

mission matters

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We bring you
inspiring stories of
lives transformed

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from the ground

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My prayers were
answered



“Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind.”

(Romans 12:2)



We embrace change in Methodist Women in Britain (MwiB). Our butterfly logo reflects our view that change and transformation are integral to the process of creation and discipleship. We engage in initiatives that are changing lives: of child domestic workers, Dalit women and girls, those affected by dementia, those who experience oppression and violence. Through our website and resources, we encourage discipleship through prayer, Bible study and worship including the annual Easter Offering materials.

The twice-yearly meetings of the World Mission Forum enable representatives from each district of the Connexion to meet with the World Church Relationships Team, guests from our partner churches and mission partners preparing to serve or recently returned from overseas. We hear many stories describing change: women accessing training schemes to overcome discrimination, illiteracy and low self-esteem; testimonies of conversions to the Christian faith, new mission partners bearing witness to how God is preparing the way; district/world church partnerships providing opportunities for mutual learning and sharing.

Next year, the World Mission Forum will change its focus and become the One Mission Forum. We shall “think locally as well as globally” and include areas of chaplaincy, fresh expressions and other ways of engaging in mission in our local communities.

I commend this issue of *Mission Matters*, bringing us more inspiring stories of changed lives and new opportunities for transformative mission – from such diverse places as Derby, Wales, the South Caribbean, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. They tell of how ordinary members of the Methodist Church are being inspired by God to (echoing Gandhi’s words) “be the change they want to see in the world”. As you read, be prepared to be changed!

Alison Judd
World Federation Area Officer, Methodist Women in Britain

God ‘happied’ me

For the last five years, the ‘Chinese Church’ in Derby has had its own Methodist minister, the Revd Kok Kong Yap (who is partly funded via a connexional grant). The church now meets in hired space at the city’s central URC church.

The congregation regularly numbers 70+ adults and 20-30 children on a Sunday afternoon. Many were not Christians before they started coming, and at least once a year the congregation shares the joy of welcoming new converts to the faith by baptism. One such occasion was in December 2012.

Yu Chang (top right) was one of those baptized then. She had come to Britain in 2010 to study Business Management at Derby University; at that time she was not a Christian.

While here, her mother became seriously ill but her family thought it best not to tell her. By the time Yu Chang found out



Photo: © MwiB

Fourteen years ago, a retired minister began a Chinese congregation at Derby's Queen's Hall Methodist Mission. The mission has since closed, but the Chinese congregation has gone from strength to strength.



PRAY NOW 🙏

Please pray for the Chinese community and other communities in Britain as they continue on their faith journey. Donate now via www.justgiving.com/missioninbritain/donate or via the enclosed giving form. Thank you.

Chinese congregation

and returned home, her mother no longer knew her.

"I hated my family and cried a lot," Yu Chang says. "I could not talk to anyone, but my friend said to come to church. God helped me. I prayed and told God everything." She struggles to put the language of faith into English.

"God happied me," she says. "God saved me." In 2012 she became a Christian and was baptized. She remains a committed member of the congregation, now studying for a Masters degree.

Yu Chang and the congregation will soon be moving on again. The Chinese Church is considering moving to Ashbourne Road Methodist/United Reformed Church. It's situated in the heart of the student accommodation in Derby, where they hope to bring the gift of Christ's living water to more young lives.



May Kong, a friend of Yu Chang.

Photo: © Jenny Dyer

Easter Offering 2015: "The leaves of the tree..."

Deciduous trees undergo much change in their annual cycle. Both Old and New Testaments use this imagery through the Tree of Life, with its leaves "for the healing of the nations" (Ezekiel 47 and Revelation 22). The Easter Offering dedication service for 2015 brings together stories of transformation from Partner Churches in Sri Lanka, Serbia and Kenya. We hear of changes brought about through healthcare, through ethnic reconciliation and through education and are all invited to pray for change in ourselves, our own church and across the world.

