

ONE MISSION MATTERS

Spring 2017 • No 47

BIOGAS:

energy from pigs

SARK:

a dream becomes reality

ALDERSGATE:

a 'feast of faith'

ART,
holiness
and
justice

The **Methodist** Church
Living generously



Sisters and brothers in Christ

In *Surprised by Joy*, C S Lewis said that as a young man, his intellect and his imagination lived “in sharpest contrast ... Nearly all that I loved I believed to be imaginary; nearly all that I believed to be real I thought grim and meaningless”. Later in life, Lewis came to understand that imagination lies at the very heart of the Christian faith and our search for truth and meaning. We are called, as disciples, to be imaginative – but that does not mean that the path we follow is ‘imaginary’.

Imagination – part of which is the ability to tell stories and paint pictures to help us understand those things that lie beyond our everyday experience – is vital as we seek to understand more about God and more about one another. It is vital, too, as we look to find creative and resourceful ways of serving God and our sisters and brothers across the world. With imagination, our shared calling to love God and to love our neighbour can find any number of expressions – from the creative use of pigpens (see Steve Pearce’s article on the Amity Foundation’s biogas project on page 4) to meals on bicycle wheels (see the Revd Karen Le Mouton’s article on the fantastic new Sark Sanctuary Centre on page 10). This is an incarnational faith and we use all of God’s good gifts – don’t we?

Ephesians 3 tells us that God is at work within us and able to do far more than we could ask or imagine. It also contains a prayer that we might have the imagination to begin to understand the breadth, length, height and depth of God’s love in Christ for us, so that we might be “filled with all the fullness of God” and respond in creative and imaginative ways. That, too, is my prayer for the Methodist Church today.



The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell
Secretary of the Conference



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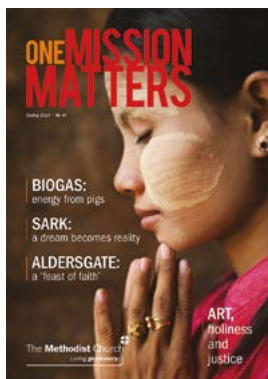
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Girl praying, Myanmar.
Cover image: © iStock/szefei

Being Good News

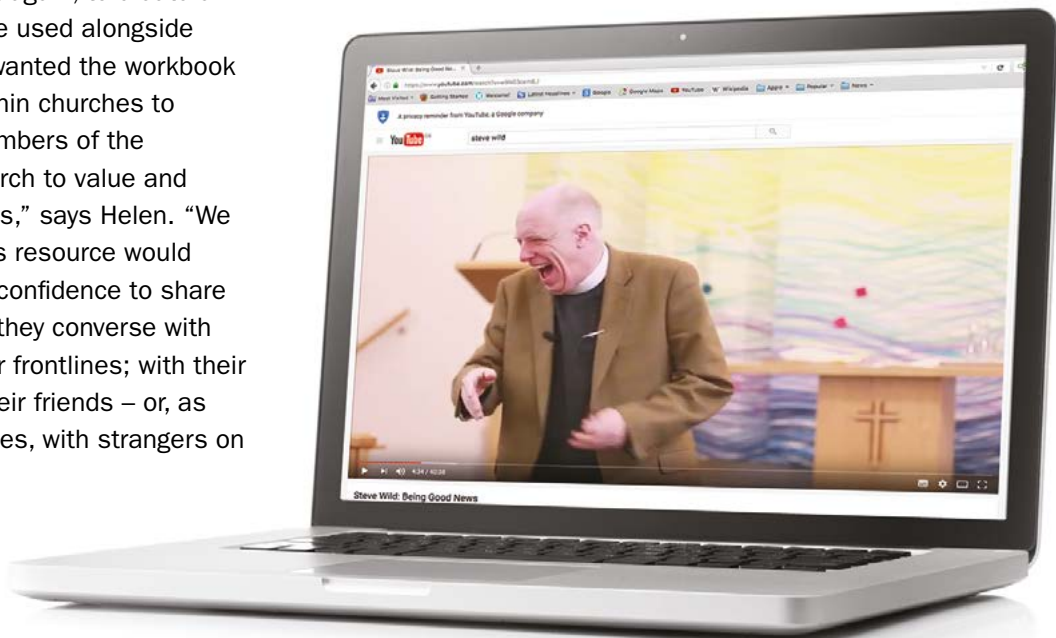
***Being Good News* came about through a conversation between Andrew Roberts (from the Bristol and West Midlands Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network team) and Helen Laird (District Mission Enabler for Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District).**

“We had both been following the Methodist President at that time, Steve Wild, on Facebook,” Helen Laird says. “We had been energised and inspired by his engaging evangelism on trains. We loved the way he introduced people to the gospel while travelling. When Steve visited the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District we wanted to harness his passion and vision, so asked if we could film one of his talks. This he willingly agreed to.”

