weekly basis (e.g. 2 hours per week, usually a Monday evening), or in blocks (e.g. 4 days over 2 weekends, Friday evening and Saturday daytime). Modules usually include lectures, seminars, group discussions, project visits, and occasional placements. The first module for 2007-8 will be Introduction to the Old Testament, which starts on 1st October.

For further details please contact;

Urban Theology Unit, 210 Abbeyfield Road, Sheffield S4 7AZ.

Telephone: 0114 243 5342 or email: office@utusheffield.fsnet.co.uk



NETWORK NEWS

The next President of Network in the Sheffield District will be Mrs. Carol Wignell of the Sheffield South Circuit. Her Induction Service will be on Friday 5th October 2007 in Victoria Methodist Church, Stafford Road at 11.00 a.m. This will include Holy Communion.

On Monday 9th July 2007 a number of us from Sheffield District Women's Network shared in the 20th Birthday Celebrations at Cleveleys Park Methodist Church. This was held during the period of the Methodist Conference at Blackpool. It attracted a great crowd and we were made warmly welcome with a delightful tea provided by our Hosts. This was followed by the main event: a celebration of 20 years of Women's Network in Methodism. The cutting of the Birthday Cake rounded off a worthy and joyous event.

The proposals regarding the changes to Women's Network have been accepted by Conference which means that the Connexional Network Task Group (which includes Judith Simms) now has to work out "The Way Forward" for Women's Network. Prayers for wise decisions are needed and would be very much appreciated.

Elaine Graham.

Secretary, Sheffield District Women's Network.

Cont from p5]

Isaiah 42:22-23 [REB]: "Here is a people taken as spoil and plundered, all of them shut up in holes and hidden away in dungeons. They are carried off as spoil without hope of rescue, as plunder with no one to demand their return. Who among you will pay heed to this? Who will give it close attention from now on?"

In 1807, 12 men in the back of a printer's shop in London paid heed, and gave close attention. In 2007, will it be you, and me, here, and now?

*Judith Simms [Women's Network]
Sheffield Methodist District Synod*

cargo

**Friday 28
September
2007**

Montgomery Hall Theatre, Sheffield

March 2007 is the bicentennial of the abolition of the British Slave trade. Paul Field's new presentation **Cargo** uses music, words, dance and images to tell the story of the Abolitionists campaign, together with the struggles of the African slaves themselves, to end the slave trade 200 years ago, and uses that story as a platform to raise awareness of the many forms of slavery that still exist today. It shows how in the past and the present ordinary people can make a difference.

Publicity has been circulated to the churches; but for further information please contact Judith Simms : 0114 266 0010 / judithRsimms@aol.com

CUTTING THE GRASS TO AID DEVELOPMENT AT GRASSMOOR METHODIST CHURCH

The sun shone on the afternoon of Sunday, 8th July 2007, when 75 people sang praises to God above the noise of passing traffic at an open-air service held outside the Grassmoor Methodist Church (Clay Cross Circuit) by the congregation there - an annual event on the weekend of the village carnival. The Rev Rachel Larkinson, the Church's Minister, and Superintendent Minister of the Clay Cross Methodist Circuit, led it.

This year, there was an extra, special part of the service, when Rev Rachel performed a 'Cutting the turf' ceremony, to mark the start of building work at the Church the following day, the next phase of a building scheme that was planned in the mid-1990s. The building contractor, DJ Atkinson Ltd of Grassmoor, will erect a new, self-contained building, with its own entrance, on the land at the side of the Church, to provide a hall, kitchen and disabled toilet. All of the facilities will be on the same level as the worship area in the current building, and will be accessible by everyone. The new facilities will enable the Church to venture into new ways of engaging with the community, particularly the young, but also those who are not so young.

Since 1998, when the Church had a new roof, the congregation has continued fund-raising - ploughman's lunches, fetes, jumble sales and concerts. A substantial amount of money has been given by church members and friends in the village, and beyond, and a generous grant has been made by 'Biffaward - investing in the environment', a multi-million pound environment fund managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), which utilises landfill tax credits donated by Biffa Waste Services. Other help has come from the Clay Cross Methodist Circuit, the Sheffield Methodist District, and the Methodist Connexion.

Taking part in the service, in addition to Church members, was the scheme's architect, Tim Stubbins of Mitchell + Proctor of Chesterfield. Also present were Derbyshire County Councillor David Chapman, and representatives of community groups, and friends from other churches. Natascha Engel, MP for North East Derbyshire, was unable to attend, but sent her best wishes for the day, and for the successful completion of the building work.

This was the last service conducted by Rev Rachel, before she, and her husband, the Rev Roger Larkinson, leave the Clay Cross Methodist Circuit. Mrs Margaret Keen, the oldest member of the Church, presented Rev Rachel with a gift, to say 'Thank you' for her four years of ministry in Grassmoor. From September, she is taking up a new appointment in the Bedford South and Amphill Methodist Circuit, and Rev Roger is retiring.

