

ONE MISSION MATTERS



Summer 2015 • No 42

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Partners in mission

The **Methodist Church** 



Dear friends

Thank you for responding to God’s grace with gratitude, both as individuals and as local churches. Thank you for allowing the generosity of God’s love for you to prompt you to be generous in return, loving God and the people and things that God loves through your praying and your giving of time, talents and money.

As I have travelled around as President, I have been amazed and humbled at all the places where ordinary people in ordinary situations are doing extraordinary things. In the grace of God they are being energised by the Spirit to worship God; to serve the communities in which they are situated and others further away; and to care for the world.

The worldwide Churches that make up the body of Christ are the largest transnational and transcultural organisations in the world. As such they are agents of the kingdom for the glory of God.

Within the body of Christ, Methodism began as a holiness movement which was also a mission movement, and vice versa. At our best, we still are.

I am firmly convinced that there is One Mission, and that worship and mission are one. Mission in Britain and world mission (what we used to know as ‘home mission’ and ‘overseas mission’) are one. Evangelism and service are one. People and property are one. Although money given for specific purposes cannot and will not be used for other purposes, the funds are coordinated and together enable us to worship and serve our one Lord. So keep on receiving and giving grace upon grace!

Kenneth G. Howcroft

The Revd Ken Howcroft
President of the Methodist Conference



Cover image: Worship at ‘Light of the Nations’ Methodist Church, Nicaragua.
© Laura Cook Photography

Erratum: In the Spring 2015 issue of Mission Matters, we incorrectly captioned the headline image for the article, ‘Let’s hear it for the Granny Graduate’ on page six. It should have read: ‘Moka Jessop Togakilo with Salome Kolouniviti’.

One Mission Matters...

What's in a name? You will, no doubt, have realised that *Mission Matters* has now become *One Mission Matters*. So what difference does such a small word make?

On the shelf above my desk I have a copy of the 1813 Wesleyan Missionary Report. We tend to imagine that the work of the Society was all focused overseas, but of the report's thirty pages, just eight were dedicated to the work in the Caribbean, West Africa and mainland Europe. The other pages tell of the vitally important mission work that was taking place across Britain.

Over time the overseas work grew and began to 'own' the title of missionary work. As years passed 'mission' became, in people's minds, something that was done "over there", despite the separation of Overseas and Home Missions.

For the past decade the Methodist Church in Britain has been exploring how

it holds both the local and the global aspects of mission together as one. Britain, and the world, are very different places now than they were in 1813. Many of us live or work in hugely diverse communities here in these islands. Some see the 'world' on their doorstep every day, though many Methodist churches are in areas where this is not the case.

As churches and individuals we can affirm our commitment to God's mission being one as we strive to be:

- a world transformed by God's love;
- a confident Church motivated to share God's love;
- a people celebrating being part of a worldwide family.

It is this statement of One Mission, affirmed by the Methodist Conference, which can help each one of us live out our faith and be part of that movement of One Mission-minded people called Methodists.

One Mission Matters...



David Friswell,
Team Leader –
World Church
Relationships

What are the funds?

The **World Mission Fund** supports the following programmes, which are currently administered through World Church Relationships:

- mission partners from the UK funded to work overseas
- Scholarship and Leadership Training (SALT) grants for overseas students
- Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMA) grants
- annual grants to partner churches
- general grants for unexpected needs such as disaster relief.

We always work through our partners, asking them what their needs are and responding accordingly.

The **Mission in Britain Fund** supports a wide spectrum of mission:

- mission alongside the poor
- chaplaincy
- sharing the gospel with all ages
- ministering opportunities at Methodist Heritage sites
- using church properties to serve local communities.

The **Property Fund** supports the work in aid of or on behalf of the trustees of Methodist properties:

- encouraging sustainable use of resources and carbon footprint
- enabling the Church to be a place of welcome
- enhancing the overall experience

- enabling churches to provide for or facilitate a range of activities for all
- enabling the building to be accessible to all.

The **Methodist Church Fund** is at the core of Methodism, facilitating all areas of being a Church. The Methodist Church Fund helps:

- Discipleship & Ministries, developing people in the church to be responsive to our Christian calling
- Mission & Advocacy, through the development of church publications, online media, local Church media support and World Church relations.
- Church governance
- essential support services (finance, property support, grants support and IT).

Giving women a voice in Bangladesh

Anika* is a 43-year-old woman living in the Mohammadpur slum, just west of Dhaka. She lives in a single-room house with her sister, brother-in-law and two nephews aged ten and seven. Anika is the breadwinner for this unconventional family; her husband left her after just a few years of marriage. Anika's family are Bihari – an ethnic minority group which experiences much persecution and discrimination in Bangladesh.

Pat Jamison, a Methodist Mission Partner in Dhaka, came into Anika's life 19 months ago when she moved into the area. Anika lives 10 minutes' walk away from Pat's house, and with Pat's help, she is now able to earn a living.

Speaking to Pat during a tropical storm in April, I could tell that she has a real heart for the women of Bangladesh who are doing what they can with what little they have. "When I see helpless women, I want to make them more comfortable and secure," Pat says.