To help prepare for this act of worship, accompanying materials will be available on the MWiB website during Lent, using

the tree as an image of hope and change. One week will focus on this drawing from the Solomon Islands where the familiar palm tree becomes a reminder of ways to transform society in the face of the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

The Easter Offering service is prepared by Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) for use around the Connexion. MWiB acts as the British unit of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFM&UCW) which has used the Tree of Life logo for 75 years, highlighting its work in transforming lives. More details will be available early in 2015 on: www.mwib.org.uk and www.methodistchurch.org.uk.





Photo: © Thinkstock 2014

Faith in foodbanks

Why is it that we are one of the wealthiest nations in the world, yet an increasing number of our population are reliant on foodbanks to sustain their families?

During her term as President of the Methodist Conference, Ruth Gee met and talked to people all over Britain. "From Cornwall to Shetland, from Lancashire to Lincolnshire, in urban and rural areas, I met Christians who are collecting for foodbanks, or working in foodbanks," Ruth says.

"In every area I asked the same two questions: Do you have a foodbank here? And have you seen an increased need for it? Wherever I travelled the answers to both questions was 'yes'. I wasn't hearing about small increases in

need; rather I was hearing about huge leaps in demand and foodbanks that were struggling to keep up."

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) has produced a resource, *Faith in Foodbanks*, to help churches explore issues raised by foodbanks, and to make connections between the work of these foodbanks and the life, worship and witness of local churches and fellowships. To find out more, visit: www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/faithinfoodbanks/

The Prayer Space: an Olympic legacy

During the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Greenwich Peninsula Chaplaincy provided visitors with somewhere they could go just to sit and reflect, if they so desired.

The Games are now a distant memory, but the Prayer Space remains as their legacy to the Greenwich Peninsula and beyond. Now in a new home near the Emirates Airline cable car station, the

Prayer Space is there for different faith communities to use for their spiritual needs.

There is a team of volunteers ('welcomers', as they're called) on hand to welcome visitors, as well as dedicated chaplains from various faiths to talk to. Deacon Jane Rice used to be one of those chaplains, and the Methodist Church supported her work via a Mission & Ministry grant. The Prayer Space has been instrumental in helping strengthen inter faith links in the area.

The current outbreak in West Africa is the worst Ebola outbreak since the Ebola virus was first discovered in 1976, with more cases and deaths than in all the previous outbreaks combined.

The Methodist Church in Sierra Leone (MCSL) has been at the forefront of the fight against Ebola. The World Mission Fund has offered MCSL support as it goes about feeding people and educating them in how to avoid becoming infected.

Ebola: Key facts



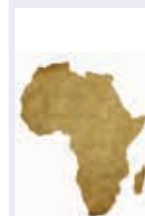
Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans.



The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission.



The average EVD case fatality rate is around 50%. Case fatality rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks



The first EVD outbreaks occurred in remote villages in Central Africa, near tropical rainforests, but the most recent outbreak in West Africa has involved major urban as well as rural areas.

(Source: World Health Organisation)

Photos: © Thinkstock 2014

PRAY NOW

Please pray for God's intervention in this global crisis, so that families and communities hurting at this time may receive healing.

EBOLA: An update from the ground



MCSL distributed 400 bags of rice to the Ebola epicentre in south-eastern Sierra Leone. Kailahun, where Sierra Leone shares its borders with Liberia and Guinea, has recorded the highest death and infection rate. In this picture, rice is being delivered to one of the locations sponsored by MCSL.



Bishop Albert Beah (in the brown hat) presents a cheque of 15 million Leones (approximately £2,000) to Manfred Vandy, MCSL's Lay President, on behalf of the Nixon Hospital. The hospital is just seven miles from Daru - a town in which a lot of MCSL's work is concentrated, and where some of the earliest cases in this current outbreak were reported.



Manfred Vandy receives donated food items on behalf of residents of one of the quarantined areas.



Manfred Vandy, MCSL's Lay President, gives some words of advice and encouragement to people who have been quarantined. Manfred (who is also Head Teacher at MCSL's primary school in Segbwema, Kailahun District) lives in one of the quarantined areas himself. The number of reported Ebola cases within the quarantine areas in Sierra Leone is stabilising; however, people are hungry and scared of going to hospital out of fear of testing positive for Ebola. "Trust in the Lord," Manfred says. "He alone will save Sierra Leone."



