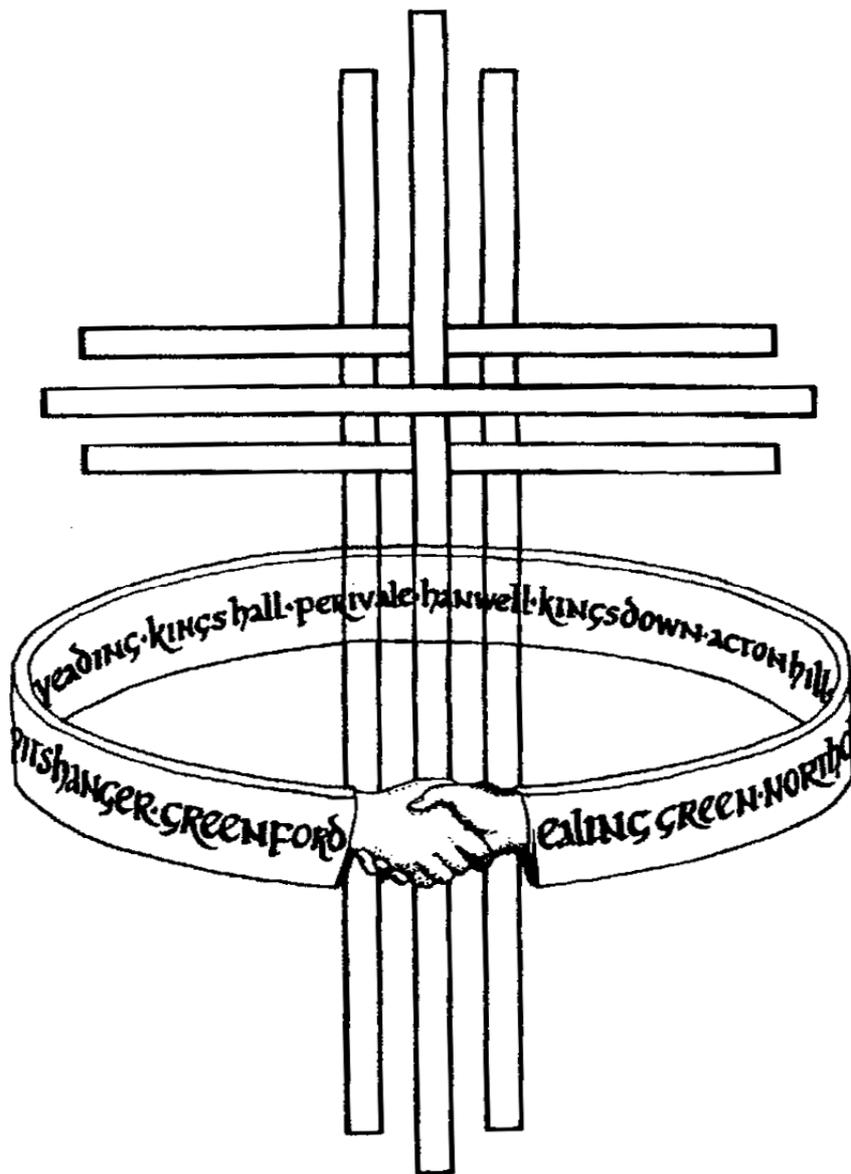


In-touch

No 54

December 2010 – February 2011



The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

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Front Cover designed by Marion Narain

From the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

Where do you find refreshment and spend time with friends? Many of us would answer that we find refreshment and friendship in the Church and we are surprised that other people don't want to share in the joys we have. Our spirits are fed through worship and through the fellowship of a coffee after the service or perhaps at a faith lunch or prayer breakfast.

We gather around tables, ask about each other's health and perhaps talk about our faith and other things that matter to us.

Jesus understood the benefits of sharing with people over food and a drink. The Gospels are full of stories of banquets and meals, parties, weddings and suppers. Some of these take place in special places, others in the ordinary places where people bump into each other in the daily tasks of getting on with life.

My favourite story of Jesus sharing a conversation in such an ordinary place is found in John 4. Jesus meets a woman by a well – what could be more ordinary? Yet it is not such a simple story. In this encounter barriers of race, gender and prejudice are crossed and Jesus helps the woman to feel valued. Their conversation becomes theological – they talk about God, particularly where to worship. Through this meeting, her life is changed and the people in her village meet Jesus and are transformed as well.

It would be great if lots more people came into our churches but perhaps we can learn from Jesus. He did not ask people to meet him in a special place, he spent time where they were, in the market place, in the town square, in the village street.

For a lot of people Jacob's well in John 4 would be a coffee shop – a place of meeting and reflection. I offer you the following poem – can we bring refreshment to people where they want to be? How can we show God's love in the ordinary and everyday places?

May God bless you and bring you refreshment.



Michaela

Just an ordinary coffee shop

Balancing precariously,
poised and promising a particular kind of refreshment,
are the two cappuccinos and three lattes on my tray.

This is my well,
this the place of encounter, gossip, thirst-quenching
friendship and rippling laughter.

This is a wishing well,
where good wishes are offered as an acceptable
cover for the 'I love you' that is deeply meant.

This is a communal well,
where chance encounters rub shoulders
with planned meetings and happy coincidences.

This is a being well,
not a place for doing, for actions and deadlines looming,
the space offers well-being in a crazy world.

This is no special well,
just an ordinary coffee shop, one of dozens in this town,
but in the encounter I am transformed.

This is a sacred well,
in the laughter, the tears, the sharing and departing,
the rituals of embodied human living are practiced.

