

## **Peter Hancock ... in conversation**

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August the Rev Peter Hancock was welcomed as the new Chair of the Northampton District. Peter introduces himself as he chats with Paul Taylor.

**Hi Peter. Welcome to the Northampton District. You have just moved down from Huddersfield ... how are you settling in?**

Pretty well, so far, thanks. Nearly all the boxes are unpacked now and we're at the stage where we can go out for a walk and find our way home! Preaching at twelve welcome services has provided a lightning introduction to various parts of the District. The sat. nav. has proved invaluable.

**It was great to see so many people at your Welcome Service in Milton Keynes. Rev Peter Whittaker preached about our role as 'encouragers' ... how important do you think this role is for a Chair of District.**

I think one of the most important things we can all do is to encourage each other. Encouraging others has always been part of my ministry and I certainly see it as important in my new role. I have benefitted from the encouragement of District Chairs in the past and I hope others will benefit from my encouragement in the future.

**Your journey, as a minister, has taken you around the country ... where have you been stationed.**

For my last year as a student at Queen's College, Birmingham, I was seconded to the Old Hill Circuit in the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District. I was then stationed as a probationer in the inner-city section of the Bristol (Kingswood) Circuit. After five years there, we moved to the Hinckley Circuit in what was then the Oxford and Leicester District. We spent sixteen years there before moving to the

Huddersfield (Pennine) Circuit in the West Yorkshire District, where we spent the last seven years.

**When you say "we" – who is included in that?**

My wife, Jane, and our three daughters, Kerry, Joanne and Carly, who were all born in Bristol. During our time in Huddersfield, the girls flew the nest and are now living in Colchester, Newcastle and Leeds respectively. Kerry is married to Ben and our granddaughter, Emilia Jane, was born five months ago.

**You spent a long time in the Hinckley Circuit, where you were responsible for the establishment of 'The Bridge', one of Methodism's earliest fresh expressions. What did you take from this experience?**

The strength of the Circuit system in enabling mission; the amazing levels of commitment that people will offer when inspired by a vision; the attractiveness of a natural Christian community.

**You are a member of the executive of RUN. What is RUN all about and why are you involved in this organisation?**

RUN is an organisation serving churches of over 30 denominations, mainly in the UK but also Europe. We aim to Envision, Resource and Network Christians for mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our occasional national conferences have been extremely well-received and resources produced include partnership in the first Fresh Expressions DVD and the low-level evangelistic iMatter DVD. I became involved because I was one of a number of leaders of pioneering congregations who began RUN as a self-help group. I continue to be involved because it is a way of

*continued on page 7*

# ■ ■ ■ ■ BEGINNINGS & ENDINGS ■ ■ ■ ■

## District Property Secretary

After 8 years of giving excellent service to the District, Colin Bemrose has now retired as District Property Secretary. His successor is Roy Littlecott, a Chartered Surveyor who spent his career as a local government town planning officer in Hampshire and Northamptonshire. Roy has also been a Circuit Steward and Circuit Property Secretary, so well understands the difficulties of knowing which forms to fill in, when, and to whom they should be sent!

The District Property Panel continues to meet on a regular basis and is pleased to hear of schemes at an early stage in their planning – it can save lots of problems later on.

Roy Littlecott

☎ 01604 406200

✉ [rj\\_littlecott@hotmail.com](mailto:rj_littlecott@hotmail.com)

## District Ecumenical Officer

My name is John Anderson, I am in my first appointment as a presbyter in the Rugby and Daventry Circuit, which includes shared ministry at Christchurch, Brownsover in Rugby, an Anglican/Baptist/Methodist LEP. I candidated from Christchurch, Clarendon Park, a Baptist/Methodist LEP in the Leicester Trinity circuit.

Why did I become District Ecumenical Officer? I was brought up in the Presbyterian tradition then, through no fault of my own, became a member of the URC. My faith journey since then has taken me through a variety of styles and traditions of church, bringing me to where I am now. Through it all I have been convinced that what we hold in common is more valuable than what keeps us apart, that unity does not mean uniformity, and that **not** working together is usually just plain daft!

I see my role as encouraging you to think ecumenically as a high priority not just something at the bottom end of an agenda which we might get to if there is time; to see mission and ecumenism as inextricably linked together; and to guide you through the relevant paperwork and processes when and if you decide to go down that path.