Bishop Beah gives a few words of encouragement to some quarantined people in Kenema.



Photo: © Thinkstock 2014

Top of the class!

Andy Dye is now in his fourth year serving as a mission partner in Grenada. One of the activities that Andy regularly helps with is a homework club based at Bethel Church, St Georges, Grenada.

ACT NOW

Around the world, the World Mission Fund responds to the needs of communities in extraordinary ways. To be a part of this, visit: www.justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/donate or donate via the enclosed giving form. Thank you.



Photo: © Andy Dye

Above: Shivani at her graduation

Two retired church members, Rhetta and Inez, started the club in 2009, in response to the news that Grenada's secondary schools had scored some of the worst exam results in Maths and English in the Caribbean that year. Rhetta and Inez felt they had to do something, so they prayed about it and then began the homework club. It runs for a couple of hours after school each day for students living locally.

'Shivani's graduation was a proud moment for Rhetta, Inez and me after many years of working with her.'

"When they began it was just themselves and a few students," Andy says. "Now others – some with backgrounds in teaching, some without – have come on board to help, and as many as 20 students can come along in an afternoon. They have even received interest from other organisations who have donated textbooks and a couple of laptop computers. There are plans to provide

snacks in the afternoon to keep the students' energy up and to further build links with the parents to encourage them in their sons' and daughters' education. It is not a huge, costly project, but it is effective in what it's doing and it is good to be a part of it. I think Rhetta and Inez give a great example of seeing a need, praying and doing something practical to help."

One of the project's recent success stories is Shivani, who has been a member of the homework project since she was in the first form in secondary school. Shivani recently graduated at the top of her class. "Her graduation was a proud moment for Rhetta, Inez and me after many years of working with her," says Andy. "She will be one of the first in her family to go so far in her education."

Shivani is now attending the TA Marryshow College (equivalent to a sixth form college) in St Georges, where she is studying Business Management, Accountancy and Sociology. In the future, she hopes to study for a degree and then go into business.

The Vice-President in Zambia

Gill Dascombe, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, tells us about her visit to Zambia this summer



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Thanks to your generous support of the World Mission Fund we can respond to the needs of communities such as this. Go to: www.justgiving.com/mcfworldmission/donate and be a part of this today.

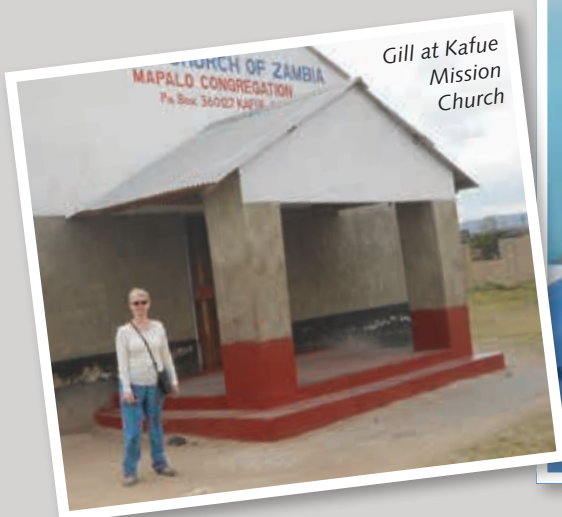
This is the health centre's delivery suite. The grey box to the right of the bed is an oxygen concentrator. It was broken and the staff did not have the funds either to repair or replace it. This seriously compromises the care they can give to weak or pre-term babies.

In July, the World Church Relationships team arranged for me to visit Zambia. Our first visit was to the mission at Kafue, a small village situated about 40km south of Lusaka. Originally a Primitive Methodist foundation, the mission was established in 1919 and comprises a church, a secondary school for boys and a health centre.

This was my first opportunity. The health centre provides care for people suffering from Zambia's main killer diseases – HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria – as well as maternity services and child healthcare. They have two in-patient wards as well as clinic areas, and also operate mobile clinics which serve the surrounding area,

up to a 30km radius. It was extremely moving to be able to meet the staff and find out more about their work and the problems they face. I was continually astonished, impressed and humbled by their dedication and the quality of care they can offer with such little resource.

As I work in the National Health Service, I had specially asked to visit hospitals and healthcare projects overseas.