I make it safely to our table and
the predictable pattern begins; creamy foam licked from a spoon
and in the encounter with the apparently mundane
I meet the divine.



Michaela Youngson (first published in The Weaver, the Word and Wisdom)

Better Together? Belonging Together?



This is the address given by Rev Jenny Impey, Co-Chair of the London District to the **District Synod** on Saturday 11th Sept 2010.

I once caused quite a stir. I was the preacher at the town's ecumenical week of prayer for Christian Unity. Most of the churches were represented, most of the clergy present and I began by saying that to pray for Christian Unity was heretical. It certainly got their attention and they continued to buzz long after the sermon had finished.

I'm no longer as convinced as I was by the truth of the statement but it arose out of a frustration that the only time the churches really got together was to pray for Christian unity – the unity that Christ prayed for, the unity that the writer to the Ephesians declares - **we are all one**. Simply to pray for unity suddenly seemed cheap and easy when what was really needed was the building of strong relationships across the denominations which would enable us to be a force for good in the town as we sought to be good news and to make a difference for Christ. In Christ we **already are one, we are already are united. We belong together.**

As we reflected on this synod we'd originally called it Better Together? (with a question mark!). It seemed important to us to give over much of the time to reflecting on the District review together. But Better Together suggests a focus on what we do together and almost subconsciously the theme became Belonging Together as it embraced not only the review of the District, but our relationship with the Conference, with the City and with ecumenical and interfaith partners. A stronger phrase that is concerned much more about the quality of our relationships and the way in which our words and actions impact on others.

Belonging Together is a fact. There is one body and one Spirit, just as we were called to the one hope of our calling. We belong together whether or not we acknowledge it; whether or not we notice it, whether or not we act on it – for better for worse, for richer for poorer. It is the quality of those relationships and the actions that flow from them that determine whether we are or will be better together!

The London District was born 4 years ago. Do you remember the fanfare? The packed Central Hall? The joyful Ghanaian Choir? The exquisite Korean dancers? (If you don't, thank you for joining us, and for bringing your questions and your challenges to us as you help us to develop the story)

What about the crosses which were given to representatives of each of the churches in the District and which are still given prominent place in the vast majority of our churches? A sign



of our belonging together in Christ.

And what about the story book? That visible sign of our commitment to one another, as representatives of each circuit prepared their page of the book and brought them forward to be bound together as we inaugurated this District.



We belong together and since that day countless links have been generated across the district as we have travelled around and told our stories – for good or for ill. We belong together for better or for worse and this global city is impacted by those relationships.

We gather on the anniversary of 9/11. A day that was devastating to individuals and impacted personally on many thousands of people. A day that has shaped subsequent history and highlighted the impact our words and actions and relationships have across the world. A day that continues to evoke strong reaction and highlights the way in which the actions of a thoughtless few can have ripples across the world. Over the last few days all the media focus seems to have been on one small church of 50 members in Florida (*see footnote*). One pastor, 50 members, dangerous publicity and the world is on edge. If only it were that easy to get good news into the press! Our words and actions are capable of changing the world.



We belong together, but will we make choices and build relationships that make us better together?

For me the world seems to have shrunk since the London District came into being. Barely a day goes by when there is not something in the news headlines that causes me to pray for individuals around the District.

When I hear of earthquakes in New Zealand, my thoughts are with Roger and Carole Wiig. Of course they are in the North but the school where Hamish and Anne Galloway live is in the heart of Christchurch.

When I hear of flooding in Pakistan and attend a welcome service in Richmond and Hounslow we pray for our brother and colleague Kaleem John.

What happens around the world profoundly impacts



the life of the London District as families and friends

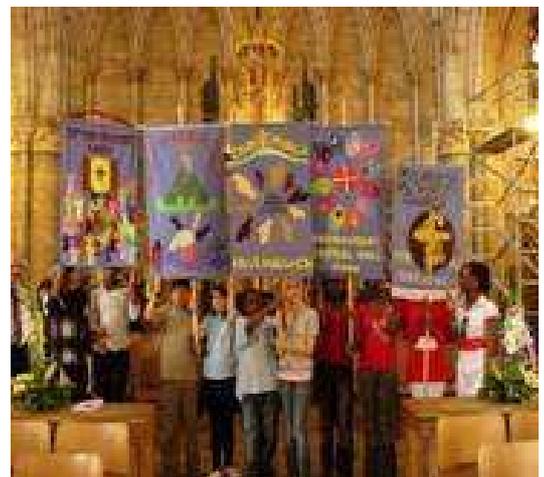
and relatives are caught up in it all. What happens in the life of our District and in the life of the Connexion no less profoundly affects the life of the world and our relationships with others at a local level. As the Chief Rabbi said in his Rosh Ha Shannah message – we all have a part to play in writing the script



The Methodist Church is regrouping for mission and each and every circuit, and now each and every district is being asked to make choices about how we will relate to one another and to the areas in which we live and work. What are the relationships that need to be built, what are the difficult choices that have to be made so that we might indeed be better together and make a greater difference in our communities? Today's synod is the beginning of the next stage on our District journey. Others brought the District into being. Others set up the structures and confirmed the recommendations. Now we have choices to make. What will our belonging together mean? What is our vision for the District today? How will we develop the relationships between us in ways that will help to build up the body of Christ in love and equip the saints for ministry? Who will be our partners on the journey?

The choices we make as we engage with one another today and in the coming days will shape the next chapter in our history.

For the truth is: District is us! The 23,000 members, 247 churches and 40 circuits are the District. (Did you know there are 23,000 Bus drivers in London – the same number as Methodists – if ever I think there are only a few of us, the sight of a red London bus reminds me we can still make a difference!) We belong together – dare we speak the truth in love to each other and grow together as we build even stronger relationships with one another and with our partners as we seek to play our part, alongside all who are willing to work with us, in being good news for this global city and beyond?