After Steve had visited and the film had been edited, Andrew and Helen met again, to create a workbook to be used alongside the film. “We wanted the workbook to be used within churches to encourage members of the Methodist Church to value and tell their stories,” says Helen. “We hoped that this resource would give them the confidence to share the gospel as they converse with people on their frontlines; with their neighbours, their friends – or, as Steve often does, with strangers on trains!”

PRAY

Pray that ***Being Good News*** will inspire all those who watch it to become passionate about sharing their faith with their friends and neighbours.



Both the *Being Good News* film and workbook are available from the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District website at: wsmethodist.org.uk/mission-matters/

Imagination at work in rural China

The Amity Foundation seeks to improve the lives of people in rural China through many imaginative projects. STEVE PEARCE (Partnership Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific) reports on a few of them.

Amity is an independent voluntary organisation, initiated by Chinese Christians to promote education, social services, health and rural development. The Methodist Church in Britain, working through the China Forum of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), has been a partner of Amity since its earliest days.

Yongshun County is officially designated as 'poor', and minority groups make up 92 per cent of its population. The Amity Foundation has been working here for 17 years, with 8 current projects involving about 120,000 people.

Bagu is a village in Yongshun County where Amity recently set up a biogas system. Biogas is simple: dig a hole and install a digester next to the kitchen. Build a pigpen and the family toilet on top. Run a pipe to the cooker. And remember to train someone who knows how to fix it when something goes wrong! Some 250 families in Bagu now have biogas and now use about 85 per cent less firewood than they used to previously. Everyone comments on how clean it is.



Photos: Steve Pearce and © The Amity Foundation

Above: Thanks to the biogas project, pigs are now a source of energy.

Top: Trying out a biogas-powered cooker.

Left: Some of the women's efforts to rediscover their cultural dress and activities and, as a spin-off, encourage tourism.



Along with the biogas system, Amity have also helped set up a female development cooperative in Bagu. The women play a very important role in community life, and their involvement has led to a variety of benefits for the community such as more cooperation between families, a renewed interest in traditional art forms, effective learning of new skills and added benefit from existing cultivation and husbandry. The women in the cooperative here have enjoyed working together and are developing cultural activities too. In some of the villages, this sort of cultural revival has led to opportunities opened up by the rapid growth of Chinese tourism. People sell tapestries and food products at the new Laosicheng World Heritage Site and put on traditional folk dance performances at Shuangfeng Village.

GIVE

Your generous giving to the World Mission Fund enables us to support Amity's work in China. **Please continue to give, to enable many imaginative projects to thrive.**



The Karathaiga Women's Group working during fruit and tree seed germination.

Sisters are doing it...

The Karathaiga Women's group is made up of 100 women in Meru, eastern Kenya – a part of the country frequently affected by drought. The group formed when the women came together to think up ways in which they could improve their standard of living.

The group met with Martin Gikunda, who works with the Methodist Church in Kenya as Humanitarian Relief and Church Development Administrator. Martin trained them in greenhouse farming, drip irrigation and fish farming. He then linked them up with someone who constructed a tree/fruit nursery greenhouse for them; he also talked to the county government who donated another greenhouse. The women saved up and pooled their money, and then constructed a third greenhouse on a half-acre piece of land donated by one of their members. They planted tomatoes, reared fish and started germination of fruit/tree seedlings for sale to the public.

Thanks to the Karathaiga fruit seedlings nursery, all 100 women

and over 400 other people now have kitchen gardens in their homes. This has not only improved their nutrition but also their income, as they sell these vegetables and use the profits to pay their children's school fees.

GIVE

Martin Gikunda, the women's trainer, is a National in Mission Appointment (NMA); the World Mission Fund pays his salary on behalf of the Methodist Church in Kenya. **We want to continue supporting Martin and other NMAs around the world. You can help us do this by giving to the World Mission Fund.**

ART, holiness and justice

by the Revd Ric Stott, VentureFX pioneer minister, Sheffield Methodist District

Our Church is drowning in words. With the exception of the poets and storytellers who use words to open up our imaginations, words are often used to prescribe and limit the possibilities of faith.