Anika's story is by no means uncommon. Marriage and divorce are too easy and happen too young. "Girls here get married young and have babies young," laments Pat. "Often their children are underweight and stunted in the womb. Most of this is due to poverty; 80% of child marriages involve

very poor families. When a daughter or son leaves, the family don't have the financial burden of feeding or educating them. As a consequence at least 75% of girls from deprived areas drop out of education." Pat regularly encounters girls of 19 who are divorced. Divorced girls are often treated like "used goods" and families don't always accept them back. Desperation often leads these girls into the hands of traffickers.

Originally from Northern Ireland, Pat arrived in Bangladesh five years ago. Initially the move was a three-year career break, but she has fallen in love with the country. "The people are amazing and the place just hooks you and draws you in," she says. For the first three years, Pat worked as a community health advisor with the nurses and development workers under the Church

of Bangladesh's Social Development Programmes (CBSDP). She is now involved in all 17 of CBSDP's projects. The majority of their work centres on facilitating groups, particularly women's groups led by a cohort of community organisers. "We try to see where is the highest risk and where is the greatest need," says Pat. The groups discuss underage marriage, preventative healthcare and water and sanitation. The focus is to give advice not handouts, she explained, and her heart is for the programmes to outlast herself and the current staff in CBSDP. "In Bangladesh, the woman is not allowed to speak out. These groups are able to help women who have been helpless and voiceless for so long."

**Name has been changed.*



Photo: © CBSDP



Photography: © CBSDP

Left: Methodist Mission Partner Pat Jamison visiting a women's group in Meherpur, on Bangladesh's western border.

Above: A community organiser delivers preventative healthcare training and advice to a women's group.

Top: A young woman who was given help and advice to start a small kitchen garden proudly shows off her harvest of pumpkins.

What 'peace' really means

Colombia has a long history of civil war, and the violence is unfortunately still ongoing. The Colombian Methodist Church is mostly made up of Afro-Colombians, rural dwellers, indigenous people and people who have been displaced through violence. All of these groups suffer significant inequality and enforced poverty.

Challenged by seeing how the war has affected children in Colombia, Juan Cardona Marin successfully applied for the SALT scheme. He is currently on the Corrymeela Community's one year volunteering programme in Northern Ireland.

Juan applied for the volunteer programme with the intention "to learn more about the peace process, and what this thing called 'peace' really means". Although only seven months into the programme, he says it has been one of

the greatest blessings he has ever had in his life. "Although it has been a big challenge, I have known myself better during these past seven months than in the past twenty-five years of my life," he says.

"Reconciliation does not start with the government; it starts with me. I want to know if Colombia is ready for peace. We need to start working with people; seeing if they understand what peace really means, and to go into churches and allow people to forgive themselves and start the process of reconciliation."

ACT NOW

Join the Joint Public Issues Team in promoting peace in your community. See www.jointpublicissues.org.uk for their latest work.

Left and below: Juan attended the last gathering of the World Mission Forum in Leeds in February. He shared his personal thoughts on peace and reconciliation and got everyone singing and dancing in a more 'Colombian' manner.



Above: The Methodist Church of Sierra Leone is supporting Ebola survivors like Lahai Kallon, his wife and his young daughter in the District of Kailahun by providing trauma counselling. Here the family proudly show off their hospital discharge certificates.

Ebola update: thank you for your support

We give thanks to God for his mercies, provisions and steadfastness throughout the Ebola crisis. The Ebola outbreak started last March and is still claiming lives today. Both Liberia and Guinea have been declared Ebola-free. Meanwhile, in Sierra Leone, no new confirmed cases have been recorded as of 24 May. The total number of people who have survived and the number of discharged cases stand at 41,013 and cumulative confirmed cases amount to 8,608 individuals. We thank God for the volunteers, committed frontline personnel, persevering communities and Ebola survivors in affected countries. And we remember the survivors, bereaved families and damaged communities in our prayers. May they continue to experience the healing and grace of God. **Thank you for your concern and support for those affected and infected by the Ebola disease.**

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Thank you for supporting our One Mission. To find out more about the work of the Methodist Church visit our new webpages: www.methodist.org.uk/supportourwork

Epworth Old Rectory gets a facelift

The Wesleys' family home has recently been transformed by the acquisition of eighteenth-century reproduction furniture and 'kitchenalia' as part of a grand reinterpretation project to create living memories in this 300-year-old rectory.

The Epworth Old Rectory is a Grade one listed building built in the Queen Anne style and, according to Gillian Crawley (manager at the rectory), "a rare survival of its type". Today's rectory, with its croft and set in gorgeous gardens, was built in 1709 to replace the family's original house which was destroyed by fire. The family continued to live here until the Revd Samuel Wesley (John Wesley's father) died in 1735. This historic site was purchased by the Methodist Church with assistance from Methodist Churches around the world in 1954. It was restored and opened to the public in 1957.