The District is Us!

Footnote

This comment is a reference to plans by Pastor Terry Jones of the small, non-denominational Christian Dove Outreach Center in Gainesville, Florida to burn copies of the Qur'an on the 9th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks (dubbed by Jones 'International Burn a Koran Day'). Widely condemned by political and religious leaders, Jones ultimately declared, on September 11th "We will definitely not burn the Qur'an... Not today, not ever."

Women's Network (1)

Rev Femi Cole Njie has completed her two year term of office as the Women's Network President for the London District. Because there were no nominations to take over the role, the District Executive meeting in July decided that Femi would continue in her role as President for this year.

Unfortunately the Network Vice-President died in 2009 after a short illness and there were no nominations to fill the vacancy until recently.

At the District meeting on 29th September members unanimously elected Blossom Jackson, Ealing Trinity's Network representative, as Vice-Chairman and President elect 2011 - 2013. Blossom considers it an honour to offer service in this role and is humbled that members should have faith in asking her to take on Femi's mantle.

Our congratulations go to Blossom on her election, and she asks for our prayers and support as she takes on her new role. Blossom has a profound belief that Network could become another powerful force for spiritual growth in the church through all its objectives.

It is anticipated that there will be a commissioning service will take place next year most probably at Hinde Street Methodist Church.

2011 - Year of the Bible

Throughout 2011 the Methodist Church is encouraging churches and individuals to deepen their discipleship by focusing on the Bible. This particular year marks the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible (*aka the Authorised Version*) which brought the Scripture to people in English and, when read aloud, had a dramatic effect on church attendance and people's lives.

What better opportunity then to celebrate Scripture as a gift from God and take up the challenge of encouraging people to engaging with it in fresh, life-changing ways to become effective disciples of Jesus Christ in the 21st century. We want people to live Bible lives with confidence and compassion in their relationships, workplaces and communities.

For more information, visit the Deepening Discipleship 2011 year of the Bible website at www.deepeningdiscipleship.org.uk.

From the Circuit Meeting

The most recent Circuit Meeting was held on 14th September at Hanwell.

In the last edition of In-touch, it was reported that the budget for the 2010/11 connexional year had been agreed by the Circuit Meeting although at that time only 5 churches had responded to Peter Green's request for assessments. Whilst the number responding had risen to 9, it has emerged that not all churches had managed to pay their promised assessments for last year. As a result, a deficit of about 10% was emerging (about £24,000). A general request was made to churches to increase their offers if they were able to do so.

The exercise to obtain valuations for Moullin House, King's Hall and the Circuit's 'redundant' manses is well in hand, but not yet complete. Because of this, it has not been possible to develop firm proposals for each property. However, the caterers at Moullin, Hallmark Catering, have indicated that the kitchens at the House do not meet current environmental health standards. It is estimated that it will cost £18 – 20,000 to rectify the problems. The Circuit voted to underwrite the cost of the necessary work.

Following the success of the Circuit Lent course this year, it will be repeated at the western end of the Circuit, probably during Advent. Dates have not been finalised, but sessions are planned at Northolt on Wednesday evenings and at Greenford on Thursday mornings. Also, the recent Circuit membership classes were well attended and a number of people – both young and older, had become members as a result.

Hanwell is participating in an ecumenical project to provide Winter Night Shelters in Ealing during the winter months (January – March). There was to be an Information Evening about the project at St Christopher's Church in Hanwell on 13th October.

The meeting was informed that the Circuit Choir was to have its first meeting on 23rd September at Kingsdown and will sing at the ecumenical service at Pitshanger on 28th November at 6.30pm. All churches around the Circuit were invited to join the service.

Jarel Robinson-Brown has commenced ministerial training at Wesley College, Cambridge. In addition Joy Barrow, one of the Circuit's local preachers has transferred to the Harrow & Hillingdon Circuit. The Meeting sent their good wishes to both Jarel and Joy.

The next Circuit Meeting will be on 10th March at Northolt. There will also be an Extraordinary Circuit Meeting in November (date to be announced) to discuss the future of Moullin House.

News from Street Ministry at West Ealing between the Library and Sainsbury's

Rachel Kamara

It has been a while now since we gave an update of this Ministry. Thanks for all those who have been praying for this team. We miss our leader Yorke who started this Ministry but has moved to Bristol.

We still meet on Saturday mornings. The morning starts with the experience from one of our team mates – Hong Syms from Hanwell Methodist Church. She walks and travels around the area in the presence of the Lord. She sees all ages, able and disabled come from the library with books and some reading newspapers. Some come from Sainsbury carrying their shopping and some leave on bicycles. She prays for and speaks with a few. The rest of the team, Ulla Sovio, Martha White, John Collier - all from South Hanwell Baptist, meet at Burger King, have some refreshment and share experiences of the week through scripture or testimonies. We leave at 11.30am for the streets.

It is such an experience that we do not want to miss a Saturday. Even in the absence of any member there is always someone there. We have made so many friends, to name a few an elderly lady called Maureen who used to sit outside when there were benches but now waits inside Sainsbury. She always looks forward to seeing us. Arpie, another lady who has even spoken to some of those we minister to encouraging them to take heed to our message. Michael, who is always around when we get to the street. We are out there to make friends and share the good news to as many as we can and at times they request prayers.