I look forward to hearing from you!

John Anderson

☎ 01455 552364

✉ [john.anderson@methodist.org.uk](mailto:john.anderson@methodist.org.uk)

## The End!

After four years, my term on the Methodist Council has come to an end. I do thank the District for having elected me to serve as its representative, it has been a real privilege.

So what does the Methodist Council do? Well, it serves the Connexion between Conferences, and takes those decisions which have to be made in order for the Church to continue functioning. It also debates those topics for which there is insufficient time at the annual Methodist Conference – its format is like a mini Conference in itself! It has been interesting to meet people from all around the country, including those from the Island Districts – Shetland, the Channel Islands, etc. Of course those well known faces from Methodist Church House become familiar and personal, rather than viewed from the pages of the Methodist Recorder, and I have argued with the best of them!!

One aspect of the work of the Methodist Council which is not mentioned very often is that of the 'sub-working groups'. I have been fortunate to have been involved with many of them, and have learnt a lot from them. It all started with the question of Bishops or not, and although it meant a lot of extra work, I obviously did not blot my copy book(!), for it led on to other aspects, including a Handbook for Presbyters and Deacons, a new course for prospective Worship Leaders, and 'our Heritage' – which has led to the formation of a Heritage Committee and the appointment of a Heritage Officer.

All that remains is for me to wish my successor, the Rev Dave Warnock the same enjoyment and satisfaction in serving the Church in this way, and our Northampton District in particular, as I have had.

Barry W Wilford.

## STATIONING BRIEFING

*launching the stationing process for Sept 2011*

If you or anyone in your circuit is seeking re-invitation or is moving appointments in September 2011 ... this is for you.

Saturday 12th June 2010

Roade Methodist Church, Northants

Superintendents, Ministers, Circuit Stewards ...  
... book the date now!

# ■ ■ ■ MISSION ■ ■ ■ MISSION ■ ■ ■ MISSION ■ ■ ■

## Back to Church Sunday

On September 27th 2009 half a million people across the UK will have invited someone special back to church with them. Next year's Back to Church Sunday will take place on 26th September 2010. This may seem a long way away, but as those churches and circuits who have done it this year can testify, there is a lot to do before a successful event!

Why not invite Tim to lead a **B2C Sunday training evening** in your church or circuit to make sure you've covered all the bases before the big day?

## mission shaped ministry course milton keynes

The aim of this course is to prepare individuals and teams for pioneer ministry in fresh expressions of church within a mixed economy church.

- it is hoped people will come as individuals and teams
- it is hoped that many will begin the course as they are preparing to embark on a fresh expression of church, but that others would come at a later or earlier stage
- it is hoped that many ministers will take part in the course alongside many lay people

### Dates

Wed 16, 23, 30 Sep, 7 Oct 2009 (evenings)  
Fri 4 – Sun 6 Dec 2009 (residential)  
Sat 6 Feb, 6 Mar 2010 (all day)  
Wed 28 Apr, 5, 12, 19 May 2010 (evenings)

### Speakers

Baptist Stuart Murray Williams  
Anglican Bishop Graham Cray  
Methodist Spirituality and Discipleship Officer,  
Jenny Ellis

### Further details

from Tim Woolley



## Mission 21

[www.mission21.info](http://www.mission21.info)

Mission 21 is a major conference to encourage and equip church planting and fresh expressions of church, bringing together leaders to consider what God is doing at this time. It is running from lunchtime on **Tuesday 17th November** until lunchtime **Thursday 19th November 2009** at The Forum, home of Bath City Church.

### The Programme includes

- workshops facilitated by experienced practitioners streamed to help you deal with your individual situation
- plenary sessions designed to inspire and challenge you
- opportunities for you to make new connections with others with similar areas of ministry and experience

**Revd Dr Martyn Atkins**, General Secretary of the Methodist Church is one of the keynote speakers.

*The Northampton District will fund the cost of the conference of £90 (not including accommodation) from its training budget for the first 5 people, lay or ordained, who want to go! Contact District Treasurer Peter Candlin ASAP!*

## Biblefresh, Sharing Faith

*Biblefresh* is a partnership of over thirty different organisations with a desire to see the Christians re-engage with the Bible. The initiative will culminate in a high-profile year-long campaign in 2011, which the Methodist Conference has endorsed and commended to the church. *Biblefresh, Sharing Faith* is a half day event developed to help the churches, circuits and Methodist Christians of our District use the Bible appropriately as a resource in sharing our faith in our world today, using a mixture of teaching, discussion, multimedia presentations, and culminating in a video Bible study on America's first family. Contact Tim for details.

