

mission matters

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Youthwork in Bulgaria



Flood Relief Update

Issue **27** May 2008

Changes to the Funds Liz Clutterbuck, Funds Adviser

Many readers will be aware that at the 2007 Methodist Conference it was decided to change the names of both the Fund for Home Mission and the Fund for World Mission. In the cover letter of March's *Mission Matters*, John Nutt, Mission Education Co-ordinator, explained that the Fund for Home Mission would be renamed the 'Fund for New Mission', from 1 September 2008, whilst the Fund for World Mission would probably remain unchanged.

It has since been proposed by Methodist Council that the Fund for Home Mission

will actually become 'The Mission in Britain Fund', whilst the Fund for World Mission will become 'The World Mission Fund'. This proposal will be put before the 2008 Methodist Conference, which will ratify it and decide when the change will take effect.

One of the primary reasons for changing the name of the Fund for Home Mission (FHM) is that 'Home Mission' is felt to be an outdated term and is no longer particularly relevant to the work it supports. The Home Mission Division of the Methodist Church ceased to exist in 1996 and since then the

Church has generally referred to the projects funded by FHM as 'Mission in Britain'.

The Mission in Britain Fund will have a slightly different purpose to the current FHM. It will fund new mission initiatives and projects that are of 'connexional significance' within the UK. Existing projects and those of local importance will receive grants at district level.

As of September 2008 there will be a new grant making process for applications from both Britain and overseas. In Britain this will see a greater emphasis placed on mission work and locally supported projects.

A tale from The Edge

Liz Childs' post of District Evangelism Enabler for the Lincoln & Grimsby District is partially supported by a grant from the Fund for Home Mission. Here, she describes how discovering a missional focus for a building project in the village of Keelby has grown into a fresh expression of church:



It all began when we couldn't find a design to fit disabled toilets within our existing building. Our kitchen was pretty grotty too and needed a makeover.

We asked ourselves the question – 'Why are we spending all that money and gaining nothing on the mission front?'

After a difficult and frustrating journey of planning, grant-searching and fundraising, a modern coffee shop has been created serving first class coffees and freshly baked snacks.

It has been a steep learning curve for the team of volunteers to master the workings of a coffee machine, the baking of scones and environmental health regulations, but the coffee shop is now open five mornings a week. The real work has now begun: meeting customers and becoming part of their lives.

We have a core of regulars who come in to meet friends and others who come in alone seeking company and are now our friends. We have begun monthly café

worship, experimenting with all kinds of resources, and have appointed a project worker to co-ordinate mission activities at The Edge.

Our aim is to engage with the community and reach out from the edge of the church to share the love of Jesus, who lived on the edge among those who would count themselves non-religious, with those who are not seeking him through the inherited church.

From Bulgaria to Britain

Pete and Sam Taylor were Mission Partners in Bulgaria for three years, returning to the UK last May. They are currently studying at the Queens Foundation in Birmingham.



We have been back for nearly a year now, and can't believe how much time has passed.

We were sad to leave Bulgaria but are hopeful that we will visit again, and that we can keep in touch with our many friends there. We have regular email contact, telephone conversations with friends and letters, and we regularly exchange English custard for Bulgarian herbs - goodness knows what the post office must think!

Whilst doing presentations on our furlough we encouraged house-groups, Junior Church groups and a school to remember the children in orphanages we had worked with, and to consider sending out 'goody bag parcels', filled with football stickers, pens, crayons etc. A few Methodist churches and related groups did just that; some also sent goods to an old people's home in Ruse which the Methodist Church there has contact with.

Just after Christmas we received a parcel from the boys' orphanage at St Dimitar Basabovski. They sent us Christmas cards and drawings. The director said he was especially pleased to have received greetings, postcards, stationery, toys and sweets from 'your church friends in England'. He informed us of developments in the care of boys who are too old for the orphanage. There is a successful project called 'sheltered living' where boys 18 and over live for two years as independent people with 24 hour care and are taught

skills for domestic living and budgeting; some of the lads also gaining part-time employment.