For some time now we have prayer walked through the farmers market, thanking God for the farmers who are serving the community and also for the work of the Salvation Army. Often we get visitors from churches overseas who join us in the ministry. Not long ago we had some friends from Lake View Baptist Church, Auburn, USA. Their presence allowed us to have a large team and we spread up to Dean Gardens. Recently we had Katerina, a lady from Czech Republic. A few months ago, one of the members of the team, Marie Adamkova had a scholarship to Tennessee to study music.

We believe that God has a mission as every Saturday is different - the experience is hard to tell so 'Come and see' John 1:46. We usually give out tracts and copies of the Gospels. In this way we have tried to get outside of our church buildings to reach out to others who would not go to a church. We keep in touch with those whom we have met more than once and chat over what has been happening since we last met them. The traders – Bill the card seller and those that sell the 'Big Issue' magazine are just a few who look forward to meet us on the Saturdays.

The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few.

Women's Network (2)

Blossom Jackson

It is some time since I have given you an update on the work of Women's Network in the Circuit. The resumé, which follows, not only tells you about the work in Ealing and the London District, but also includes the progress that is being made to merge Women's Network with the World Federation of Methodists and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW), to form one Umbrella Organisation.

First Of all, this new organisation is called 'Methodist Women in Britain' (MWIB), and will have members from both organisations on its executive. The planning for the organisation is well on the way and will be presented at Synod next year. It will have a more powerful, global thrust with an added ability for making direct representation to the United Nations.

Women's Network will carry on its current work, ie Easter Offering Service, Daffodil Day involvement, Quiet Days, Conferences, etc. However the most important factor remains that all women in the Methodist church are members of Women's Network or Fellowship and will be members of MWIB. The fact that all of us are not actively engaged in Network throughout the year should not stop us from supporting the activities, when we can, because we can make a difference in the spiritual growth of our church, among other endeavours.

Upcoming Events

Easter Offering Service

The 2011 Easter Offering Service will take place at Greenford Church. Further Details will be available in the New Year.

Women's World Day of Prayer

The Ealing inter-denominational service will take place at Hanwell Methodist Church at 2.00pm, 4th March. The 2011 Service has been prepared by the Women of Chile. We give thanks for the safe recovery of the miners and the inspirational message the world has learnt from God and man's intervention in this amazing occurrence.

Women's Network Sunday

The date for the 2011 Service is 6th March or a date nearest it. Further details will be available in the New Year. I hope that more churches in the Circuit will be able to include this service in their planning rotas.

Spring Festival at Wesley's Chapel 7th March 201

You are probably aware that there will be no Daffodil Day service at Westminster Central Hall next year, because the organ has been sent away for repair to be ready in time for the church's Centenary celebration in 2012. As a consequence the London Women's Network has planned for a service to take place at Wesley's Chapel. This will be a ticketed event because the church can only hold 400 people. Each Circuit will be allocated a specified number of tickets and as soon as the numbers are decided, I will let you know.

WFMUCW Conference- 10th -15th August 2011 - further details will be made available.

Sector A Craft Day – 12th March 2011

Further details will be available nearer the date. There will be another Quiet Day arranged by sector A further details will also be available next year.

Finally, I am pleased to let you know that I have been elected as Vice- president for the London District Women's Network for this year and President elect from 2011-2013. I ask for your continuing prayers in this task and will let you know details of the induction service which will most probably, take place most probably at Wesley's Chapel.

May God bless us all in the work that we all do in the furtherance of his work.

A date for your diary....

Concert at Hanwell Methodist Church

Including -

Barbershop

Irish Dancing

items by the Brownies, Guides, Scouts, Cubs etc

Saturday 2nd April at 7.00pm

Tickets £5.00 adults, children free when accompanied by an adult. Refreshments will be available during the interval. More details nearer the time.

In aid of repairing the church roof and masonry

Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter for the Homeless

Mary Blackwell, Hanwell

On 13th October Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter organizers held an information evening at St Christopher's Church, Hanwell, for all the churches in the Ealing Borough. The evening was reasonably attended (around 70 people representing at least 18 churches). Rev Liz Moody of St Christopher's welcomed everyone, followed by an appeal by Ed Linehan, an ex-shelter guest. Guest speaker, Ali Preston, the project co-ordinator from Wycombe Winter Night Shelter then described the operation of the rolling shelter at Wycombe and related how it had been set up, after which she and Liz Moody answered questions from the floor. Bruce Marquart from the upper Room also attended and ably fielded some of the questions. The organized part of the evening finished with a DVD presentation from West London Churches Homeless Concern* and an appeal to those attending to indicate on the forms available whether they were able to offer help in the form of shelter venues, volunteers, funding or expertise.

The Shelter initiative grew out of concern for people sleeping rough during the cold weather last winter, and the increased presence of homeless people in the Ealing area. The young and the old, the disabled and families with children are provided for through the council's homeless department, while there are a scattering of women's refuges in the borough. However, there is no emergency shelter for single homeless men, and Ealing Council refer those beyond their remit to St Mungo's who have a single hostel in the borough, to which men can only be referred if they have been found sleeping rough for three nights over the space of a week by St Mungo's street outworkers.

Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter proposes to set up a 12 bed pilot rolling winter night shelter along the lines of the one operating at Wycombe. A rolling shelter is one where the guests (a friendlier word than clients) are accommodated at a different venue each night of the week, and the shelter had initially hoped to enlist 7 churches along the Uxbridge Road to accommodate the shelter one night of the week each on a regular basis through the cold weather months of January, February and March 2011. However, although all the churches along the Uxbridge Road were approached not all of them responded and of those that did some were unable to accommodate the shelter owing to pressure of church activities and lettings. The appeal for venues has therefore been widened to cover all churches in the borough with increased success.