# TRICHY-TANJORE

LEICESTERSHIRE LINK WITH THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA IN TRICHY-TANJORE, TAMIL NADU

This ecumenical link was first started in 2002 when Rev Alison Tomlin was heavily involved. Amongst the Methodist Church in Leicestershire we are now trying to kick-start new interest. In the sense of global concerns and the World Church, an involvement with the link offers a host of possibilities – focussed prayer support, a greater understanding of the need for Fairtrade, knowledge of specific mission work with HIV/Aids, possibility of gap year travel, a youth exchange, development of ministerial training, opportunities for a sabbatical, etc.

Christianity was first introduced to much of the Trichy- Tanjore area by Methodist missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries. Since 1947 the Church in South India has been a united one but our Indian friends still look to Methodists in Leicestershire to see who and where we are, what we are doing.

In Leicestershire we have much to learn about working ecumenically. Sharing in the Link committee, which meets about five times a year, it proves an exciting challenge to work alongside representatives from the Anglicans, URC, Baptists and Roman Catholics.

In June 2009 a group of 8 people from Trichy-Tanjore visited Leicestershire. Most had never been on an aeroplane before, let alone travelled out of India. Surrounded by Christian love they were hosted in various homes around the city and county. The opportunity was given to share in house group discussions, visit coffee mornings and flower festivals, projects for the homeless and school assemblies. Our friends were introduced to the work of Street Pastors,

Christian Aid and hospital chaplaincies. The group consisting of both lay and ordained, equally male and female, led or took part in various different church services. As I know from when visiting Trichy in 2007, it's the sort of Christian experience that is never forgotten.

Action possibilities

- ➔ To find out more about the church in Trichy-Tanjore would you like a speaker for a church meeting or to take part in a worship service (One World Week, Fairtrade Fortnight, World Missions, HIV/Aids etc)
- ➔ Do you know anyone (16 years plus at time of travel) who would be interested in visiting Trichy as part of a young people's group?
- ➔ Would you like to visit independently or as a couple. Such a visit could be combined with bird watching, sightseeing or as a pilgrimage or prayer retreat? The hospitality received is wonderful. Costs would be minimal except for air fares.
- ➔ Would you like to gain from the experience of working with Christians from other denominations in Leicestershire? In itself, this is quite an eye opener!
- ➔ Would you like to gain a greater understanding of various global and mission issues to inspire personal prayer?

For more information contact:  
Anne Speight  
☎ 01509 213137  
✉ [annep.speight@ntlworld.com](mailto:annep.speight@ntlworld.com)

## Discovering the nation's Biblical literacy

A Methodist supported biblical literacy study has made headlines around the world. The National Biblical Literacy Study 2009, which found that knowledge of the Bible is declining with fewer than one in twenty people able to name all the 10 commandments.

The project was initiated by Revd Brian D Brown, a Methodist minister in the Oxford Circuit and Revd Jonathan Kerry, Director of the Guy Chester Centre in Muswell Hill, London.

The survey brought to light the fact that 33% of the under-45s interviewed could not name anything about the Feeding of the 5,000 compared to 12% of over-45s. More positive findings showed that 75% of the interviewees owned a bible and significantly high numbers of them knew central facts about the crucifixion and resurrection stories.

Brian said: "The study happened to hit at the right time and we are extremely pleased that there has been so much interest in it. The Church needs this information and needs it now. The Methodist Church saw what we were doing as important. I am particularly grateful for the support we have received from the people in the Connexion. Everyone has been very supportive at the grassroots level."

# ■ ■ ■ ■ DISTRICT DAY CONFERENCES ■ ■ ■ ■

During the year we are offering a number of District Day Conferences for different groups within the church. These Day Conferences have three aims: to share experiences; to provide development opportunities; to worship together and say thank you.