"However, it's the story that happened in the house that gives it its international significance," says Gillian. It is the story of a family, well-educated and with a belief so strong that they found themselves in one of the most deprived areas of England with political ideas completely out of kilter to their community. And it is the story of Susanna Wesley, the 'Mother of Methodism', who, through her methodical and disciplined teaching and care for her large brood of nine children, ultimately cultivated the

ideas that spawned Methodism from her two youngest sons.

As part of the Old Rectory's Welcome Home redevelopment project, the team at Epworth are hard at work, returning the house to how it looked and was run in 1716 when the Wesleys were living there. They have already unearthed the original eighteenth-century fireplace in the fore-kitchen. And now the most recent Connexional grant of £70,000 has been put to good use, enabling the team to buy in high quality reproduction furniture to recreate the space Susanna would have brought her children up in. This has so far included an eighteenth-century table for the kitchen and the bottom of a dresser. On its way are an oak table to adorn the entrance hall, a servant's stump bed for the nursery, and a bookcase to go in the Reverend Samuel's old study. "The table in the kitchen has completely transformed the space," says Gillian. In the near future she would like to see the fireplace in use, with a roaring fire in the grate. School groups could then make scones on the newly acquired (old) table and cook them

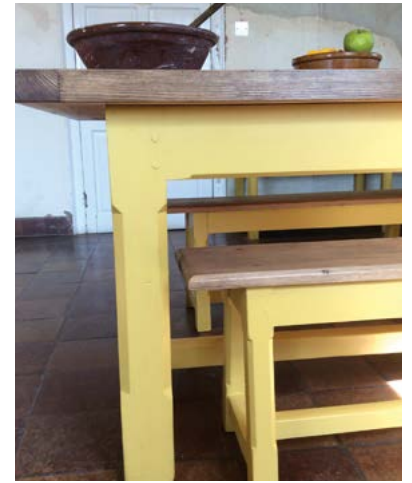


Photo: © Gillian Crawley

over the griddle on the fire, giving them a 'hands-on experience' in that kitchen.

The rectory gets half a dozen school groups visiting each year. Gillian herself has led three and loves them. In March this year, they had a school party from Crich Junior School. Mrs Wesley (one of the Epworth volunteers) made it very clear, to all the children, that the table was a recent present from the Revd Wesley and she didn't want to see any feet kicking the legs or scribbles being made on the top. "We have got a real niche in the market," says Gillian, "covering the gaps in education that schools aren't teaching these days. It's about opening their minds to history, to heritage, to Methodism."

FUNDRAISE

We are looking for champions like Gillian. Could you help us to fundraise for projects at home and abroad? See www.methodist.org.uk/supportourwork for more information.

Below:
The Epworth Old Rectory is an internationally known heritage site and a rare survival of its type.



Photo: © Tim Eccleston



Photo: © Gillian Crawley

Above: 'Home Education' in the twenty-first century – a dressed up school party from Crich Junior School makes good use of the reproduction table in Susanna's kitchen.

Top: Susanna Wesley's kitchen table, one of many recently acquired items of eighteenth-century reproduction furniture that now adorn Susanna's kitchen.

Think, Pray, Vote

When we hear the words “general election” the images that spring to mind are probably of ballot boxes, manifestos and TV debates.

We might not immediately think of Jesus’ challenge to love our neighbour. But this was the message from the Methodist Church, working with the Baptist Union, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland through the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), in the run up to the 2015 General Election.

Rachel Lampard, JPIT’s team leader, explained: “Politicians often tell us that if we vote for them we will be better off. But if we are challenged to love our neighbours as ourselves, don’t we need to ask how policies might benefit not ourselves but others?”

JPIT organised a conference, Love your neighbour: Think, Pray, Vote, as a way to stimulate debate within the Church about how we need to take politics seriously as Christians. The Archbishop of Canterbury addressed the conference; resources produced for the

election (including DVDs, Bible studies, briefings and guidance) were used by churches across the country to help people to think about the issues raised in the election; to pray together, and then to encourage people to vote.

Tim Baker, a local preacher from the Thames Valley Circuit, said: “Many people, especially of my generation, feel that politics is ‘not for them’. The Love Your Neighbour conference, and the excellent resources that accompanied it, demonstrated the importance of politics to anybody who cares about social justice. I’m grateful to all involved for inspiring me to engage more directly with the general election and with the processes of democracy over the coming months and years. They helped me to play a small part in encouraging our politicians to build a better, more equal, more loving world.”



Photo: © TMCP

Tim Baker, a local preacher from the Thames Valley Circuit and the Churches and Volunteers Officer for All We Can, encourages more political engagement from his generation.

ACT NOW

Join JPIT in promoting justice and equality in your community.
www.jointpublicissues.org.uk

One man and his football

It’s autumn in Sunderland. A bright-eyed figure makes his way to the centre of a frosty playing field, armed with a football. But the field is empty and no one is in sight. This was the experience of the gutsy James Willis, the new Eden Team leader for Southwick and Sunderland, on his first week in the job. Six months in and he has seen God’s hand in healing and salvation.