The intention is that the shelter should offer overnight accommodation using inflatable mattresses and duvets which would be transported from venue to venue to minimize the need for storage at the venues. Guests would be welcomed from 7.30pm. A hot evening meal would be provided and staff would eat with the guests, giving them a chance to befriend, offering a sympathetic ear and companionship. A range of activities would be made available for the evening, along with newspapers to enable guests to seek more permanent accommodation and employment. An overnight team would ensure supervision on a rota basis throughout the night, while

a morning team would come in to cook breakfast and help clear up. Guests accepted at the shelter would remain under its protection for up to 28 nights while they sought a more permanent solution to their homelessness.

Training will be provided for those who wish to volunteer at the shelter, but as the volunteers are likely to be new to shelter work, the shelter proposes this winter to take guests only from chosen homeless agencies, where the vast majority of rough sleepers are known. Volunteer training will take place at St Christopher's Church on the evening of 15th December while training for venue co-ordinators will take place on the evening of 7th December. Volunteer forms will be available at your church and if you feel able to help you should fill one in and bring it with you to the training evening. Each venue will need a venue co-ordinator to oversee operations at their venue, organize their volunteer workforce and liaise with the host church. If you think that you have skills and experience that would be useful in this role and would like to offer your services to the shelter please get in touch with Rev Liz Moody on 020 8578 2796 or email lizmoo@btinternet.com by the end of November.

** If you would like to see this video but were unable to come to the information evening you can view it on West London Churches Homeless Concern website.*

Speaking Out on Global Poverty

Blossom Jackson

On Wednesday 20th October some of our members joined other Christians at Westminster Central Hall to hear international speakers, share their messages on the topics of eliminating global poverty and global warming. The event, which was organised by Christian Aid, ended in the afternoon after lobbying parliament.

The morning's activity started with community hymn singing, led by a group of singers and ended with a short service and a blessing by the Rev'd Jesse Jackson. The main speakers included Loretta Minghella OBE, Director of Christian Aid; Rt. Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, Secretary of State for International Development; Suzanne Matala, Christian Aid Partner - the Council of Churches in Zambia, and the keynote speaker was the renowned international activist and campaigner – Rev'd Jesse Jackson.

Loretta Minghella shared with us information on her overseas visits to countries where Christian Aid projects are in operation.

Andrew Mitchell told us that the Coalition Government has agreed not to cut the overseas budget on overseas aid, despite the gravity of the current economic crisis. Suzanne Matala gave vivid information on current work in Zambia on HIV awareness, female empowerment, the fight to clear up polluted land in the mining industry and the pressure being made on Government, for transparency on taxes on money being made from that industry,

Rev'd Jesse Jackson gave a powerful and thought provoking speech that was marred only by the PA system that was not working at optimum capacity during his delivery. He spoke of what Christ has taught us about caring for the poor and needy and gave an overview of what needs to be done at ground and political levels for eliminating poverty and reducing global warming. His portrayal of the current factors that are affecting the world scene included job losses, poor sanitation, lack of clean water, diseases, high maternal and child mortality rates, poor housing, the poor having to take on degrading jobs in order to eke out a meagre living, and the prevalence of HIV and Aids etc. His vivid illustration was of the rich who might lose one house at a time of economic crisis, but the poor, who inevitably, loses his/her total abode. He went on to say that we are measured in God's eyes by how we care for the 'least of us', and of the need to dream the world out of poverty by becoming engaged in activities that can enable the poor to have improved lives. On global warming, he reminded us that we are stewards of God's earth and that if we abuse the earth inevitably the earth will fight back! So, we need to take all necessary steps to look after our world.

After lunch we marched to Parliament to deliver three messages:-

- Thanks for protecting the Aid Budget
- Ask Vince Cable to support a new international accounting standard on country-by-country reporting in order to help poor countries to crack down on tax dodging
- Ask Caroline Spelman to introduce mandatory reporting on carbon emissions, by UK companies, in order to tackle climate change.

We stood in the biting cold in the park adjoining Westminster, until Steve Pound, MP for Ealing North joined us and we were not disappointed! The jovial MP was clearly delighted to see us and started by gleefully telling us that his old school mate, the Bishop of London had told him before his arrival - "I see Pound that you have a large Ealing contingent!" I guess we were easily seen, because the young man who held our banner was about 6' 4" (an Obama look alike!) who regaled us with his campaigning activities! Also, the line to other groups had not been broken, most probably because of the keen cold wind. So the Bishop had most likely thought that they too were from Ealing!

Steve Pound assured us that our activities to eliminate poverty and debt control have helped to keep MPs on their toes! He promised to write to Vince Cable and Caroline Spelman as requested. He also told us of his role in helping to clean up polluted land in Honduras after visiting a gold mine there and seeing how gold was extracted.

We then returned to Westminster Central Hall to fill out our evaluation forms and reflect on a memorable day.

The Byways of Methodism

One Saturday during the Summer, we decided to go for a walk through part of the Ashridge estate. Fancying a 'green' trip, we took the train to Tring from where we could walk along part of the Ridgeway towards Ivinghoe Beacon. Having got within sight of the beacon, we veered off towards Ivinghoe village passing en route a lone man out spotting butterflies (he was rather excited about having seen a couple of rare types). After a nosey round the parish church, and welcome refreshment in the village teashop, we thought we'd just take a little further look around the village before wandering back to Tring to take the train home. As we walked along the main street we chanced upon a chapel which was up for sale. The noticeboard indicated that the congregation had moved elsewhere and was part of the 'Wesleyan Reform Union'. 'Who on earth might they be?' we wondered. With 'Wesleyan' in the title, they clearly share history with Methodism as we know it, but exactly what we had no idea.