Gill at Kafue Mission Church



Post natal ward

Celebrating history



All photos: © Alison Skinner

ACT NOW

Why not pop in and see for yourself the next time you are in Leicester?

In September, Bishop Street Methodist Church in Leicester opened its new Heritage Room to the public. **Alison Skinner** tells how the project came into being.

Left: Heritage room after refurbishment



Above: Colchester and boards
Below: Heritage room after refurbishment



It all began with a question from Jill Marsh, who was minister at Bishop Street from 2003 to 2014: Why not make the church vestry into a heritage room?

The vestry was an ideal space. It contained a portrait of John Wesley and an original oil painting of William Lewis, the Presbyterian who admired Wesley and who, in 1753, gave the first Methodist congregation premises in which to worship.

In 2013, we applied for a Connexional Grant and were awarded £13,850 that August. The following month, the Heritage team began clearing the room and researching the history of early Methodism in Leicester.

By the end of April 2014, two display boards were installed in the café area. Visitors could now gain an understanding of the role of Methodism in Leicester and the part played by Bishop Street Church. One important discovery (via a letter to the Methodist Recorder) was an image of our architect, the Revd William Jenkins.

As part of the City Council's *Story of Leicester*, we helped to design an external information board. The vestry was

redecorated, new track lighting installed, the remaining clutter removed and the portraits restored. It was almost complete with a much cleaner, brighter feel, and furniture inherited from the nineteenth century.

Saturday 13 September was Heritage Open Doors Day. The newly framed photographs arrived at 9.15am, and the team worked hard to hang them, along with the explanatory texts, ready for visitors arriving from 10.00am. On the day, the room contained a light box for the viewing of Victorian lantern slides which proved a popular attraction. A collection of old Missionary Society collecting boxes all provoked many memories of Sunday School days among visitors along with an old pulpit Bible presented in 1842 and old annual reports. All in all 83 people came through the door on the day.

The Chapel café attracts visitors daily. The room is sufficiently complete for visitors to enjoy but there is still much to do. Currently the room can be visited on weekdays between 10.00am and 3.00pm, or by arrangement.

"My prayers were answered"

It's nearly 10 years since the Indian Ocean tsunami struck. Many countries were affected, including Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka, with over 30,000 lives lost and 1,000,000 people left homeless



Left: Ruwani Perera (middle), with church accountant Sisirani Mendis (left) and UEM's executive secretary for Asia, the Revd Sonia Parera Hummel (right).

Ruwani Perera was 24 years old at the time of the disaster, married to an Air Force officer and with a two-year-old child. She and her family lived in a temporary wooden house in De La Salle beach in Modera, Mattakkuliya, Sri Lanka. Times were hard; the only income the young family had was the husband's monthly salary – not enough to meet their day-to-day expenses and feed their baby well.

The tsunami showed the Perera family no mercy. It destroyed their temporary house and all the furniture and utensils they had. Fortunately, they were able to escape from the beach to a safe location but they could not save any of their belongings. The family became desperate after the tsunami, as even temporary shelter became unavailable.

"Living with a two-year-old in a welfare camp was very complicated," says Ruwani. "At times I would think that it would have been better if I had died when the tsunami struck. I am a Christian and I believe in God. Every morning and evening I would pray and ask God to give us proper shelter so that my husband, my child and I could re-establish ourselves as a family.

"Then one fine day my prayers were answered. Some members of the Methodist Church came to the camp where we were temporarily residing and collected some information. We were told that the Methodist Church was making arrangements through a donor organisation in Germany to provide us with housing. When I heard this news, I immediately thanked God for answering

Left: Ruwani's new home.



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my prayers and was very happy. Within a short period the Church had built some two-storeyed houses in a safe location. My family and I were offered one of them. We now have a nice permanent house with all basic facilities."

Nikini, the Pereras' eldest daughter, is now 11. In the years following the tsunami, Ruwani and her husband have had two more children: a seven-year-old daughter called Isuru, and a four-year-old son, Thimira. The two girls are doing well in school (Thimira hasn't started school yet). "My husband is still working and now we are in a position to live a good healthy life," says Ruwani. "We are proud to say that we have a house of our own. I believe that this is a blessing from God, and we thank God very much for the assistance given by all donors."