Sunderland and Southwick are in the bottom one percent of wards with the highest level of deprivation in England. The area is also home to one of the Eden Network’s newest teams. Eden (Educate, Disciple, Encourage, Nurture) was started in 1997 by the Message Trust to support churches to reach out to young people in deprived communities. The Eden team for Southwick and Sunderland (one of 30 teams around the country) was launched and commissioned by St Andrew’s

Methodist Church in January this year. They currently have a team of five volunteers supported by a partnership between St Andrew’s and Sunderland Community Church.

James arrived to head up the team last September, following his gap year with Salt and Light ministries in Middlesbrough, working just three days a week. The Connexional grant of £30,000 has allowed him to expand his ministry to work four days a week.

On his first week on the job James started his ‘detached ministry’. A football addict at heart, he took himself and a football off to the local playing fields to see if he could find anyone for a kickabout. No one was there. He persevered and found himself connected with a group of lads who have now started to play football together. James reckons he has met over 150 young

people since he started turning up in the parks in September.

“Every couple of days I get a knock on the door with a football,” he says. “It’s so simple, but so God.”

“We really have been reminded as a team that God is in control and brought us here to Southwick for a reason. But even in all the exciting opportunities we have hit some big challenges as a team, churches together and individually. But it’s been in these times that we have learned our greatest lessons and seen some incredible breakthroughs. We are on an adventure and like any adventure it’s new, eye opening and tiring! But I know I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else right now.”

PRAY

Please join us in praying for families living in impoverished communities.

How the money is used

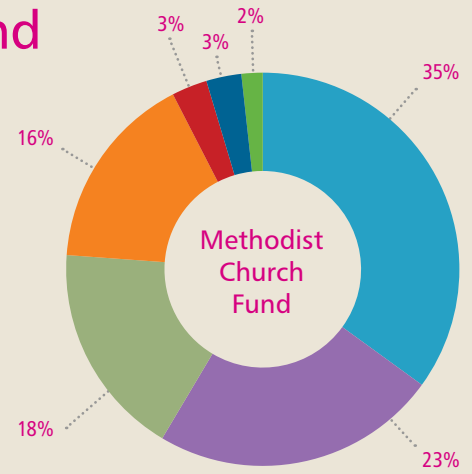
Mission – both at home and overseas – is all part of the Church’s One Mission effort. However the actual financial resourcing for mission is primarily allocated through funds specific for Mission in Britain, the Fund for Property or the World Mission Fund.

Methodist Church Fund

The Methodist Church Fund (MCF) is unrestricted and is available for use at the discretion of the trustees (the Conference) in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

It is mainly funded through the MCF assessment. The amount received from the MCF assessment for the financial year ending 31 August 2014 was £12.6m, compared to £12.3m for the previous financial year.

The proportion to be collected from within each district is agreed at the District Treasurers’ Practitioner Forum, which is held each August.



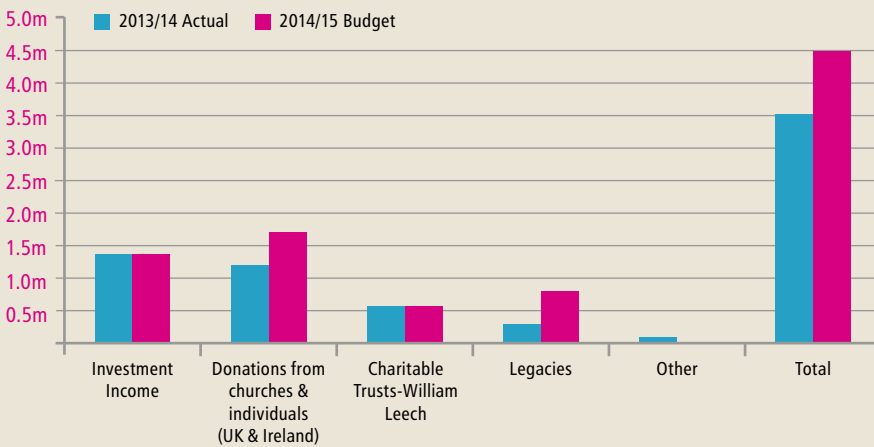
World Mission Fund

Our thanks go out to all the churches, circuits and individuals who have been so generous in their support for the World Mission Fund over the past year. In accordance with its purposes, the Fund is spent through the World Church grant programme for the benefit of our overseas partners, offering much needed support for their mission and ministry. It also enables mission partners to be sent from Britain, blessing Partner Churches with their particular skills and gifts.

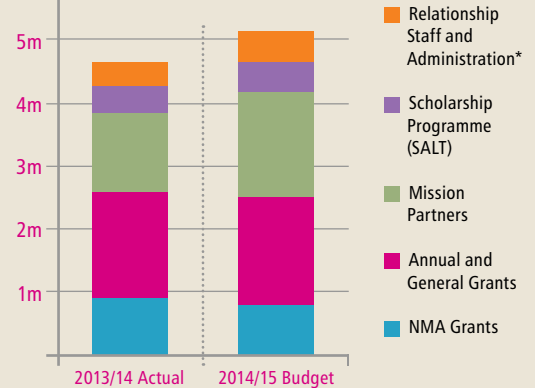
Each year, the needs of our partners around the world exceed what we are able to offer from the Fund. For some years now we have been giving away more than our income, which is reducing our historical reserves. Although manageable in the short term, this reduction of reserves needs to be balanced against the long term benefit of investment income to the fund – which accounts for around half of the income each year.