A little probing on the internet soon identified the Wesleyan Reform Union as an ongoing offshoot of Methodism with circuits and churches mainly in the north and east Midlands, stretching into Yorkshire and a hand full around High Wycombe – there is a High Wycombe circuit, but the Ivinghoe congregation is independent of it. The Wesleyan Reform Union dates its independent existence to 1849. A little further probing started to throw up complications in the history of Methodism of which I had no idea whatsoever.

It is probably true to say that Methodism in Wesley's day was rather a heterogeneous movement, which, when Wesley was alive managed to keep broadly together under his leadership. When he died in 1791, the inherent strains and tensions between the various groups within the Wesleyan Connexion began to surface and splits and expulsions resulted.

Many of us will know of the split between 'Wesleyans' and 'Primitives' which happened in 1811. I suspect fewer of us will know of the Methodist New Connexion which was formed in 1797 when Alexander Kilham was expelled from the Wesleyan Connexion over disputes about church governance – he thought that too much power was being taken by the clergy and that they were usurping the position and rights of the laity.

The Wesleyan – Primitive split came about because of differences in the way the two groups thought the connexion should develop. Hugh Bourne (expelled 1808) and William Clowes (expelled 1810) wanted Methodism to continue in some of the ways of its early years. In particular, they wanted to retain Camp Meetings – a feature of early Methodism involving day-long open-air meetings, public praying and



preaching, something that ran counter to the way the Wesleyans wanted to go. In the Primitives' early years there was also what was considered by the Wesleyans a dangerous association with what sounds almost like 'primitive religion' with the 'Forest' or 'Magic' Methodists led by James Crawfoot. His meetings were 'ecstatic' with people having visions, falling into trances and so forth and he was also believed to have supernatural powers. The Primitives were always more closely associated with unskilled labourers, both farm and industrial with a tendency at times to absorb some of their more superstitious beliefs.

In the meantime, the Wesleyans were trying to become part of the 'accepted' religious landscape of the country and this involved exercising a degree of discipline over its clergy, its preachers and congregations including doctrinal standards. This process was played out against the backdrop of long-term war with France, fears of French invasion verging on paranoia and fears of 'contagion' from the French revolution of 1789. For the government of the day, outdoor preaching, any hint of questioning of established authorities and so on smacked of sedition and rebellion. The Wesleyans feared a backlash from the government if some of the ways of early Methodism were continued, hence their opposition to men like Bourne and Clowes. However, by the mid-19th century, the Primitives had also come to the conclusion that they needed to exercise discipline and control over some of their more wayward elements. To that extent they started converging with the Wesleyans, although they remained centred on the 'lower' classes while the Wesleyans appealed more to the aspiring lower middle and middle classes.

Returning to the saga of splits, in 1827 the Protestant Methodists broke away from the Wesleyan Connexion ostensibly over the 'organ dispute'. This broke out when Brunswick Chapel in Leeds did, for the time, that very un-Methodist thing of installing an organ, the first in a Methodist chapel. This, however developed into a broader dispute about church governance (again) which underlay the split. In 1836 the Protestant Methodists renamed themselves the Wesleyan Association, probably picking up a few other disaffected people in the process.

In 1849, further similar disputes over church governance and the autonomy of individual churches (or lack of), led to another group - the Methodist Reform Church, splitting off. In 1857, this group got together with the Wesleyan Association to form the United Methodist Free Churches. However, one lot did not wish to join the new grouping and they split away to become the Wesleyan Reform Union which remains independent to this day (and includes the chapel we saw in Ivinghoe). Although their history is rooted in Methodism, not all of them accept the name 'Methodist'.

In the meantime in Cornwall, William O'Bryan, a Methodist local preacher had founded the Bible Christians in October 1815. Perhaps their most famous 'son' was Billy Bray (1794-1868) who became a well known preacher after having been converted from his drunken ways by reading Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress'.

At least in 1907, things started to come back together again. This was when the United Methodist Church was formed by a merger of the United Methodist Free

Churches, the Methodist New Connexion, and the Bible Christians. Then in 1932, The Wesleyans, Primitives and the United Methodist Church got together to form the Methodist Church of Great Britain as we know it today.

Phew, all back together. Well, not quite. Apart from the Wesleyan Reform Union, the Independent Methodist Churches remain outside the connexion. These are mostly to be found around Manchester, Cheshire, Durham, and Tyne & Wear, but also have churches in Bristol and West Yorkshire. They are all independent, but band together for 'mutual support'. In 2009, there were 84 independent Methodist churches with around 1,800 members. Some of these may always have been independent, others may have split off at various times. Without doing an awful lot more historical digging, it's difficult to know.

So, apart from those two groups, have we done with splits? Again, not quite. In 1971 the Free Methodist Church broke away from the Methodist Church of Great Britain. Their first congregation was formed by Rev Frank Mitchell in Heysham and has since expanded with churches in Lancashire, the West Midlands, Warwickshire plus some in Cornwall and Northern Ireland. Their current 'leader' is Bishop David Roller. Whether that means they are 'episcopal' in structure or it's just a fancy title, I'm not sure. In this case, the reason for the split was concern over a perceived drift in the Methodist Church towards 'liberal' theology. In essence the Free Methodists wished for a more traditional theology and a greater evangelical approach. Perhaps not surprisingly, they are members of the Evangelical Alliance and the Free Churches Group.

With the possible exception of the last split in 1971, the issue that has caused people to go off has been the issue of church governance. At no point have there been fundamental splits over doctrine or the nature of the Christian faith. Even the 1971 split did not involve any accusation that the Methodist Church itself was espousing non-orthodox doctrines, but that some of its clergy were heading in that direction.