**... for Children's & Youth Workers**  
**'Kids Want Christ'**  
 Saturday 27th February 2010

**... for Circuit Stewards**  
**'Circuit Stewards Resourcing Day'**  
 Saturday 20th March 2010

**... for Circuit Treasurers & Circuit Property Stewards**  
 Saturday 28th November 2009

**... for Lay Employees**  
 Saturday 16th January 2010

**... for Pastoral Visitors**  
 Saturday 17th July 2010

**... for Preachers**  
 Saturday 15th May 2010

**... for Worship Leaders**  
 Saturday 6th March 2010

For more details about these Day Conferences ...

... look on the District Website [www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk](http://www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk)

... contact Paul Taylor: ☎ 07779 241087 ✉ [northamptondo@btinternet.com](mailto:northamptondo@btinternet.com)

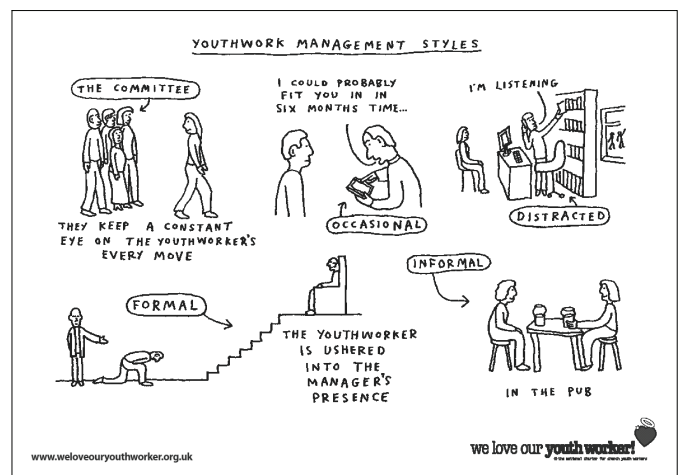


Many churches across the UK are wrestling with the challenge of connecting with young people in our society. Fewer teenagers are linked with the church community than in previous generations, yet many of the pressures they face are greater.

One response has been to employ a paid youth worker, full or part time, to focus on some of these issues. It is estimated that there are currently around 8,000 employed youth workers in UK churches, alongside the many volunteers also working with young people.

This change has brought with it a new challenge for many churches as they think about how they go about not only recruiting a youth worker, but also training and supporting them in their role.

The Charter is meant to be a helpful way for churches to think through the key issues in employing a youth worker. It contains seven declarations churches make about these issues. The seven areas come from the very real experiences of youth workers up and down the country: they reflect situations where youth workers, and the churches that employ them, can often find frustration, conflict or simply



unmet needs. Some churches may find they already meet the seven areas of the Charter, others may find that it beneficial in identifying areas needing change. We hope everyone will find it a helpful and reflective experience.

We believe that young people in the UK deserve to find a vibrant church, aware of their needs and able and willing to respond. The Charter is meant to be a significant step towards helping churches make the most of the benefit of having a paid youth worker. It is, we hope and pray, also a meaningful contribution to better serving and loving young people in the name of Christ.

[www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk](http://www.weloveouryouthworker.org.uk)

# SAFEGUARDING

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS

## The law has changed

From **12 October 2009**, new measurers are being introduced to help prevent unsuitable people undertaking **paid of volunteer** work with **children or vulnerable adults**. It's called the **Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS)** and the **Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)** has been set up to help implement the Scheme and make decisions over who should be barred from working with vulnerable people. Those decisions are legally binding. Failing to comply could result in both the employer and the employee or volunteer being prosecuted, or even going to prison.

From **26 July 2010** all new employees, those moving jobs and volunteers who want to work with children or vulnerable adults can register with the ISA. [There will be a 5 year roll out period]. The legal requirement for employees [volunteers] to register with the VBS and employers to check their status will come into force in **November 2010**. This means that from November 2010, they **must be ISA-registered**. From then on it will be illegal to employ new people who are not ISA-registered.

### Definitions ...

#### ... of a 'child'

Anyone under 18 years of age.

#### ... of a 'vulnerable adult'

Not just a disabled or older person, but any individual who needs to be able to trust the people caring for them, supporting them or providing them with an essential service, which could leave them vulnerable to abuse. An example would be anyone receiving NHS treatment, living in a care home or in sheltered accommodation.