Visual art does something different. Deepening the mystery is not an attempt to obscure what is already clearly seen, but to invite the viewer to take the risk of embarking on a journey into the unknown: a journey into the infinite wonder of God who we encounter in Jesus Christ.

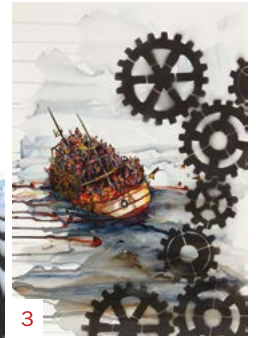
The paintings shown here were commissioned for the 2016 Methodist Conference on the theme “holiness and justice”. For me the process of painting is prayer, meditation and a non-verbal way of doing theology. My goal in creating this work was not to prescribe to the viewer my thoughts and ideas about the theme but to open up a space where people are enabled to wrestle with their own views, led and inspired by the Spirit of Christ who beckons us to engage deeply with the world. This is not always a comfortable experience, and at times art unsettles and challenges our strongly held assumptions about God and about ourselves. But such is the journey of discipleship, and in my experience the Holy Spirit uses art, creativity and imagination to lead us off the safe, well-worn path into the deeper mystery of love.



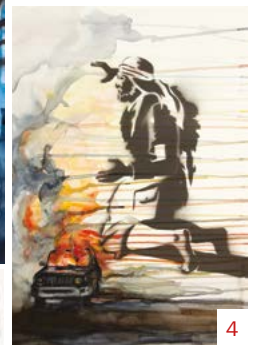
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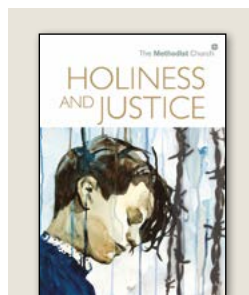
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5

HOLINESS AND JUSTICE PAINTINGS

1. Walking together
2. The deeper paths
3. Mechanisms of injustice
4. Holy Ground?
5. Called to make a difference
6. The beyond brought close, the mundane made strange
7. The gift transformed in the giving



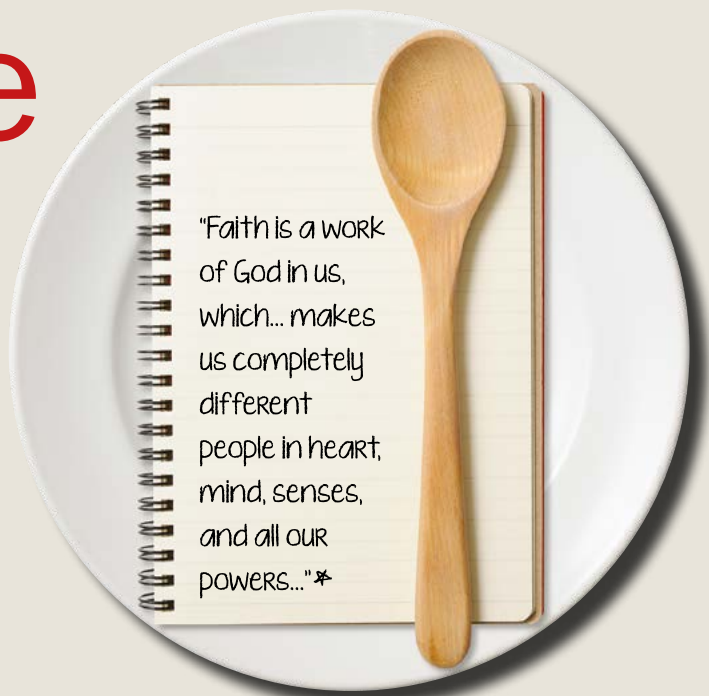
To order a copy of the *Holiness and Justice* booklet (featuring all the paintings here), go to bit.ly/holinessandjustice

PRAY

Pray for Ric – for his ministry and his artistic vision. The paintings featured here all illustrate the 2016/2017 Presidential theme, *Holiness and Justice*. For more on that, see page 12 where Vice-President Rachel Lampard talks about her time in Pakistan.

