



IS THAT REALLY FOR US?

So many radio and TV channels – we hardly ever watch the same thing at the same time any more. Over the next few weeks, however, we will have more of a common focus than usual.

First it will be the General Election and then the World Cup. What might we learn about ourselves as a nation by the way we interact with such events?

As political parties shape their policies many in the media make the unquestioned assumption that each of us will vote for that party which offers the best deal to us personally. It is not expected that we will use our vote with an eye to the well-being of others – maybe those in this country who are in less fortunate circumstances than ourselves. And as for looking beyond these shores, well...

So, one of the guiding principles is the assumption of self-interest. Is that really us?

This time around, of course, many a talk show host will be relying for their ratings on the continuing fall-out from the expenses saga. To listen to some programmes you would think that all of our elected representatives are only “in it for themselves” and intent on “ripping off” the taxpayer. The hard work, long hours and not inconsiderable sacrifice on the part of many in public life is too easily swept away on a media-hyped tide of cynicism. Is that really us?

What about the World Cup? – What about it indeed? You may say if you are one of those who has never seen the attraction of grown men chasing a bag of wind around a field! Others may agree with former Liverpool manager Bill Shankly who said “Football isn’t a matter of life and death ...

it’s much more serious than that”. Scots, Welsh, Irish and all other nationals without a team in the tournament will have to take a stance on whether to cheer for England or any team playing against them.

One thing the World Cup will demonstrate again is that, for the English, hope springs eternal. It is 44 years since they won anything of significance but you can bet that there will be that combination of excruciating tension and euphoric abandon which only the fan who lives in hope can know. Of course, many a hard-bitten veteran of the last seven campaigns will feign detachment but on the inside they will be on tiptoe like a child on Christmas eve.

Our recent experience of World Cups has opened up another window on our national character (and that of the Scots and Irish). That is the joy of the communal. We tend now to watch matches together – in homes, pubs, churches, public squares. The highs and lows are the more exhilarating and bearable for being shared. If England did win the cup, I think we could guarantee a spontaneous pouring of bodies out into the streets, loud and less-than-musical singing and uncontrollable weeping in each others’ arms.

So which of the above defines us as a nation? Self-interest and cynicism or hope and the joy of the communal? And for we Christians who are called to pray and work for the well-being of the nation in which God has placed us – we have a role to play in rejecting that which demeans and promoting that which ennobles and enriches.

Peter Hancock
District Chair

METHODIST YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2009

From the 13th November until the 15th Elise and I went to Durham for the weekend to the first Methodist Youth Assembly. The purpose of the Assembly was to allow young people to put forward views that would then be taken to the Methodist Conference to make changes within the Church that will please both the old and the young.

When we arrived we were greeted by the stewards at the station who then took us in the minibus that would transport us to the conference centre that was to be home for the weekend, a converted catholic seminary. On arrival we were signed in and given keys to our rooms which facilitators then escorted us to. After that we met all the other young people attending and had something to eat. After everyone had arrived we went to evening worship where we met the people who had helped to organise the event. The worship was fun and enjoyable very much centred around the young people of the church. When it finished we were left to either go and socialise again or go to bed.

Saturday was a day that consisted of various discussions concerning self-esteem, advocacy and rights, vocation, God and me, youth violence, sex and sexuality and equality and diversity of which we had the option of attending four of our own preference. In the sessions we discussed the issues that each topic raised and how the Church and youth could do something to help. The views of everyone were then recorded and condensed into statements

that we could vote through to be discussed at conference. The rest of the day very much consisted of food, socialising and in the evening entertainment from a band called Lifecolour.

Sunday was the day in which we voted a new youth president for this year and next year as well as voting on what we thought should be taken to conference based on what came out of the discussions the day before. We then went to worship in St Catherine's chapel followed by lunch and then goodbyes as people began to leave to catch trains and lifts home.

All in all we both had an enjoyable and eye opening weekend where we could express our views and learn how young people can make differences within the Church that will hopefully impact on society as well.

Elise Upstone & Natasha Reeves
Rugby & Daventry Circuit

Methodist Youth Assembly 2010 will take place from 19-21 November 2010 in Swindon. If you would like to attend then online bookings need to be made by 1 September 2010. There are only 350 places so you are advised to book early! You could also go as one of our District Reps ... the nomination forms will be available in the summer, so please contact your minister or get in touch. Thanks.

Paul Taylor
District Director of Training & Development

<http://methodistyouthassembly.eventbrite.com>

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

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

12 people, 4 circuits, 18 months ... to start afresh!



The Northampton District is offering a great opportunity for four circuits who want to see new ways of being church impacting on their community over the next 18 months.

The District is running the **Mission Shaped Ministry course in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire** jointly with the Dioceses of Peterborough and Leicester, with weekday evening teaching in Northampton and Leicester and weekends together in a central venue.

The course has a particular focus on the development of new areas of outreach that engages those outside the reach of traditional church. Course participants will have online access to course materials and a broad range of online resources developed by the national Fresh Expressions team by practitioners with practical knowledge and experience of the subject areas. The course lasts twelve months, with a follow-on six months second phase and the opportunity for ongoing involvement in an action/learning network at the end of the course.