Registration will also include employers being continuously informed of an employee's suitability to work [volunteer]. It should remove the need for the multiplicity of CRB checks once someone is ISA registered with an enhanced CRB The scheme remains free for volunteers and £64 for paid employees.

Gill and others will be delivering training around the district so that all circuits are well informed about these changes.

This registration will not be voluntary but compulsory and it will be an offence for anyone to 'employ' someone who is not registered.

These new procedures are designed to give all of us confidence that anyone working in these areas [and the numbers currently quoted are 11.3 million] will be able to demonstrate that there is no known reason why they should not be taken on. It does not of course mean that they are necessarily suitable to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults and other criteria must still be in place to ensure the safety and well being of all we are seeking to look after, care for and deliver services to.

### Am I affected?

From **July 2010**, all new employees, those moving jobs and volunteers who want to work with children or vulnerable adults can register with the ISA.

From **November 2010**, all new employees and volunteers who want to work with children or vulnerable adults **must be** ISA-registered. Until they have obtained ISA-registration (and it is each employee's responsibility to do this) they cannot legally be employed.

The application form shows this person is perfect for the job we have ...  
**but until the person is ISA-registered you can't take them on whether you pay them or they are a volunteer.**

continued from page 1

supporting and encouraging the Church in innovative forms of mission for today.

**Sharing meals will be an important part of your new role! If you could invite any four people for dinner, be they alive or dead, who would they be ... and why?**

Mikhail Gorbachev

– a courageous change-agent.

Aung San Suu Kyi

– a woman of integrity and strength.

Elvis Presley

– an unbelievable phenomenon.

Ivy South

– a member of one of my churches in Bristol who used to bring us food parcels.

**I understand you are a football fan. Who is your team and what are your hopes for the coming season?**

Stoke City – the mighty Potters! Hopes for the season – that we finish 9<sup>th</sup> in the Premiership (one has to be realistic) and that the fans are still the loudest in the League.

**Finally ... I thought I'd ask you about some more of your favourites!**

**Food** – steak and chips

**Drink** – Timothy Taylor's Landlord Bitter/ orange juice (delete as appropriate!)

**Holiday** – Ireland, especially Dublin

**Music** – Bruce Springsteen / Paul Weller / Chopin (Jane says)

**Joke** – "Doctor, doctor, I feel people are ignoring me"... "Next, please!"

**Thanks for your time.**



**The St Philip's Centre** is rooted in the multi faith context of Leicester and is a national ecumenical training centre under the Presence and Engagement initiative.

It provides training for Christians, those of other faiths and civic partners. It enables Christians and churches to be a confident presence in a multi faith world, prepared to share their own faith and learn from others. Good working relationships and dialogue with peoples of other faiths serve to promote the common good.

The Centre is being developed by the Anglican Diocese of Leicester, St Philip's Church, the Methodist, United Reformed, Roman Catholic and Baptist churches.

More details about courses offered: [www.stphilipscentre.org.uk](http://www.stphilipscentre.org.uk) ☎ 0116 273 3459

## YOUNG LEADERS OF WORSHIP COURSE

A course designed for those in their teens and twenties who are exploring leading worship; suitable for both those looking for a basic introduction to leading worship and those looking to train as Worship Leaders

Date: 16-18 July 2010

Time: Friday dinner to Sunday lunch

Venue: Crossways, Yardley Hastings, Northants

Cost: £55 (*subsidised cost from District funds*)

This course will explore: what is worship ... and why do we bother; the way we worship; some important bits ... that sometimes we miss; worship themes. Participants are also asked to undertake a 'mystery worshipper' assignment at their own church and one visited on the course.

The course will be led by Paul Taylor and Pam Lewis, both Local Preachers with a passion for involving young people in leading worship.

Your church or circuit may be able to support you with the cost ... why not ask?