As our own economy continues to grow, we hope that donations will once again start to increase so that we can continue to help overseas partners share the love of Christ with their communities for many years to come. As you have seen from the articles in this and other issues of *Mission Matters*, your support for the World Mission Fund makes a real difference to the life and work of so many people and churches. Thank you.

Comparative Income (£million)



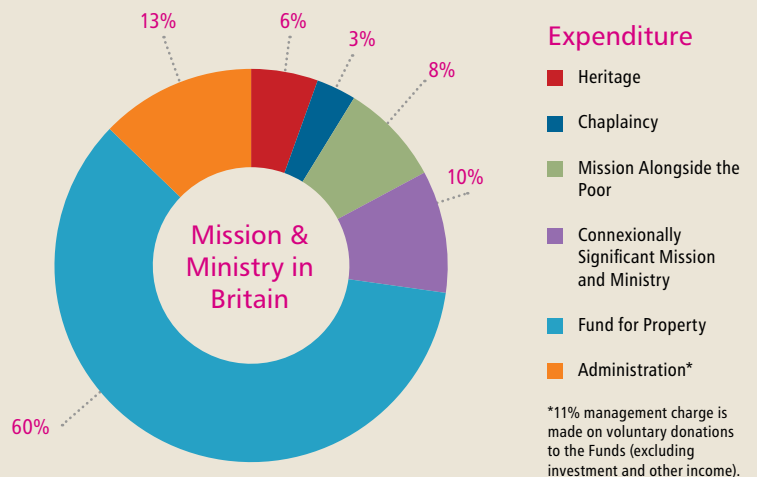
Expenditure (£million)



*The following charges are made on the voluntary donations (excluding investment and other income): 11% management charge, 7% charge to contribute to the costs of the World Church Relationships Team.

Mission & Ministry in Britain

Applications dipped during the 2013/14 connexional year, and we did not allocate the full available budget. After policy input from the Methodist Council, the Connexional Grants Committee is currently reviewing its processes and the criteria against which applications are assessed in order to ensure that the funds are targeted to where they can make most impact. The majority of grants in Britain were awarded for Mission Alongside the Poor work. This reflects the current economic situation, in which our churches have focused their mission on working with communities in need. .



*11% management charge is made on voluntary donations to the Funds (excluding investment and other income).

- Support Services
- Learning Network
- Governance
- Mission & Advocacy
- Office of the General Secretary
- Other Funds
- Discipleship & Ministries

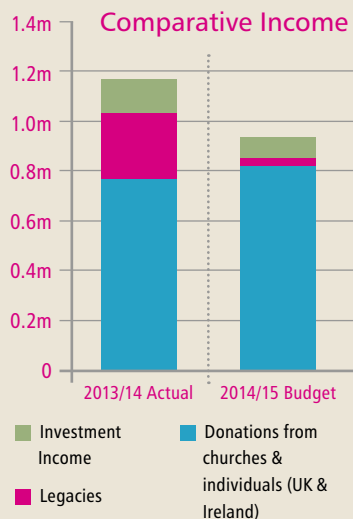
SUPPORT OUR WORK

Thank you for supporting our One Mission. To find out more about the work of the Methodist Church visit our new webpages: www.methodist.org.uk/supportourwork

Property Fund

Property grant applications exceeded the budget and funds have been awarded to projects that most closely matched the eligibility criteria.

Churches appear to have a good understanding of the availability of property grants, which might be accounted for by the process being more clearly defined.



School security in Pakistan

The right to education is a fundamental human right. Unfortunately, children in Pakistan are being deprived of this right. Between 2009 and 2012, 893 schools were attacked across Pakistan, making educational facilities the most targeted building type in the country. According to the Church of Pakistan, the majority of these attacks were carried out with the aim of destroying the educational facilities and discouraging children from getting an education.

There have been a considerable number of casualties as a result of these attacks. Over 140 students and school personnel were killed and hundreds injured when the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan was attacked last December. Following this attack, there have been heightened security alerts all over the country, and Pakistan's government closed all educational institutions (they eventually re-opened on 12 January 2015). The government of Pakistan has now given strict orders that public and private schools must meet minimum requirements for school security set by security agencies, or else face being closed for good.

Thanks to donors of the World Mission Fund, the Methodist Church in Britain recently sent a £30,000 grant to the Raiwind and Multan Dioceses of the Church of Pakistan. This money will allow them to assist 22 schools in making the required security arrangements, so that classes can resume as soon as possible.

PRAY

Dear Father. Thank you that the schools in Peshawar have been re-opened and that the children can return to school again. We thank you for the dedication of the Raiwind and Multan Dioceses of the Church of Pakistan in protecting them from harm. Lord, cover them with your protection. May there be peace and security in Pakistan again. Amen.



The new security measures that 22 schools have now received in the aftermath of the Peshawar Attack.