Methodists in Britain contributed via All We Can and the World Mission Fund. Donors also included the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka and United Evangelical Mission in Germany.

Not being bored by the boards!

In 1963, on being accepted to train for the ministry, I spent three years in residence at Richmond College. One of my abiding memories of those years is of the several boards situated in the main entrance hall. On these were to be found the names of some of our antecedents at the college who had offered to serve overseas. Alongside the names were inscribed their years of service. For many this was often very brief as they died 'on station'. Not mentioned are those who travelled with them and may also have faced an early death.



These boards are now to be found in Methodist Church House, appropriately in the Richmond Room on the first floor. From 2012 I spent two years as chaplain at MCH. This provided me with ample opportunity to slip into the Richmond Room and reflect on the significance of what are powerful historical testimonies.

The German theologian and pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was much influenced by the boards while on a visit to Richmond College in the 1930s. I'm not sure whether he saw them before or after he wrote, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die", in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*. What is clear is that there is an obvious connection. Bonhoeffer himself took his own words very seriously indeed.

The description of Methodism as "a discipleship movement shaped for mission" is one we have grown used to in the recent past. It's one which many of us can warm to. The danger is that it can slip off the tongue. The familiarity might just breed contempt. The boards at MCH are a reminder, as is Bonhoeffer, that there is a cost involved in following Jesus – who, in the end, asks no more of us than he gave of himself.

Ron Smith

"All change" for fundraising

Over the last year, the Fundraising Team has made some changes in the way it presents information to you, our fellow disciples in local churches, circuits and districts across Britain. We are grateful to you for helping us disseminate information to your congregations via publications such as *Mission Matters*, *A Generous Life* and the special fundraising services held during Easter and Advent.

Mission Matters, our prime communication platform, is looking better with more engaging stories from Methodists in Britain and worldwide. With your help, donations to the connexional funds are helping us support projects that respond to community needs right across the Connexion. The response from the survey (a copy enclosed, if you have not yet sent in your feedback), has been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging.

Joan Bosomworth, one of our readers, said recently: "*Mission Matters* reminds me of the needs beyond my own church and circuit. It keeps in mind the bigger picture."

We have also updated the fundraising content on the PROPERTY CONSENTS website to make it more accessible for local churches.



Please see *How to Fund Your Project* for more information if you are:

✓	reviewing whether an idea is good enough for a project
✓	looking for funding from Methodist Church sources
✓	considering applying for external (non Methodist) funding
✓	needing assistance filling out a funding application form
✓	in need of new fundraising ideas
✓	experienced in fundraising but looking for specific advice.

We have included basic information ranging from how to run successful local fundraising activities such as coffee mornings to how to best fill in application forms requested by large donors. The updated site provides simple steps to online fundraising, budgeting and event planning. It covers local, government and trust fundraising.

When using the site you can go directly to the chapter you are interested in. The site also includes downloadable templates of basic budgets and a table of donors which allow you to search for donors according to the funded area. If your church is looking to fund youth work, for example, the table allows you to filter all donors that might be willing to support that work. We strongly encourage you to visit our consents website, where you will find many answers to your questions about applying for external funding.

Please continue to pray for our fundraising efforts in this connexional year and beyond. Thank you.

ACT NOW ✓

If you have a story to share with the wider Connexion, or if you need advice and guidance on fundraising, please contact the Fundraising Officer on 020 7467 3532 or via email at fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk.

“Buy one, get other five free”



My first Christmas in Britain

“I went to a local shopping centre to buy something, and I saw all these people singing carols. I recognised some of them as ministers. When they finished singing, I went up to the leader of the group and said, ‘I’m new in this country; can I say something?’ He said ‘Yes, you’re welcome.’ I started to cry and I told him that this was a very new and good experience for me, because in my country we cannot express our faith in this way. It felt emotional that I can now express my faith publicly like this. I then sang a carol for them in my language. You could say this was the start of our ministry here.”

ACT NOW

The Mission in Britain Fund supports the work of mission and ministry projects like these across the UK. Donate now at: www.justgiving.com/missioninbritain/donate or via the enclosed giving form. Thank you.