More details from Paul Taylor ☎ 07779 241087 ✉ [northamptontdo@btinternet.com](mailto:northamptontdo@btinternet.com)

### What makes a healthy circuit<sup>1</sup>?

The 'task' outlined in *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* (Methodist Conference 2007) attempts to achieve two things:

- sustainable and relevant circuit structures which will serve and oversee the mission-obligations of the Church in the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- new ways for Circuits to fulfil their responsibilities and purposes in line with Standing Order 500: 'The Circuit is the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help'

If we are to take this task seriously, we need to ask ourselves what a 'healthy circuit' might look like in the 2010s? If we could answer this question we would be on the way to addressing the two aspects of the task outlined above ... and then we would be able to explore what this sort of circuit might look like.

### What might a 'healthy circuit' look like?

On the page opposite you will see a list of statements, that have been put together by the District MAWF Group, that try to describe what a 'healthy circuit' might look like in the 2010s. We are now consulting, throughout the District, as to whether this list paints a realistic picture of the role of the circuit.

We would welcome your thoughts and comments:

- do these statements paint a realistic picture of a 'healthy circuit' for today and the 2010s?
- are there any statements you would like to change ... remove ... or add?

Please send any feedback, in writing, by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010 to Paul Taylor

✉ northamptontdo@btinternet.com

📍 12 Ryeburn Way, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 3AH

Thank you.



## VOCATIONS DAY

Do you feel God is calling you to something more?  
Got that nagging feeling but don't know what to do?  
Know God wants more ... but not sure what?  
Just need some space to listen?

If your answer is **YES** then this day is for **you!**

Date: Saturday 19 June 2010  
Time: 10am to 3pm (lunch provided)  
Venue: Great Park Street Methodist Church  
Wellingborough NN8 4PH

The programme for the day will include:

- time to listen to God
- workshops exploring presbyteral ministry, diaconal ministry and lay work in the church
- a variety of people to talk to including:
  - Rev Peter Hancock (Chair of Northampton District)
  - Rev Tim Woolley (Director of Mission)
  - Paul Taylor (Director of Training & Development)
- a selection of resources to explore

## MISSION CHALLENGES?

Would your church or circuit benefit from help with its mission statement or strategy?

Would training in faith-sharing be useful?

Are there ecumenical opportunities for a Street Pastors scheme that you could explore?

Would a Sunday service or a church/circuit away day with a mission theme help to get some creative thinking started?

If the answer to any of these challenges is **YES** ... then please get in contact with Tim

## A healthy circuit<sup>1</sup> might look like this ...

A series of statements that describe a 'healthy circuit' in the 2010s.

### **Worship**

A healthy circuit is able to ...

- ... make available well trained people to preach and lead worship
- ... offer appropriate, regular training + development, both initial + ongoing, for preachers<sup>2</sup> and worship leaders
- ... make available a variety of styles + traditions of worship across the circuit, both Sunday and during the week
- ... encourage the development of fresh ways of worship, including those accessible to the wider community
- ... offer appropriate support and encouragement for the use of technology in worship, both audio and visual

### **Learning & Caring**

A healthy circuit is able to ...

- ... develop and deliver a circuit wide training programme, relevant to the needs of the circuit<sup>3</sup>
- ... encourage and resource small groups across the circuit for learning and pastoral support
- ... offer appropriate opportunities for particular groups who might be best served at circuit level<sup>4</sup>
- ... develop and resource a discipleship programme that responds to EDEV<sup>5</sup>
- ... provide an overview and support for safeguarding<sup>6</sup> across the circuit
- ... provide appropriate support and pastoral care for the Circuit Ministry Team<sup>7</sup>
- ... offer appraisal opportunities for members of the Circuit Ministry Team<sup>7</sup>, in line with connexional requirements
- ... ensure all buildings<sup>8</sup> in the circuit are fit for purpose

### **Service**

A healthy circuit is able to ...

- ... reach out and connect with the local community
- ... discover and share needs and discern 'those that need you most'<sup>9</sup>
- ... encourage the appropriate use of church buildings and the development of relationships with user groups
- ... ensure that time and resources are used in ways that are consistent with our beliefs and values

### **Evangelism**

A healthy circuit is able to ...

- ... offer appropriate faith sharing training
- ... encourage and support faith exploration courses and mission events, advocating ecumenical co-operation
- ... integrate and resource the planting of new congregations and fresh expressions of church
- ... explore the place of new congregations and fresh expressions of church within the circuit

### **Interconnexion**

A healthy circuit is able to ...