If you are looking for a course to equip you to start a fresh expression of church, then this may well be the course for you, and District funding will be available as usual to support individuals who want to go on the course but

we strongly encourage teams to attend together as they can more effectively apply what is learned to their particular situation.

To this end, the District is making available grants to cover 2/3 of each participant's £180 cost of the course, plus a £1000 set up grant for the resulting fresh expression of church. These will be available to the first 4 circuits who want to send a team of 3 people on the course, with a clear intention to support them in setting up a fresh expression of church in the circuit.

Grant forms will be sent to each Superintendent after Synod, where more details of the course and application forms will be available.

Back to Church Sunday - B2C4U?

Preparations begin again soon for the Back To Church Sunday on 26th September 2010. To help with these preparations and to encourage more circuits and churches to be involved in this exciting outreach we have run a training event in a number of circuits to help churches make the best of the opportunity of B2C Sunday. Covering areas like 'finding a champion' 'making best use of invites', and 'maintaining momentum for the event', and ideal for offering to neighbouring circuits to join together for an evening, B2C4U can be booked with me at a time to suit your circuit. Do get in touch.

Using Film in Mission

Following enquiries from several circuits, I have put together a resource paper Using Film in Mission which has lists of useful resources, ideas and copyright info for running film events as outreach or FX initiatives. Let me know if it would be helpful to receive an electronic copy.

Tim Woolley
District Director of Mission

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

BREAKOUT 2010

... it could be the last!

www.breakout2010.info

If you are taking a group from then the District will contribute £30 towards the cost of each young person's ticket.

More details: Peter Candlin (District Treasurer)
peter.candlin@ntlworld.com

SAFEGUARDING

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS

The changes in legislation that affect us all!

* NEW GOVERNMENT BODIES * NEW LANGUAGE * NEW RESPONSIBILITY *

This applies to all who work (and volunteer) with Children & Young People and Vulnerable Adults

SAFEGUARDING IS ABOUT THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH ... THE CONNEXION ... THE CIRCUIT ... THE LOCAL CHURCH

Safer Recruitment is something that has been in our Safeguarding Policy since 1993, YET most of us have not implemented policies & practice in these aspects locally. In order to fully implement the new legislation and safeguard all who are vulnerable, we need to give some further attention to the area of Safer Recruitment. The District Team/Safeguarding Group will be rolling out training and support that will enable us all to work further on this area.

Essentially we should be looking at job descriptions for all positions, taking up references, giving training & support to all

volunteers as well as getting each individual to have a CRB & ISA registration.

'We will carefully select, train and supervise all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration/ membership of the relevant vetting and barring schemes.'

The suitability and safety of someone to work with vulnerable groups should not be taken for granted based simply on criminal disclosure checks or registration with a vetting and barring scheme, even though they may have been be 'cleared'

from the Methodist Safer Recruitment policy document

Definitions

... of a 'child' ... anyone under 18 yrs 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.

Methodist Policy

... and good guidelines for children, young people and vulnerable adults

These documents are in development and will be available after Methodist Conference. The latest version is currently available on the Methodist Church website

www.methodist.org.uk

... in Methodist Council papers for April 2010

Gill Crippen

District Safeguarding Officer

☎ 07967 362885

✉ northamptondso@btinternet.com

District Training & Support

People ...

All circuits should have appointed a Safeguarding Co-ordinator for children and young people.

All Churches within circuits should have either their own or shared Safeguarding Co-ordinator for children and young people.

Circuits and Churches need to decide if they need an additional person to look after **Adult Safeguarding**.

Action ...

Sample job descriptions for the roles above are now available from Gill

The District Safeguarding Group has been expanded and will be offering training and support to the circuits including the circuit safeguarding co-ordinators

Adult Safeguarding is a whole new area and circuits may need help in the writing of policy and practice locally ... contact Gill

To organise training for your circuit contact Gill

The next District Safeguarding Co-ordinator's meeting will take place in the Autumn 2010 ... Contact Gill for more details

SAFEGUARDING

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS

The new scheme ... following the staged implementation of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, in 2010, it will become mandatory for all new employees, appointees and volunteers for roles in certain activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults (as defined by the Act) to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority, in England and Wales. There will also be mandatory requirements for employers including voluntary bodies and churches for the first time.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

The **ISA** is a non-departmental public body which is responsible for all the barring decisions of the new **VBS** (Vetting & Barring Scheme). From November 2010, if you are an organisation working with children you must check the ISA registration status of all new potential recruits prior to appointment. This will determine whether or not you can employ them (or take them on as volunteers) and may affect what activities they can undertake for your organisation.

The VBS scheme aims to avoid harm or risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults within specific contexts (called 'regulated activities') and achieves this by preventing those deemed unsuitable from gaining access via their work.

All those new people working with children and young people or vulnerable adults will be required to be registered with the scheme in order to be able to take up such roles, or within 5 years from implementation if continuing in their role. This is a legal obligation. From the relevant implementation dates within the 5-year 'roll out' it will be a criminal offence to employ anyone in a regulated activity who is not registered.