Methodist churches have traditionally marked Aldersgate Sunday on the Sunday closest to Wesley Day, 24 May. This year, it falls on 21 May. We are encouraging Methodist churches to renew the tradition of commemorating Aldersgate Sunday and celebrating being the Church of Jesus Christ. More than that, we are inviting you to host a *Feast of Faith!*

Aldersgate Sunday: a Feast of Faith



*Extract from Martin Luther's *Preface to the Letter of St Paul to the Romans* (1552)
translated by Bro Andrew Thornton © 1983 St Anselm Abbey

Relight the flame: reviving the tradition of Aldersgate Sunday

Aldersgate Sunday commemorates a moment of significant change in the life of one of the most prominent of the founders of Methodism, John Wesley. On 24 May 1738, after his challenging first years of ministry, John Wesley reluctantly attended a prayer meeting in Aldersgate in London. There, while listening to someone reading from the writings of Martin Luther introducing Paul's letter to the Romans, Wesley suddenly felt within him the reality of salvation. This began to crystallize for him the message that he wanted to share with the world and led ultimately to the formation of the Methodist Church.

John Wesley's experience of 'assurance' became the driver of his life, shaping his preaching and demonstrated in his work with poor and needy people. He preached that we should consider ourselves as stewards; all we have – mentally, physically and in material wealth – comes from God and we will be responsible before God for how we use those gifts.

"...Employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in doing good, all possible good, in every possible kind and degree to the household of faith, to all people! ... Give all ye have, as well as all ye are, a spiritual sacrifice to Him who withheld not from you his Son, his only Son..."

Extract from Wesley's Sermon 50: *The Use of Money*

Aldersgate Sunday is the perfect opportunity to ask all Methodists to reflect on the difference that a deeper awareness and experience of God's grace has made for them, to ask them to consider the value of the Church to them, and ask them to reflect on how they respond to all that God has given them, including reviewing their personal giving.

Aldersgate Sunday: a Feast of Faith

Celebrate and share your own stories with a Feast of Faith

Just as John Wesley felt his heart “strangely warmed”, we too can be refreshed and inspired by sharing our faith stories with each other. We are inviting the church family to get together on or near Aldersgate Sunday and, inspired by John Wesley and in the relaxed and joyful context of sharing food, to encourage one another to tell your own faith stories.

You could have brunch, lunch or even tapas together! Get your young people making (healthy!) food. Your celebration does not have to be in ‘Wesley week’. Maybe you have a church anniversary coming up or a member has a ‘significant’ birthday; you could get together then to praise God for all you have received personally and as a church. Take inspiration from the traditional flavours in your church family or local community, then simply share your faith stories and praise God together.

We want to hear your faith stories

Please share your *Feast of Faith* stories, reflections and photos with us; the organiser’s pack tells you how to do this. Remember to get permission from every storyteller or owner of images before you post their stories.

“Do not you know that God entrusted you with that money (all above what buys necessaries for your families) to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help the stranger, the widow, the fatherless; and, indeed, as far as it will go, to relieve the wants of all mankind? How can you, how dare you, defraud your Lord, by applying it to any other purpose? ...the more he entrusts you with, be so much the more careful to employ every mite as he hath appointed.”

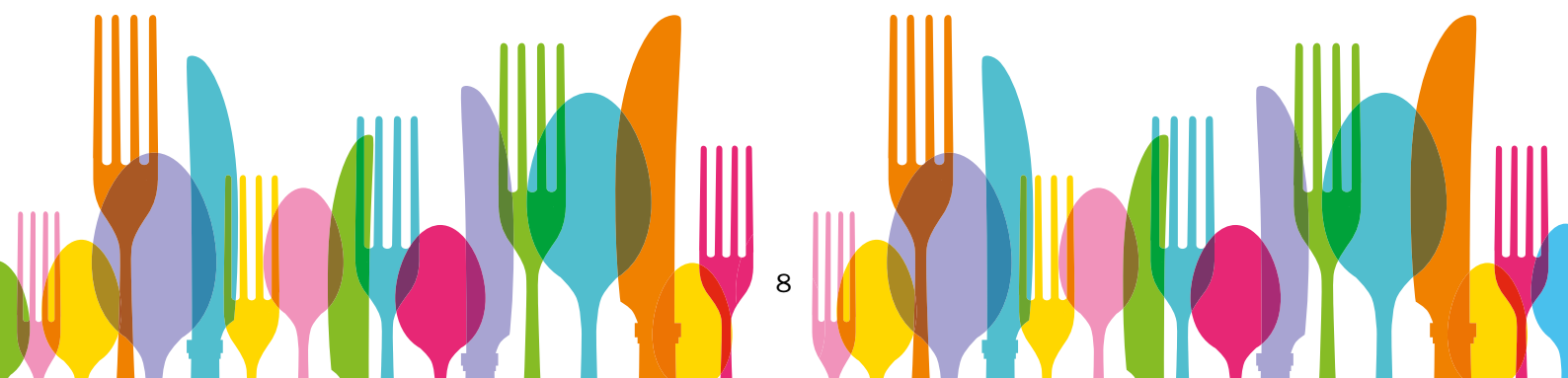
Extract from Wesley’s Sermon 126: *On the Danger of Increasing Riches*