The 1971 split notwithstanding, British Methodism does seem to have been stable since the union of 1933, and one hopes that it will remain so. Methodism as we know it is, after all facing huge challenges in contemporary Britain. A few years ago, when I read Rupert Davies' history of Methodism (written in the early 1960's) he could say that there were over 600,000 Methodists in the UK. In 2007 the total membership of the Methodist Church of Great Britain had fallen to 267,000, and doubtless will have dipped further since. We'd better stay together!

Millennium Development Goals

Remember the Millennium Development Goals?

In 2000 world leaders set a series of development goals giving themselves 15 years to achieve them. With two-thirds of the time up, world leaders met in September to discuss progress.

To begin, these were the goals set in 2000, and progress as measured in 2008.

Millennium Goal	1990	2008	2015 target
Population living on less than \$1.25 a day, % total	46%	27%	23%
Undernourished population, % total	20%	16%	10%
Deaths of children under 5 as percent of live births	10%	7.2%	3.3%
Percent primary-school-age children enrolled	82%	89%	100%
Percent of pregnant women attended at least once by skilled medical personnel	64%	80%	100%
Population with access to improved water source, % of total	71%	84%	85.5%

Note that 'Population' relates only to the developing countries covered by the goals and the figure of \$1.25 per day at purchasing-power parity is an internationally accepted measure of poverty.

The goal of halving poverty by 2015 looks within reach although, since China and India accounted for 62% of the world's poor in 1990, changes to the world's overall poverty rate depend very much on their performance. Both those countries have achieved significant economic growth and consequent reductions in their poverty rate since 1990 (China's poverty rate fell from 60% to 16% between 1990 and 2010). This has been achieved through economic growth rather than development aid.

The overall target for reducing poverty is perhaps rather a blunt instrument and it would be better to consider each country separately. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) believes that 15 poor countries have already achieved the goal. These include 6 in Africa – the Gambia, Mali, Senegal, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic and Guinea. However, 28 poor countries have measured their poverty rate in one year only between 1990 and 2008, so it is extremely difficult to assess how they have progressed.

The Millennium Goals are typically reduced to working out how much money is required to reach the targets and then berating governments for not spending (or giving) enough. The goals do not, however include economic growth, even though

that is arguably a key factor in achieving them. As the World Bank has pointed out, economic growth does not just make more money available for social spending, but also drives up demand for such things as schooling, thus helping to meet other development goals. That said, it is not a sure-fire route to achieving the Millennium Goals. Despite significant economic progress, India still has a poor record on child malnutrition – since 1991 India's GDP (gross domestic product) has doubled, but malnutrition has reduced by only a few percentage points.

A second issue is ensuring that money is spent effectively and actually reaches the intended targets. For instance, absenteeism is often high in the developing world – teacher absenteeism in rural Kenya is around 20%, in Uganda around 27% and 14% in Ecuador. In addition, a study conducted over 18 months in Rajasthan in Northern India found that nurses who were supposed to be staffing primary care clinics were at work only 12% of the time. The effectiveness of building new schools and clinics is clearly blunted if staff are often absent. There is also the problem of how to stop money being siphoned off before it reaches projects. A study found that in 2000 70% of the money allocated for drugs and supplies by the Ugandan government 'leaked' away. In Ghana the figure was around 80%. Similarly, India's Planning Commission reckons that in 2009 only 16% of the resources earmarked for the poor under the country's subsidised food distribution scheme ever reached them.

Whilst this sounds very pessimistic, governments, NGO's and others are gradually building up a body of methods that improve the effectiveness of spending. For example, a large scale evaluation in Andhra Pradesh in southern India showed that performance pay for teachers was three times as effective in raising pupils' test scores as the equivalent amount spent on school supplies. Similarly, in Rajasthan pupil performance was improved and teacher absenteeism reduced by paying teachers only when they showed a date-stamped photograph to prove they had been in school on a given day. Leakage of funds for schools in Uganda was significantly reduced when the government, appalled at how much was going astray took to publicising on the radio and in the newspapers how much was being allotted.

The World Bank hopes that by sharing such methods, governments can get a greater grip on improving the lot of their populaces. Development aid will clearly remain key to achieving the Millennium Goals, but other factors are also important as well – methods to ensure the effectiveness of spending such as those described above, and also economic growth.

This article is a summary of one published in the September 25th edition of The Economist magazine

Gerald Barton, Editor

Parsons I have Known

Anita Oji has been reading a book called *Confessions of an Un-common Attorney* by Reginald L Hine which was published in 1946. It is basically his diary as a solicitor and records events in his life. She sent the following from the section 'Parsons I have known' which she thought you'd all enjoy.

"Often as I go a roundabout way to work, I pass the not-as-yet opened shop of a picture framing client, and through the window I see him sitting at his bench, his hands folded, his eyes closed, framing the thought of the Almighty in his hand and hallowing the work of the day. When that shop is opened the man's face is *radiant*." (the author italicized the word).

"Religion as they say in the East is what a man does with his solitariness. And there again we are at a loss, for we have no solitude. The law leaves no vacant hours for contemplation. We go home burdened and bewildered by the problems of the day, and there are papers in our portfolio for tomorrow. 'I am generally so dead beat by the time I kneel down to pray' said (a notable lawyer - not Hine) 'that I begin out of habit: "Gentlemen of the jury".'