“When you leave home to start a new job somewhere else, or for some other change in your life that is a planned thing, you know where you’re going and have some idea of what to expect. When we left, it was in different circumstances. We left because we had to.”

December 2005 wasn’t the happiest of Advent seasons for Raheela John. She and her husband Irfan had just arrived in Britain, having been forced to flee their home in Pakistan as a result of persecution.

“There was so much fear,” Raheela recalls. “We’d never been to any foreign country before, and we had four children with us. We weren’t sure where we were going, what kind of people we would meet, or even if we would be welcome.

“On the plane, we cried all the time. But we have a routine as a family; whenever we start something new, we do so with a prayer. Irfan said, ‘I’m a church minister. We’re going to a new place. I don’t know what’s ahead, but I don’t want to do any other job than ministry work.’ I told him

that while we were praying, I had a sense that God was taking us to Britain for a purpose.”

Raheela and Irfan were granted asylum in the UK in May 2006. “The process of waiting to hear whether we were to be granted asylum was very difficult,” says Raheela. “It felt insecure and there were many fears. But we were welcomed here in this new world. The Methodist Church in particular helped strengthen our faith. The Church helped us, with great love, to overcome all our worries and fears. When you’re part of a Church, you have a family behind you. And with being part of a Church, there is always hope. And where there is hope, you learn that in patience and in waiting, it becomes easier.”

Raheela is a nurse by profession, but has chosen instead to support Irfan in his ministry work. She has completed a degree in Theology. Irfan is the Synod Enabler with Culturally Diverse Congregations in Wales, a role that involves working with asylum seekers and refugees from different faiths.

“Back home, I helped Irfan in church,” she explains. “I started a women’s ministry and Sunday School. In Pakistan it’s a cultural thing that the minister’s wife accompanies him on house visits, so we visited people together. “Over here, we do ministry in a different way. But wherever I am needed – especially having gone through all sorts of experiences – I can help make people feel comfortable when they are in difficult situations. My home and kitchen are open to anyone at any time. We give people love and moral support, as we received – and still receive constantly. And you don’t just get Irfan and me; you get the whole family. In Wales where we live, people who know us call us ‘Buy one, get other five free!’”

"I use the book constantly and continue to be inspired and supported by the wonderful prayers."

Margaret Fancy, church member,
North Lancashire Circuit

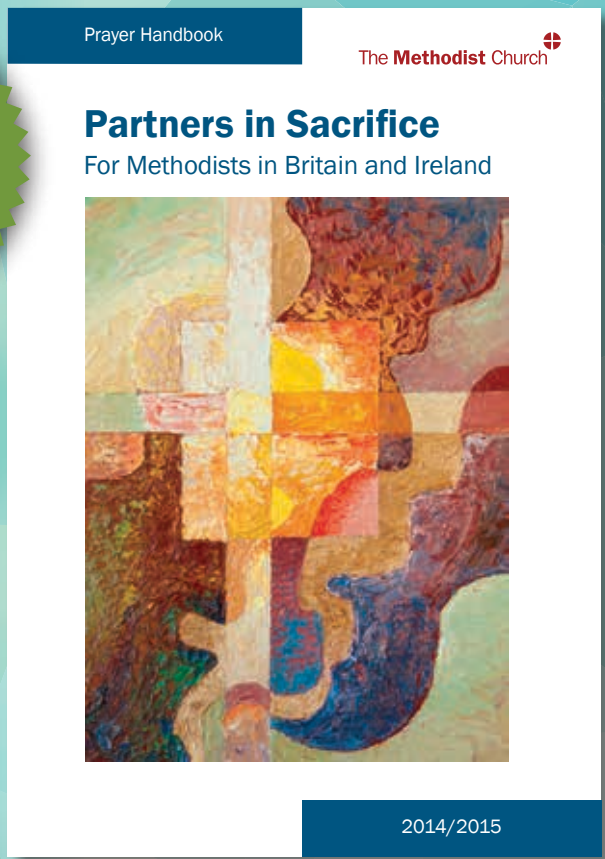
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The Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, General Secretary of
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