Get the organiser’s pack

The *Feast of Faith* organiser’s pack includes:

- background on Aldersgate Sunday
- ideas for your Aldersgate Sunday feast, including conversation-starter cards to help guests share their faith stories.

To get your organiser’s pack, visit www.methodist.org.uk/feastoffaith or email fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk



Responding to God's love: ***I Give to Mission...***

We want also to encourage churches to reflect on the difference it makes to our lives to experience God's love, and how our commitment to Christ is lived out. How we use our resources should be part of our discipleship – so we want to help you explain the continuing importance of the Methodist Church's mission in Britain, and encourage you to talk boldly about the need for financial resources to continue the kind of pioneering and innovative projects we feature from across the Connexion in ***One Mission Matters***. By 2020, unless income increases, we expect there will be a gap of about £1m between the funds the Church has to make mission grants in Britain and the applications for help that we receive.

We are introducing a new fundraising resource called ***I Give to Mission...*** to encourage the Methodist people to make a regular, individual commitment to the Church's grant-making funds, in addition to what they may already give to and through the local church. We are working with Stewardship¹ to ensure giving can be easy and secure online. There is a leaflet, video and additional online information to support **#igive2mission**: www.methodist.org.uk/igive2mission

Many of us support causes close to our hearts with regular donations. Could you give as little as £5 per month to the Mission in Britain Fund? See the attached giving leaflet for more details.

¹Stewardship are an independent charitable organisation working in partnership with The Methodist Church: www.stewardship.org.uk/

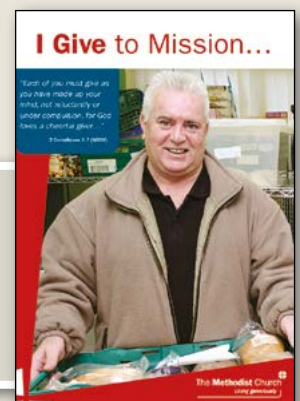
Five ways you can give...

1. **Complete the attached form** to open a Stewardship giving account and send it to Stewardship, 1 Lamb's Passage, London EC1Y 8AB.
2. Call us for more information on **0207 467 3532**.
3. Visit **www.methodist.org.uk/igive2mission**.
4. Email **fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk** for more information.
5. *Text **IGIV17 £5 to 70070**.

**(Every penny of your donation (including Gift Aid) goes to charity. You may be charged for your text message, please refer to your network operator's standard rates.)*

Order more forms from Methodist Publishing – order no: **GV101-FR-17**

You can call 0845 017 8220 or email orders@norwichbooksandmusic.co.uk





Above: The plans for Sark Methodist Chapel's expansion.
Far Left: Karen le Mouton with Persil the Sheep.
Left: The finished Sanctuary Centre.

Dreaming dreams

by the Revd Karen Le Mouton

When I had my welcome service as the lay minister on Sark early in 2011, the superintendent Revd Dr David Hinchliffe encouraged me to have the freedom to “dream dreams”. Little did I know what God had in store or how prophetic those words would become! Now six years on, not only am I in my second year as a probationer minister but the Sark Sanctuary Centre has become a reality.

Our congregation is small but imaginative, with a big heart for serving the community. We spent a long time listening attentively to the community as they imagined what was required to address their needs. This – with God’s miraculous provision – led to the development of the £650,000 Sanctuary Centre, which was completed

in February 2017 (the official opening is planned for April, to allow for those who wish to come from the UK and other islands to travel more easily). We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all the grant providers who have taken Sark to their hearts.