Two lay workers from Ruse Methodist Church were able to continue our mission and outreach to the orphanage after we left. They have supplied the home with second-hand computers from Switzerland and started to teach computer skills on a weekly basis.

We also keep in touch with a small Methodist church in rural Bulgaria called Hotanza, a predominately Romany village with a healthy youth group. Around two years ago we started a youth group meeting there, and it mushroomed from 6 to 40 young people. The meetings were fun and chaotic! We sang fantastic choruses, had a devotional time and games. On Good Friday last year we ran a Holy Week activity day. We really believed this was where God wanted us to be and we feel blessed to have had this time with them.

We feel passionate about the mission opportunities we encountered in Bulgaria. It is hard to be back in Britain, to be so far removed from the people, places and language that were home for three years. Our lives have changed a lot. Rose (our three year old) speaks in English now and we are both studying for the Methodist Foundation Training at Queens. We hope to be accepted for ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain when we candidate in the next couple of years.



Experiences Exchanged!

Focus On: The Experience

Interview with Habib Nader, Experience Exchange Programme Manager, USPG: Anglicans in World Mission

What is the Experience Exchange Programme?

The Experience Exchange Programme is a self-funding volunteer programme that provides the opportunity to spend six to twelve months experiencing a different culture and sharing in the life of the church overseas. It is a jointly-run programme between the Methodist Church in Britain and USPG: Anglicans for World Mission. The current partnership began in 1998, and since then over 400 EEP volunteers (affectionately referred to as 'EEPs') have been sent overseas.

Who is it for?

The Experience Exchange Programme is for anyone resident in Britain and Ireland who is over 18. There is no upper age limit; we have sent many volunteers aged over 70. No special skills are required, although a volunteer's professional skills and abilities are taken into consideration when arranging a placement.



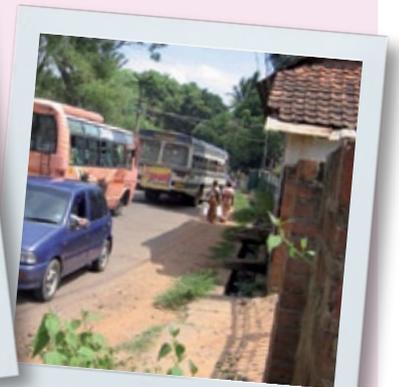
Dr Mione and Professor George Goldspink, Neyyoor, South India

In August 2007 we went to Neyyoor, close to Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu, to work with the Church of South India. George (a retired engineer) was invited to give lectures at the CSI Institute of Technology at Thovalai (a one hour white-knuckle bus ride away), while Mione's medical expertise was used to help set up a new diabetes clinic at the CSI Mission Hospital in Neyyoor. Founded in 1837, the hospital now has an international centre for the treatment of cancer, but currently lacks financial support. There is a desperate need for refurbishment, and for modern equipment.

On Sundays we worshipped at the CSI home church. Services lasted for two hours, all in Tamil, but we enjoyed singing in the choir: many English tunes, and many, long, haunting Tamil tunes and lyrics.

We were warmly welcomed by everyone we met, but few people spoke English. We saw only five other 'foreigners' in the five months we were there. We were surprised by the strict segregation of the sexes: female students and staff sit at the front of the bus, and on one side of the church. Girls and boys are never allowed to go out on 'dates' and most marriages are arranged. Young people seem to trust their parents to find suitable partners for them.

People know the Bible very well and pray for all aspects of their lives. However, there seems to be little exploration of



the application of faith in a changing world. In the same way, academic study is focused on learning the prescribed material, without understanding how to apply it to new situations. A lasting memory is one of the Tamils being a very trusting and unquestioning people.

We would recommend EEP to anyone wishing to learn about people in other countries. We learnt that it is impossible to change the world in five months, but there now is an expanding diabetes clinic at the hospital, and maybe some additions to the curriculum at Thovalai. We made a great many new friends and learnt some Tamil. We are trying to raise some funds for hospital equipment. We are glad that we went and we feel very privileged to have had the experience.



Exchange Programme

What do EEP volunteers do?