Photography: © Eugene Gabriel

3Generate: constantly evolving

The Methodist Church has always led the way when it comes to Church-based work with children and young people. Lynne Norman takes a look at the annual gathering of young British Methodists.

A flagship for Methodist Children & Youth, the 3Generate children's and youth assembly has evolved into an event that is genuinely shaped by children, young people and their workers. 3Generate provides a safe space for children and young people to talk about the issues that matter to them. It also offers them the chance to vote for their President and representatives. But 3Generate is much more than just a governance event; worship, teaching, outward-bound activities, entertainment and lots more feature in it every year.

The ultimate aim of 3Generate is to equip workers to enable children and young people to have their voices heard at every level of the Methodist Church and beyond. Alongside the annual event, the BiG SleepOver and BiG Session resources are published each year, to help carry on conversations in home churches. Last year, when faced with the 'problem' of tickets selling out within three days of going on sale, 3Generate TV (its very own YouTube channel) and the 3Generate BiG Weekender were introduced in a bid to widen access to

the event and help local churches to 'do' 3Generate where they were.

This year's 3Generate assembly will take place from 20-22 November at the PGL Centre in Liddington, a much bigger venue and a huge step of faith in response to the unprecedented demand for tickets last year. Running alongside 3Generate will be The Well @ 3Generate – a training event for workers (previously known as Generate+).



Young people engaging in workshops and outdoor activities at 3Generate.



3GENERATE
CHILDREN & YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2015

To find out more about the event, visit www.3generate.org.uk

"3Generate 2014 was brilliant. It was an absolute privilege to be involved in the planning and hosting of it, and was amazing to see so many children and young people having their say. 3Generate is such an important event as it allows children and young people to explore their relationship with God and reminds them that they are not alone in faith. The theme was Generous Living, and we also explored a variety of topics such as worship, respect in relationships, being a radical Christian and social media. Every year, I am so encouraged, inspired and challenged by this amazing event. I can't wait for next year's."

(Megan Thomas, Youth President)

Band for Life: a musical community in which everyone has a part to play

Every Friday afternoon, a group of men and women make their way down to Bow Road Methodist Church – home to one of Tower Hamlets Circuit’s social action projects.

Band for Life is a music group based on the belief that music brings people together, regardless of age, health, background, social situation, gender or ethnicity. The group was launched in October 2012 to provide a dynamic and inclusive musical community, open to all and particularly welcoming of those experiencing mental health problems and those who are socially isolated.

In the heart of London’s East End, Tower Hamlets is typically known for being one of the most deprived areas in the UK. The area also has a hospital admission rate for mental health problems that is 1.4 times higher than the national average.

Against this stark backdrop, Band for Life is bringing about transformation and healing. Every week, a collection of up to twenty people meet to play and share music together as a band, playing a variety of styles from 1930s hits to Rock n Roll. The attendees range from high-functioning individuals to people who have life-limiting mental health problems

and/or are socially isolated. “But all of them are here because they love music,” says Sarah Wilson, Band for Life’s project leader.

Sarah is a trained clarinettist and pianist, and a qualified music therapist. She strongly believes in the value of music in breaking down barriers for people suffering from mental illness. “It can be such a transforming experience,” she says.

Several of Band for Life’s core members used to be socially isolated, staying indoors all the time. One man had to come escorted to the church by social services. The funding for this service eventually dried up. But by then, he had grown so much in courage and independence that he continued to come every Friday without support. “As he got older, he gained MORE independence – in contrast to what we might expect,” Sarah said. “He is living more, and doing more, despite the fact that 10 to 15 years ago, he was predominantly housebound.”



The group has doubled in size since it started. “They are a big support to each other,” says Sarah. “Some have started to meet together outside of the group. It’s hard to say what music means to us, but its therapeutic effects are plain.”

Here’s what one attendee said: **“I used to be a semi-professional singer, but adverse conditions on my pathway dictated that I had to abandon my professional singing career. Over the years, I went through a very dark period of depression, anxiety and feeling suicidal. The singing group at church has given me hope for the future, and a chance to carry on where I left off. The people here are fantastic and it’s like one big happy family. I feel so happy and my mood is elated.”**

Below: Band for Life members meet every Friday afternoon to meet and play music together, organised by project leader Sarah Wilson.



West End to Broadway

In January 2012, the congregations of Trent Vale and Wesley Epworth Street Methodist Churches sold their buildings and came together with the vision to build a new church and community café in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent.

At the time, the churches were looking at three potential sites, but to everyone's surprise, it was an old, derelict pub, The West End, that came up trumps. Many of the middle-aged members actually remember going there to celebrate their twenty-first birthdays. After two years of planning and fundraising and six months of building work, the West End Methodist Church Community Centre and Café opened in January 2015.

It has been "jam crammed full" every Sunday since, according to the minister, the Revd Nichola Jones. The church had to hold four separate openings in order to cater for the sheer numbers of interested people. "The kingdom of God has come on chocolate biscuits and cake," joked Nichola. At the first of the openings, 95 year old Ilona Parkes cut the ribbon, saying "I prayed to God every day I'd live to see this day". At the community opening over 900 turned

up and the church "did not know what to do" – there wasn't a room in the place that wasn't crammed but there was an "atmosphere of joy bubbling all the way through," said Nichola. The Lord Mayor even commented, "you can feel there is love here."