In partnership with the community, we are supporting the island’s vision, summarised as “to maintain and enhance the well-being and prosperity of a community that upholds the virtues embedded in the Sark way of life while striving to meet international expectations” and “a caring society that seeks to ensure its weaker members get the help and support they need”.

As the centre grew out of the ground, imaginative ideas began to pour in – including

one for us to offer a ‘meals on bicycle wheels’ service (there are no cars on Sark). In a community where there is no form of National Health Service or Social Security system, the Sanctuary Centre will be a hub of provision for the community.

GIVE

With your support, we can support other projects similar to the Sark Sanctuary Centre. You can donate to the Property Fund via www.methodist.org.uk/give

Photos: Lydia Bourne (Bourne Photography) and Sue Daly



Below: A damaged Methodist Church.



Photos: Sandra Lopez ©TMCPC



Above and Left: A Methodist school that sheltered 800 people and which has been repaired with donations from Methodists in Britain.

"We'd rather be wet than burnt"

by Sandra Lopez

How could anyone who has been involved in a disaster spare a thought for anything other than survival? I pondered these things and imagined what I might encounter as I travelled to visit the Methodist Church in Haiti (*Eglise Methodiste d'Haiti-EMH*) following Hurricane Matthew, which hit the island last October.

What I actually found when I arrived were people who had made a choice to trust in God for their futures, to thank God for the little they had left, and who were finding hope in the signs of renewed life after the devastation that had ensued. Thanks to the generosity of the Methodist Church in Britain, EMH has so far received £38,000 to support the relief effort following the hurricane. With an initial tranche of these donations, the Church was able to send four aid convoys to the devastated areas with basic food supplies and water. The Church was also able to support over 6,000 people in the weeks after the hurricane, when communities were at their most

vulnerable. Methodist churches and schools that were still standing served as shelters for communities who had lost everything; some are still being used for this purpose.

Haitian brothers and sisters shared with me how they were finding hope in seeing leaves growing back on decimated trees. They were finding hope in seeing the Methodist schools beginning to open again and seeing their children return to a semblance of normality. They were thanking God for rain rather than the baking hot sun because even though many still do not have a roof over their families' heads, they would rather get wet than burnt. They were seeing God's love in the support of

their church and finding purpose in participating in the activities of the church. Not once did I hear anyone blame God for their challenges. Not once did I hear someone say they no longer put their hope in Jesus.

THANK YOU

Thank you for enabling us to support the Methodist Church in Haiti in its response to the hurricane. **Your prayers and support will continue to help rebuild lives and communities in Haiti.**

To donate, go to bit.ly/2oJbMn6



Photos: © Steve Walker

Kiln workers making bricks.

Brick by brick

Methodist Vice-President RACHEL LAMPARD reflects on a recent visit to Pakistan.

The chimneys of the brick kilns were visible for miles around. Dotted around the outskirts of Lahore, Pakistan, they belched thick black smoke into the air. They looked bleak, a blot on the landscape. And they are home to some of the poorest people in Pakistan, many of them Christians.

The kiln workers are effectively slave or bonded labour. Families receive a few rupees for each brick produced, which are then sold on by the kiln owners for much more. They owe money or future wages to the kiln owners, and so are never able to free themselves from bondage. Child labour has in theory been banned, but with whole families living and working at the kiln, and little education provided for the children, it is hard to see how this is being enforced.

I visited Pakistan last year as Vice-President and was taken to visit some of the families living and working around the brick kilns. We saw women doing

the backbreaking, repetitive work of forming snaking lines of bricks from the wet clay, men taking the air-dried bricks to the kiln, and children growing up next to these polluting chimneys. We were shown how the bricks were stacked into the huge kiln, with fires lit between the rows. Walking on top of the kiln I could feel the intense heat beneath my feet. It was a nightmarish inferno.

Families living by the kilns develop respiratory problems and damage to their skeletons and muscles, and it is hard for people living in such poverty to get any kind of healthcare. The Church of Pakistan, supported by

the World Mission Fund, funds a team running a basic healthcare clinic near the brick kilns. The healthcare they receive at the clinic, basic though it is, makes all the difference to the families that we met that day.