EEPs take on a wide variety of roles. The placements are negotiated independently, the aim being to enable volunteers to develop their gifts and deepen their understanding of a global world. In the past volunteers have taught in schools and vocational training centres; worked on agricultural, building and health projects; assisted with administration; and supported children and youth work; as well as take on other roles as required by the host church.

Where are the placements?

EEP placements can be anywhere in the world. The placements are arranged through Partner Churches. We have had placements in Africa, Asia, Oceania, The Caribbean, South America and Europe.

How much does it cost?

The cost varies according to each placement. EEP volunteers are self-funded

and they usually need to raise about £2,500 to cover airfares, health insurance, living expenses, and training. We do not charge fees for participation.

What impact has the Programme made on the Church in Britain and Ireland?

The EEP experience can be life changing. Many volunteers make career changes on return; many have been inspired to take on key advocacy roles on behalf of their host countries and people. One of the requirements of the programme is that EEP volunteers share their experience with the Church in Britain and Ireland, enthuse about world church issues and raise awareness. The programme provides great opportunities for church members from a wide range of backgrounds and ages to complete a challenging 'gap year' and grow in maturity.



Gareth Braidell, Belize, Central America

Last year, at the age of 18, I embarked upon a trip to Belize, a small country in Central America with a population of only 300,000 people. I was based in the former capital Belize City, working in two schools, mainly coaching football. I also helped set up an 18-30's group at Trinity Methodist Church, where I worshipped during my stay.

I was shown the most amazing generosity: the family I stayed with took no board and lodging from me; a colleague helped me fix my car for free; and there would always be some extra food at mealtimes, even if you were unexpected. I always felt that what I offered to Belize was far less than what Belize offered me.

So many memories stick in my mind, some amazingly mind-blowing, some just simple everyday things. One of the best took place in a small park around the corner from where I stayed. Each Tuesday I coached football at Trinity Primary School. Though the kids were not the best behaved in the world, I looked forward to coaching them each week. Over the last few weeks of term I ran a 5-a-side tournament at the school, which culminated in the presentation of a certificate and some sweets

to all the children for taking part. To see them so happy was amazing. It will stick with me for a long time.

For anyone considering EEP, I say just go for it! Go with an open mind and an open heart, and be willing to get thrown in the deep end a few times. But most important of all go and learn from the people you meet.

For more information on the Experience Exchange Programme, visit www.methodist.org.uk or call Jane Cullen on 020 7486 5502

Over eight months on, and many flood victims are still not back home

In the last issue of Mission Matters we featured the work of Tewkesbury Methodist Church in response to the floods of summer 2007. Here TMC's Michael Jebson gives an update on the ongoing work with flood victims.

The flooding of July 2007 was the worst summer-time flood in living memory. Thousands of people were affected. Many were evacuated from their homes and hundreds have been living in temporary accommodation, including caravans. Over 50 members of the church community had their homes and property damaged by water.

Part of the church's response has been the 'Flood Supper' meals, offered once a month in the church hall. We have had six of these meals, which have attracted between 40 and 50 people each time, many of them from outside our church community. At the meal in April, over eight months since the floods, of the 47 people present, 20

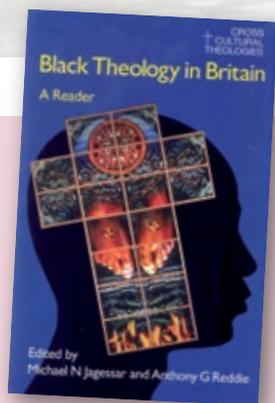
had not moved back into their homes. Nine people were still in caravans. For some there is a long way to go before the builders move out. Some do not expect to return to their refurbished homes until June or July at the earliest.

Flood victims have expressed many fears to us - a dread of heavy rain; worry about empty houses being burgled; the de-valuation of their property; lack of sleep through stress; a strain on relationships with other family members; repressed anger; frustration with builders, landlords, insurers; people struggling on their own with forms and legal matters and all the extra money they are having to spend on things not covered by insurance.