- ... support a viable, mixed Circuit Ministry Team<sup>7</sup> that makes best use of the gifts and talents of its members
- ... explore ecumenical working and opportunities where appropriate
- ... provide appropriate budgets to support the work of the circuit
- ... effectively communicate<sup>10</sup> the decisions made and opportunities offered by the circuit

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### **Notes**

1. ... in the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
2. 'preachers' includes Presbyters, preaching Deacons and Local Preachers
3. the 'needs of the circuit' might reflect the policies of the circuit as well as training and support for those holding particular roles, eg. stewards, pastoral visitors, small group leaders, children's & youth worker
4. eg. young people, under 45s; those often under represented in the local church who may benefit from meeting at circuit level
5. EDEV - extending discipleship, exploring vocation: exploring God's call; reflecting on being a follower of Christ; explore Methodism; learn more about faith (some of this involves signposting to other agencies/resources)
6. safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
7. 'Circuit Ministry Team' could include presbyters, deacons and lay people; full-time and part-time; paid and volunteers
8. including churches and manses
9. John Wesley (????)
10. 'decisions made and opportunities offered' by the circuit, local ecumenical groups, the district and connexion

# LIVING AS A DISCIPLE

EXTENDING DISCIPLESHIP ... EXPLORING VOCATION

**Living as a Disciple** is a programme of activities and events that is being developed within the District as a response to the EDEV (*Extending Discipleship ... Exploring Vocation*) initiative of the Methodist Church.

The programme has four main aims:

1. to help participants to reflect on their own story and calling to see where God has called them and is calling them now
2. to resource participants to reflect on what they already do as a follower of Christ; creating opportunities to share in the daily Christian experience of others and to reflect on this
3. to help participants explore what it means to be Methodist within an ecumenical context
4. to offer the opportunity for participants to learn more about their faith, at an appropriate level

We are beginning to put together activities and events that individuals can be a part, some offered by the District and some offered by the Guy Chester Centre.

## Reflecting on Experience

A series of six opportunities to experience and reflect on different aspects of our journey of faith, between January and July 2010. The series is launched with a meal and introduction to theological reflection, led by Rev Tim Woolley, Director of Mission.

Opportunities include:

- Reflecting of fresh expressions
- Reflecting on our history
- Reflecting in quiet
- Reflecting on other faiths
- Reflecting on the needs of others
- Reflecting academically

## District Vocations Day

Saturday 19th June 2010

Do you feel God is calling you to something more? Got that nagging feeling but don't know what to do? Know God wants more ... but not sure what? Just need some space to listen? If your answer is **YES** then this day is for **you!**

More details from Paul Taylor:

☎ northamptontdo@btinternet.com

✉ 0777 924 1087

## What next?

### ... a journey in response to a particular call

A two year series including quiet days with book club and theological thinking, placements and accompaniment, this is available to Methodists wanting to be challenged in discipleship or in response to a particular call or vocation.

## Step Forward in Faith

### ... materials for small groups in circuit or church

A new resource developed by the Guy Chester Centre for use in small groups, for people wanting to be challenged to grow not only in their personal life but also in their commitment to each other and to developing of God's kingdom around them.

More details from the Guy Chester Centre:

✉ [www.chestercentre.org.uk](http://www.chestercentre.org.uk)

☎ 020 8883 8024

*Some funding to support these opportunities may be available from the District. Contact Paul Taylor for details.*

If you would like to talk some more about how this programme could be further developed or about how it could help you then please contact Paul for an informal chat.

If you would like to explore how this process could help you prepare to candidate for the Methodist Ministry (as a Presbyterian or Deacon) please contact your Superintendent Minister or the Rev Philip Macdonald [philipmacdonald@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:philipmacdonald@tiscali.co.uk) or have a look at the material on the Methodist Church website [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) (search for 'Candidating for Ministry').

# ■ ■ ■ ■ ALISON TOMLIN FOR PRESIDENT ■ ■ ■ ■

The Revd Alison Tomlin, former Chair of the Northampton District, is to be the next President of the Methodist Conference in Britain. This year's Methodist Conference, meeting in Wolverhampton in July, elected Alison as its president-designate for 2010 to 2011.