On the corner of the church there is a brand new community café. "It's a hugely popular venue," remarks Nichola. "The staff only has to turn the lights on and people come in. When they come in, they're stunned by the quality of the work, a testament to the builders, who knew they were building something beautiful for God."

West End Methodist Church is growing. There are only 80 seats in the church but on Easter Sunday they had to shunt the children upstairs to free up space for more people. The church is raising funds to build more cupboards, so they can run a foodbank. A Connexional

property grant of £173,000 helped make the project possible, and the church was immensely encouraged by the Connexion's confidence and generosity. The church itself raised £83,000 in three years, and numerous secular grant givers have also given grants to it.

The West End café has met many needs – providing good, affordable food, and a safe space to find new friends. One lady was asked what made her come to the café and said, "I was so lonely; I just hoped someone would talk to me – and they did! This is such a happy place to be!" Another individual shared his joy on finding the café: "I came looking for good food, but I found something better. I found Jesus!"

Top: Church volunteers outside the newly opened 'West End Methodist Church Community Centre & Café' with the Easter cross they carried round the six pottery towns in Stoke-on-Trent.



Photography: © Nichola Jones



Above: Inside the café: "If it is for God, it should be the very best!"

Left: The café staff offer a warm welcome and affordable food.

An island parish looks to the skies

Methodism first arrived on the shores of Sark in 1796. It is said that the rousing singing from 200-plus Methodists was so loud, the landowner gave the church its own strip of land. In April 1926, the Wesleyan chapel (which stands today on Rue de Sermon) was completed after being moved a mile up the road, brick by brick. Now, 89 years later, the church is still striving to be an active presence on the island, even if the singing is somewhat less raucous.

The island of Sark is a 3.5 by 1.5 mile granite plateau with 40 miles of higgledy-piggledy coastline. With no street lighting the island became the world's first 'dark skies island.' There is no National Health Service or Social Security system, and islanders can't access the mainstream services on the neighbouring islands of Guernsey or Jersey without paying as private clients. There is no mains water supply and residents use boreholes and soakaways. Karen Le Mouton, lay preacher for Sark Methodist Chapel, remarked that whilst tourists may find the island "like stepping back in time", for the hard grafters living here, life can be tough.

Karen is a Jersey girl by origin and was employed as a lay pastor for Sark due to the difficulties in getting a minister over from Guernsey on Sundays. Her bid for candidacy became the focus of two series of An Island Parish. She is currently doing her second year's training and in September will be the new

minister, stationed for three years.

Karen is now turning her attention to the renovation of the little Methodist Chapel, which recently received a Property grant of £200,000. Whilst modest in scale, the proposed extension is expected to have a massive effect on local community mission, providing a dedicated safe space for the young people of the island, and respite facilities for the island's health visitor and local carers.

The church is over half way to their fundraising target of £770,000. Since Sark is not part of the UK, the church is not eligible for certain grant funding. There is also a high cost in getting building materials from the mainland shipped over via Guernsey and materials have to be decanted into smaller containers to fit into Sark's little harbour. However, the Sanctuary Centre has the potential to provide 18 months' worth of work for residents and help to boost the economy. "If I had the chance to name it I would have called it the Hope Centre," remarked Karen. "There is so much potential for this new build. The health visitor, who currently comes once a month, would have a safe space to run her clinics. And at the moment, there's nowhere for young people on the island to meet together that doesn't have alcohol."

After hearing about the church's funding application, a group of 11, 12 and 14-year-olds wrote Karen a letter.



Photography: © Sue Daly

It said: "We really want this to happen ... somewhere to spend time with friends where we aren't cold or wet, or an annoyance to other people. We could help to run it and even fundraise for new things which could be used and kept there. Giving us this sense of responsibility makes it even more important to us."

GIVE

With your support, we can champion projects like the mission-minded development at Sark Methodist Church. You can donate to our Mission in Britain via www.methodist.org.uk/give or via the enclosed giving form.

Top: Karen Le Mouton with Persil (the famous sheep from 'An Island Parish').

Below: The chapel as it is today, where the original parishioners moved it, brick by brick, almost a mile away from the original site.



Above: The Sark Methodist Chapel's proposed plans for expansion are to include a new Sanctuary Centre, offering a safe space for young people and respite facilities for the island's health visitor and carers.



Methodist Pioneers

There was a time when mission was something we 'did' to people in other countries. Things have changed and we now recognise that we are all called to be part of God's mission whether that happens to be in the UK or abroad.

Contemporary Britain is a vibrant, multifaceted and multicultural society and the challenge to share the good news of Jesus effectively today is an exciting one – especially in light of the fact that the majority of people have no experience of the Christian faith or the Church.

Alongside the many existing ways in which churches are doing this, pioneer ministry and fresh expressions of church have become one means of addressing this culture-gap. Pioneering begins in the community where people are, and seeks to help people to encounter and be transformed by God's love in Christ there. As people become Christian disciples, pioneers help to bring to birth new and appropriate forms of church. The point is not to 'get people into church' but rather to allow church to develop organically where people are.