Tewkesbury Methodist Church has resolved to continue to support those still in need because of the floods for as long as we can be useful. The calamity has encouraged us to look again at the way we carry out our mission to our church community and beyond. It has brought us closer to each other and to the people of Tewkesbury.



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Black Theology in Britain: A Reader

Edited by: Michael N Jagessar and Anthony G Reddie

Review: Mike King

Publisher: Equinox Publishing Ltd, Unit 6, The Village, 101 Amies St. London SW11 2JW

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ISBN: 978-1-84553-059-4

I confess that I first picked up this book in the hope of developing my understanding of a range of theologies with roots in many different parts of the world. Clearly that was an unrealistic expectation, and I need to await further readers in this Equinox series.

However, what the authors of this groundbreaking book do extremely well is 'to concentrate their efforts on documenting the largely Black Caribbean perspective' and to chronicle the development of Black Theology through this lens. The majority of the texts have already been published in journals such as 'Black Theology in Britain' as well as extracts from books. These writings have been chosen to highlight excerpts that

encapsulate important features of a variety of themes: e.g. 'Dread and Rahtid', 'What are the Sistars saying?', 'Roots and Routes', 'Interpreting Texts'.

There is a strong Methodist flavour, with contributions from, amongst others, Claire Taylor and George Mulrain, as well as an essay on Philip Potter. I very much enjoyed the final chapter entitled 'Future Trajectories' in which the editors also offer a critical reassessment of Emmanuel Lartey's work, and a framework for future issues concerning Black Theology.

This is a lively and thought-provoking volume. I look forward to others in the series.

NEWS & EVENTS

rethinkingmission

www.rethinkingmission.org is an electronic journal focusing on mission studies. It aims to stimulate new thinking about the theology of mission, enlightened by perspectives of Christians from around the world.

Rethinking Mission is a collaborative undertaking from the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies (SOCMS), USPG: Anglicans for World Mission and The Methodist Church. It contains articles, book reviews, news items and useful web links, with new submissions often themed, such as the recent articles on 'Women in Mission'. Forthcoming themes for the June edition are 'Eucharist and Mission' and 'Reconstructing Mission' – tying in with this year's World Mission Conference of the same name.



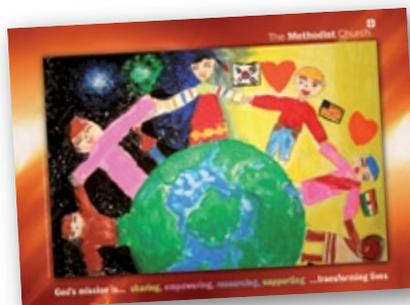
Stem the Tide

Methodist young people have challenged every Methodist church to have a month of action on climate change. MethodistChildren and MAYC, through JMA and World Action, have produced an online resource for all ages which includes material to use with children's groups, youth groups, all age worship, Bible study, sermons, etc. www.stemthetide.org.uk is full of facts, ideas, activities and evaluation tools that will help both study and action focusing on the impact of climate change on the Pacific Islands, and those who live there.



Fund for World Mission Poster

This new resource is an A2, double-sided, colour poster with the theme 'God's mission is... Transforming Lives'. It highlights stories from eight of our NMAs and mission partners, working in all our four regions, and illustrates ways in which giving to the Fund for World Mission is transforming lives throughout our Partner Churches.



The poster is available now from mph (www.mph.org.uk or telephone 01733 325002 ref: GA336).

Comings and Goings

We welcome Steve Pearce, formerly Children's Secretary, who joins the World Church Relationships Office on secondment from MethodistChildren. Steve is replacing Chris Elliott as Area Secretary for Asia Pacific, while Chris moves into her new role as Secretary for External Relationships.



Gift Aid to stay at 28%

Liz Clutterbuck, Funds Adviser

In September's Mission Matters, we highlighted that changes to income tax in Gordon Brown's last budget would result in a decrease in income to Gift Aid. It was expected that as of April 2008 the amount charities could claim back from donations would reduce from 28% to 25%. However, we are happy to announce that the Treasury has stated that Gift Aid will remain at 28% for the next two years. Please make sure that all eligible donations to the funds are gift-aided!



Further Information

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