THANK YOU

In 2015/2016, the World Mission Fund gave the Church of Pakistan a total of £45,000 towards five projects. **Thank you for your generous giving, which made this possible.**



Applecart: inspired by JPIT

In a great example of one imaginative work inspiring another, Applecart's latest film project was inspired by the work of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT).

"We were very impressed by JPIT's work tackling issues of poverty," says Peter Moreton, Applecart's Creative Director. "We felt we could help to highlight the issues raised in their *Enough, Truth and Lies About Poverty* and *Rethink Sanctions* reports by telling the stories about people who are struggling to make ends meet. We suggested the idea to the Methodist Connexion and the London District and were delighted when they agreed to joint-fund a series of four films."

Titled *Poverty: the Human Face*, Applecart's documentary series came together over three months, during which the team shot over forty hours of footage. Applecart used the opportunity to offer media training to young people

in east London. Participants had two training days in filmmaking, during which they learnt how to use cameras, sound recording equipment and film editing equipment. Alongside the training and filmmaking, participants were encouraged to take part in Bible study and prayer, reflecting on the experience and exploring the theological and spiritual impact of the stories.

"Applecart were amazing hosts and generous with their knowledge and experience," says Sanya Strachan, Youth Coordinator for the Newham Circuit. "A lot of the young people said this initiative made them excited to learn a new skill and build their confidence.

(continued on page 14)

Photo: Applecourt



“For me as a youth worker, it felt humbling that the Methodist Church would fund such a creative, imaginative project that encourages the participation of our young people. The subject matter was something that some of us in the Newham Circuit know all too well. For some of us, living in poverty is a reality so it was heart-warming to be a part of a project where it was important for the truth about poverty to be told – and for the voiceless to be heard.”

Applecourt are now busy editing the films, which will soon be available for download. The films will centre around four areas: 'Working Poor', 'Disability and Sanctions', 'Youth Poverty', and 'Immigration and Asylum'. “We're hoping to attract a broadcaster in the hope that the footage might reach a larger audience,” Peter Moreton says. “Over time, we'll be reflecting on the edited material with our young adults and we'll put together some worship resources to accompany the films.”

“ We're deeply proud of *Poverty: the Human Face* and believe it will prove a thought-provoking and transformative resource for churches, individuals and voluntary organisations across the UK. ”

Top right: Peter Moreton (left) with one of the trainee filmmakers. Scenes from the four documentaries.



Photo: Sanvya Strachan



Photos: Applecourt





What's in a name?

The Fundraising Team warmly welcomes EDEL MEREMIKWU, our new Fundraising Officer.

Edel lives in London. She is a trustee for a mental health charity and has largely spent her career working in journalism and publishing for housing and community regeneration. Her name is pronounced "Adele" ("Like the singer," she says) and she was named after an Irish missionary, Edel Quinn.

She enjoys reading and travelling, and has recently started running. Last year she ran her first 5K run with supporters of a mental health charity, raising more than £3,000 in the process. "I enjoy a new challenge and I have led many different lives," Edel says, "but God has always connected the dots for me and has thankfully led me here."

"*One Mission Matters* is a great resource for churches to highlight the impact of projects funded by connexional grants, to inspire others to develop equally innovative and effective mission and, of course, to encourage generous giving to continue the work. I want to enable churches to share their stories and encourage and inform the rest of the Connexion."

Living generously

We are delighted to welcome Edel to the Fundraising Team to help us support the Methodist Church to live generously.

Imagine our joy early this year when we realised that we had raised more than £60,000 for Haiti through the generosity of our Methodist supporters. Your prayers, financial support and action provide hope and encouragement right across the Connexion. In the next issue of *One Mission Matters*, we will be sharing more stories about your generous giving and its impact on the Church's work.

Please help us in telling stories that will inspire giving to the connexional funds as well as demonstrating how we each live out our lives as disciples of Christ. If you are a mission advocate, church or circuit treasurer or a champion for storytelling in your church, circuit or district, please email us at fundraising@methodist.org.uk or call Edel on 020 7467 3532.



Learn, pray and serve with the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ

RAINBOW MAGAZINE

- Part of a range of resources for Junior Mission for All (JMA), *Rainbow* magazine is a fun way for children and young people to engage with God's mission, both in Britain and overseas.
- Each issue of *Rainbow* is full of games, activities, news and stories from our Partner Churches around the world. *Rainbow* is free and is published twice a year; you can subscribe by emailing fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk
- See more JMA resources at: www.methodistpublishing.org.uk