Following her election, Alison said, "It is a great privilege to be elected as president-designate, and I am humbled to be trusted with this role by the conference. In my year of presidency, I will seek to help the church be more receptive to go where God is inviting us. The church has not always been very good at risk taking but it is easier to take risks when we are confident in God's love, and listening for God's voice."

Central to Alison's ministry has been the imaginative use of the Bible in prayer. She said, "The church has designated 2011 as the 'Year of the Bible', and this will be very important and exciting for me in my year of office."

Alison will be inducted as president at the beginning of the 2010 Methodist Conference, which will meet in Portsmouth from 24 June to 1 July.

Alison has recently left the district for a new appointment as co-superintendent of the Thames Valley Circuit with her husband Dave. She has served the Methodist Church as a minister for 25 years, and was ordained in 1984 in the same town - Wolverhampton - in which she was elected as Methodism's next president.

As Alison prepared to leave the District in July, she shared three concerns. She writes ...

## **Launde Abbey**

Launde Abbey is a place of refreshment and quiet space from which the Northampton District has benefited for many years. We go on retreat and hold a variety of gatherings there. Many of our people, ordained and lay, have spent time at the abbey to receive spiritual recreation and continuing support. Launde Abbey has updated its stables block but is in urgent need of financial support in order to bring forward essential work on the main Tudor-Elizabethan manor house. Recently, a number of retreat houses have closed or said they will be closing, and we cannot afford to lose this ecumenical resource. Do visit the Launde Abbey Web site at [www.savelaundeabbey.co.uk](http://www.savelaundeabbey.co.uk), and please consider how you can help. Thank you.

## **Violence against women**

One in four local authority areas has no specialised support services for women who experience violence. The government is concerned about this because of the cost to our children, young people and, indeed, whole communities, when violence tears families apart. It is estimated that violence to women costs £4 billion per year, which probably helps concentrate the government's mind. God's concern may be more about asking what we are doing to help. The Methodist-linked charity **A c t i o n f o r C h i l d r e n** - [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk) - is part of the answer but what do local churches offer?

## **Sri Lanka**

Thurairajah Samuel, known as the Revd Sam, is a Methodist minister in the Bristol District, and he has sent a request for support. The Rev. Sam runs a project that is responding to the suffering in Sri Lanka. Those involved began praying, sending aid, and visiting people in need just one month after a tsunami hit the Indian Ocean island nation on Boxing Day 2004. The project is now offering further help because of the thousands who are suffering in the former war zone in the north and east of Sri Lanka. For further information or to offer help, contact [revsam@btinternet.com](mailto:revsam@btinternet.com).

## **CELEBRATE!**

*creating whole-life disciples through small groups*

9-10 February 2010

Kings Park Conference Centre, Northampton  
£55 (before 31 Dec); £65 (after 31 Dec)

Many churches are rediscovering the Methodist heritage of small groups. Some are adopting a 'cell structure' (becoming a church of small groups rather than a church with small groups) and others are incorporating holistic small groups (which embody all elements of 'Our Calling') into a more traditional structure.

For further information and to book a place:

✉ [esdadmin@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:esdadmin@methodistchurch.org.uk)

☎ 01733 235962

## DISTRICT STAFF

If you know who to contact please get in touch with the relevant member of staff. If you're not sure please begin by contacting Sheila. Thanks.

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### Methodist Youth Assembly 2009

13th-15th November in Durham  
'Why I? Go do something beautiful!'

This promises to be dynamic and different from previous Youth Conferences. Booking Forms can be downloaded directly from [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) ... click on Youth Assembly. The event is open all young people between the ages of 11 and 23yrs and we would encourage young people to attend in groups as well as individuals.

## DISTRICT YOUTH ENABLERS

Are you aged 16 to 23?  
Are you looking for a gap year?  
... starting September 2010?

YES! ... then becoming a District Youth Enabler might be for you.

This is a gap year scheme that enables you to explore one particular aspect of the work of the Methodist Church as part of the **Methodist Church's Youth Participation Scheme**. You could be involved in some of the activities of your local church or a local project and some of the national events that the Methodist Church offers throughout the year, eg. Youth Assembly and Breakout.

This is a part-time, paid opportunity which allows you to complete a Gap Year alongside part-time study or other work or activities you are involved in.

For more details:

- have a look at ... [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) ... click on Youth Participation
- or contact Paul Taylor