People who are engaged with pioneers describe this approach as "refreshing and relevant to the people in a society like ours". One person describes the fresh expression with which they are involved as "an open community which acts as a well from which to drink". Others say that while traditional church is not for them, pioneers are developing forms of church which "grow organically", are at "exactly the level where we are", and are "spirituality rooted" in their communities.

Building on the experience of VentureFX, the next step is to encourage more pioneering mission throughout the Methodist Church. The setting is likely to be in places such as cafés, schools, pubs and community centres. People will be invited to explore Christian spirituality through common interests such as sport, music, social justice concerns or art. Church will begin to form among those who are journeying towards Jesus in this way. This is being supported and encouraged through the Methodist Pioneering Pathways, part of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network. The pathways will support both individual pioneers and also churches and circuits who want to establish pioneer projects.

These pathways officially begin across the Connexion from September



2015, but feedback from three pilot schemes which have been running since last September suggests that they have been well received. Pioneers say that they are genuinely thankful that the Methodist Church is recognising their work and wanting to resource and encourage them. One pioneer said, "This is just what I've been looking for."

If the Methodist Church is called "to serve the present age" by being shaped for mission, pioneering must be a key part of that mission. Methodists can be encouraged to know that through their giving to the Methodist Church Fund, pioneers are able to reach people other forms of mission may never reach.

Top: A member of the Garden-City community, Sherwood.

Below: Artists displaying their work at the 35 Chapel Walk creative arts community, Sheffield.



Above: The 'Immerse' Community, Kidsgrove.

Left: The Bridge Big Lunch is one of many community events hosted by The Beacon church in Dartford.



Meet the team!

The Fundraising Team is pleased to announce a new arrival: Steve Drury, our new Fundraising Officer.

Steve recently graduated from the University of Oxford and previously worked for Tearfund. He describes himself as “an energetic South African with a love of hockey and all things green and leafy”. Steve lives in London, where he’s attempting to start a new political party in his lounge whilst baking up a storm in the kitchen.

Steve joins team leader Hermira Nelson-Okrafor. Originally from Sierra Leone, Hermira was previously a supporter fundraising manager at the international development charity ActionAid, where she worked for over 17 years. Hermira is also a local primary school governor in London, a mother and mentor to a number of young people.

“We both have a heart to serve and support the Connexion through access and advice on funding, fundraising and encouraging generous giving towards the work of the Methodist Church – both at home and abroad,” Hermira says. “Do get in touch – even if only to say hello! We want to hear what’s going on in your church and community. We’ll listen and try our best to support you in your endeavours.”



One Mission Matters is a great opportunity for churches to highlight things going in their area that could inspire others. Hermira is delighted with the warm welcome and response the Fundraising Team has received so far from around the Connexion. “There is a lot of fantastic, inspiring work happening every day,” she says. “We want to enable churches to share their stories and encourage and inform the rest of the connexion. Your generosity through

prayers, money, time and commitment is making this work possible, so thank you. Having Steve in the team makes us really excited about future fundraising plans.”

Please get in touch with any fundraising enquiries. We’ll be delighted to help you. And remember to include Gift Aid in your local church projects and Connexional appeals. This means we can claim 25p for every £1 you give. Thank you in advance.

GET IN TOUCH!

See our new look fundraising web pages, coming to your screens this July. You and your church will have at your fingertips all the fundraising resources you need to help with your fundraising efforts for One Mission. You will see the impact of your prayers, volunteering and generous giving. Explore the new pages and tell us what you think.

Web: www.methodist.org.uk/supportourwork

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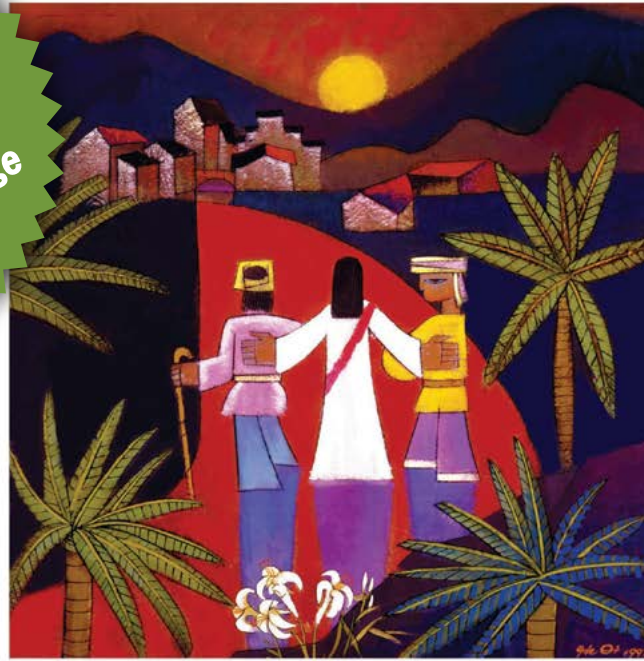
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