"Once upon a time there was a curate who was impossible as a preacher so much so that his vicar never dared let him occupy the pulpit. On one occasion, having himself to be away on the Sunday, he sent for his curate, took down a volume of sermons from his shelves, selected one almost at random, and instructed him to preach that. When the vicar came back on Monday morning he could tell from his wife's face that something dreadful had occurred. "Out with it my dear" he said. "Well Alfred, do you know that the curate started his sermon with these words yesterday "When I was Bishop of London.....!"

"He (the Bishop) delighted in a parson down in the vale who had a taste for fancy dress and would appear each day of the week save Sundays in a costume of a different period. The people smiled at his eccentricity but not when at the beginning of one Lent when he announced that in this season of abstention he would abstain from any type of service. He was off to Rome and would take the church keys with him. The faithful were furious. They raised heaven and earth and incidentally the Bishop. But the Bishop refused to intervene. He said that it takes all sorts of parsons to make a diocese."

"Towards the close of his days the parson's memory began to fail. He finished a sermon and then began all over again. He seemed unable to stop. The congregation having suffered grievously put their heads together and on the cue of the steward they used to stand up suddenly and scrape their shoes on the floor at which time the parson took the hint and hurriedly say the benediction."

"The simple words of John Wesley's men have a way of abiding in the heart. More lettered than the others was our postman who had a collie dog and used to take him into the pulpit. After years of listening this intelligent animal became a student of theology and would worry at a sermon as he would worry at a bone. But he was

not very obedient. If he disagreed with a doctrine he would give out a warning growl. Then if more acceptable words were not used he would begin to bark, softly at first, then if that failed, long and hard. To our amusement this would continue until the poor preacher, red with rage, would fling open the pulpit door and cast the protesting dog out; then he would return, take a long drink of water and continue."

On being a Leader and being Led

Browsing through some of my late mother's diaries, I came across a quotation by that ubiquitous writer 'Anon' on leadership which she'd copied into the back of her 1993 diary. It seemed worth repeating...

A leader has many needs. One of them is to feel that people are alongside him (or her), not just trailing behind. The followers too have needs. One of them is to feel that a leader is going somewhere and that they have a share in charting the way, not just trailing behind.

Gerald Barton

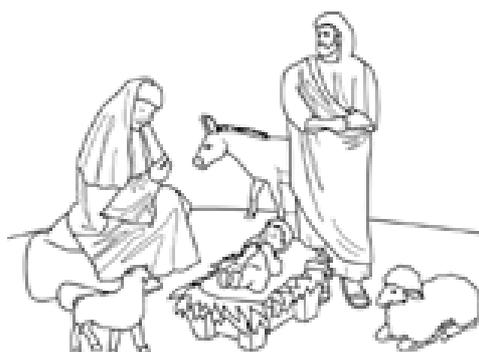
A Prayer for Christmas

He was cradled in a manger,
Saddled to a strange land.
Stranger He was to His kinfolks,
Strangers He brought into His Kingdom.
In humility He left His deity to save humanity.
His throne He descended
To bear thorns and cross for you and I.
A servant of all He became.
Prodigals and paupers
He made princes and priests.
I can never stop wondering
How He turns wanderers into wonderers
And makes apostates apostles.
He's still in the trade of making something beautiful of any life;
A vessel of honour out of dirty clay!
Please don't keep on being estranged,
Come to the Potter your Maker.

Seunlá Oyekola

Christmas Services around the Circuit

Acton Hill	24 th Dec	6.00pm	Children's Candlelight Service (Hinton)
		11.45pm	Midnight Communion (Hinton)
	25 th Dec	10.30am	Christmas Morning Worship (Hinton)
	31 st Dec	11.30pm	Watchnight Service (Hinton)
<i>This is a Circuit Service to which all are invited</i>			
Ealing Green	24 th Dec	5.00pm	Family Service (Smith)
	25 th Dec	10.00am	Christmas Morning Worship (Smith)
Greenford	24 th Dec	4.00pm	Carols around the Christmas Tree (Bennett)
		11.15pm	Midnight Communion (Bennett)
	25 th Dec	10.00am	United service at Northolt (Bennett)
Hanwell	24 th Dec	11.30pm	Midnight Communion (Youngson)
	25 th Dec	10.30am	Christmas Morning Worship (Youngson)
Kingsdown	24 th Dec	11.15pm	Midnight Service (Dunlop)
	25 th Dec	11.15am	Christmas Family Worship (Dunlop)
King's Hall	25 th Dec	09.30am	Christmas Morning Worship (Youngson)
		12.00pm	Christmas Worship (Youngson)
	31 st Dec	2.00pm	New Year's Day Worship (Zindani)
Northolt	24 th Dec	4.00pm	United service at Greenford
		11.15pm	United service at Greenford
	25 th Dec	10.00am	Christmas Morning Family Service (Bennett)
Perivale	24 th Dec	4.00pm	United service at Greenford
		11.15pm	United service at Greenford
	25 th Dec	10.00am	United service at Northolt
Pitshanger	25 th Dec	09.30am	Christmas Morning Worship (Dunlop)



Circuit Directory Update

Local Preachers: **Joy Barrow** has moved from the Circuit and is no longer a Local Preacher with the Ealing Trinity Circuit

Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

[as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

December

See inside back cover for details of Christmas services around the Circuit

31st Fri 11.30pm **Circuit Watchnight Service** at Acton Hill

January

15th Sat 10.00am **Kingsdown Book Fair**
12.30pm *in aid of JMA and Network - Admission 40p*

February

Articles for '**In-touch**' **Issue No 55 (March - May)** should be sent by e-mail headed '**In-touch**' to the Editor, **Gerald Barton**, or as hard copy or on disk to the Circuit Office (labelled disks will be returned).

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Deadline for next issue: January 28th