After the service, everyone enjoyed refreshments, served by church members.

"- well what else do you expect at a Methodist 'Chapel do'? Ed"

FOCUS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Every three years, Women's Network takes on board a specific project, and spends some time looking at the issues, gathering and sharing information, and producing material for worship, discussion, and action. We are currently half-way through our three-year project looking into the issues of trafficking, particularly trafficking of women and children in Europe for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Now I do not know how much you already know about human trafficking, so let's start with some simple facts and figures. I say simple – perhaps a better word would be 'shocking'.

- The United Nations estimates that 2 million people are trafficked each year worldwide.
- 1.2 million of those are children, i.e. under 18 years of age.
- Of that 2m, 77% are female, and
- of those women, 87% are trafficked for the sex industry.
- The Police cannot put a figure on the number of women trafficked into the UK; they estimate a figure of about 4,000 but admit that, due to the 'hidden' nature of the sex industry, it could be as many as 20,000.
- A woman can be bought at Starbucks at Heathrow Airport for anything between £2,000 and £8,000, depending on how young and "fresh" she is.
- Human trafficking is the now the second largest illegal industry in the world, after the illegal arms trade, having just pushed the drugs trade into third place.

The Reasons:

What causes people to fall victim to human traffickers? Well, imagine that you live in a situation of war, conflict, ethnic victimisation, abuse, poverty, rape, violence – what do you want most of all? You just want to get away from it. Along comes a relative, or a friend of a friend, who promises a better life, a job, financial security, money to send home, excitement, travel – and most of all, love and safety. Wouldn't you just jump at the chance? You pack your bag, kiss your family goodbye, promise to write and to send money when you're settled, and off you go.

The Reality:

Too late you realise that this is no friend, that this relative has tricked you, and that you have become the victim of traffickers. The reality of your situation is this: you are subjected to physical violence and deprivation every day. You suffer sexual abuse and rape. There's the possibility of becoming pregnant, in which case you will be forced to have an abortion – and not in a cosy clinic somewhere. You're sold to a brothel somewhere, and forced to 'entertain' up to 30 clients a day. You're kept locked in a room, with the other girls, and beaten between clients just so you remember who's in charge. There are constant threats, lies, deception, humiliation. You experience constant fear, exhaustion, isolation – you're in a strange country, you do not understand the language, and your passport and papers have been taken from you.

And what about the money you promised to send home? Well, you do not actually see a penny. And the letters you promised to write? What on earth would you tell your family even if you were allowed to contact them? Besides, you have been sold on so many times you have no idea what country you are in, let alone what town or city.

The Repercussions:

And even if you're one of the lucky ones who escapes, or is rescued, the trauma doesn't end there. You've become so conditioned to fear – fear of the authorities, fear of deportation, fear of reprisals against your family, fear of punishment and retribution if you return home. Then there are the nightmares and flashbacks, panic attacks, depression, insecurity, guilt, shame, and the inability to trust anyone, substance abuse. Perhaps it would be better to just end it all now.

This is the reality for woman and girls caught up in human trafficking for the sex industry.

What can you and I do? Well, briefly, there are four things – and it's as easy as ABCD!

ASK QUESTIONS:

- What is your local MP / MEP doing? Use them to lobby the Government.
- Use your local MP surgeries to get your concerns heard and your questions answered.
- What are local police / local authorities doing? What are they involved in?

BE AWARE:

- Make yourself and others aware of the facts about human trafficking.
- Find out what's going on locally, nationally, internationally, to tackle the issues.
- Look on the internet for information about agencies working to tackle human trafficking, e.g. Stop the Traffick, Anti-Slavery International, CHASTE, Poppy Project, UK Human Trafficking Centre (Sheffield)

CONVERSE: Talk about the whole issue of prostitution

- We need to work towards a culture shift – particularly among younger men
- Get the message across that it's not OK to pay for sex
- Talk to your teenagers, grandsons, youth groups (male and female) about the issues, see what they think, and make them aware.

DO SOMETHING: Take action

- The Government recently signed the *Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings*; keep pressure on your MP to ensure that the Convention is ratified at the earliest opportunity.
- Contact organisations, like those named above, to find out what you can do.
- Buy fairly and ethically traded goods, take part in child sponsorship programmes, etc. – i.e. tackling some of the root causes behind human trafficking.

200 years ago, the British Government signed into law the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Those slavery laws have never been repealed, but no-one has ever been prosecuted under them, and today, 200 years on, it is estimated that there are about 20 million people worldwide caught up in slavery of one kind or another. People the world over agree that slavery is wrong, yet it still exists, and indeed thrives, and fortunes are still being made out of human misery and fear.

In 1807 people began to be aware of the issues, they began to be bothered by what was going on, and they decided to act. Today, we can't fail to be aware – just look at your TV schedule for this week, watch the news, read the papers.

[Cont on p 6