Regulated Activities

Although churches and other faith communities are voluntary organisations they will all have a new legal duty to ensure that those working with children or vulnerable adults are not known to be unsuitable for this work.

Regulated activity ... any activity of a specified nature that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently, intensively or overnight.

- **specified nature:** teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation
- **frequently:** regularly, once a week or more often
- **intensively:** 4 days or more in a 30 day period
- **overnight:** any time between 2am and 6am

Regulated activity ... any activity allowing contact with children or vulnerable adults that is in a specified place frequently or intensively.

- **specified place:** schools, children's homes, hospitals, juvenile detention facilities, adult care homes

Regulated activity ... any activity that involves people in certain defined positions of responsibility.

- **defined position:** such positions include school governor and trustee of certain charities

Regulated activity ... any activity which involves on a regular basis the day to day management or supervision of people carrying out activity of a specified nature or in a specified place.

Am I affected?

It will be an offence to take on a paid worker or volunteer, in an position covered by the legislation, who is not ISA registered.

Whilst it is still not entirely clear who will be affected by the new legislation, [The Government has not yet finalised its guidance on the detailed operation of the scheme] what is clear is that we should not be looking at trying to avoid the legislation, but rather, seeking to implement good practice. Thus, it seems appropriate that all those who are volunteering [or in paid work] with children, young people or with those who are vulnerable in the more generic sense of the term, should agree to register with the ISA even if they don't have to.

Further advice/training will be given during the next few months

Details about the timetable for CRB checks and ISA registration over the page

SAFEGUARDING

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Criminal Records Bureau will administer the **Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS)** scheme in conjunction with our Registered Body - **Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS)**.

From **26 July 2010** all new employees, those moving jobs and new volunteers who want to work with children or vulnerable adults can register with the ISA.

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.

Registration will also include employers being continuously informed of an employee's suitability to work [volunteer].

How ISA registration complements CRB checks (England and Wales only)

Criminal Records Bureau certificates will still be required in order for a decision as to suitability for a particular role to be ascertained. The ISA registration certificate will simply show whether someone is suitable, based upon the fact they are not barred from the relevant workforce and is just one stage in the recruitment process. The ISA will bar unsuitable people based upon a range of relevant, tested information and evidence.

Suitability for a particular role is also based upon a wide range of other recruitment checks and CRB checks which potentially show a wider criminal history will still need to be part of this assessment. There is a wide range of criminal offences which do not lead to barring but which may be relevant to an individual's proposed role, e.g. offences of drink driving, drug abuse or violence to adults.

The new scheme WILL NOT remove the need for the multiplicity of CRB checks once someone is ISA registered with an enhanced CRB. For each paid or volunteer post, it will still be necessary to have a fresh CRB disclosure.

A WAY FORWARD FOR MISSION

Across the Methodist Church, the process known as 'Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission' has been going on for a couple of years. This initiative is exploring the structure of the church at circuit and district level. The exercise has now reached the stage of considering the role of the circuit in the 21st century, and what circuits might look like in the future. In the Northampton District, we have already held a district-wide consultation on the concept of a "healthy circuit".

Unfortunately, some have seen the review of what it means to be a circuit as simply part of a process to create bigger circuits, and have highlighted problems that would arise if circuits covered larger geographical areas than they do at present. However, this is not one of the central aims of the circuit-examination process.

For its part, the Northampton District's main focus is to enable, support and challenge circuits to have mission at their heart. We hope to explore the model of a healthy circuit with existing circuits, so that together we can identify their strengths, and how these might be shared with others. This may well lead to some changes on the ground but these would only be as a consequence of the desire to have healthy circuits.

More details of the Mapping a Way Forward process in the Northampton District, including the results of the consultation exercise, are available at: www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk.

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

PLANTING LIFE: MISSION 21

In November 2009, eight Methodists from the District joined many more for two inspiring days at the Planting Life! Mission21 Conference in Bath.

Deacon Fiona De Boltz from the Kettering and Corby Circuit reports

When we first arrived in Bath and then entered the beautiful ex-cinema which now houses Bath City Church, it was heartening to see so many people gathered from different denominations from all over the country and further afield, who were keen to plant churches, be involved in Fresh Expressions and/or support others who are doing so. I recognised a few other Methodists from other parts of the Connexion and had the chance to chat with some during some of the coffee breaks.

The event was a mixture of speakers in the large auditorium, including Rev Dr Martyn Atkins who started the event off, and smaller seminars or 'streams'. These streams also had speakers but there were opportunities for discussion in pairs or small groups too. I met people from Dublin and Holland in these small groups and was fascinated to hear about ministry in their contexts. We had the opportunity to attend seven sessions of our chosen stream over the course of the three days. I opted for the 'Planting Fresh Expressions' stream, which gave participants an opportunity to hear about lots of projects and Fresh Expressions happening all across the country, and then discussed how sustainability and maturity can be achieved in these.

Apart from the streams and the plenary speakers, there was also a one-off 'Specialist Stream', which I found particularly helpful. I had opted for one called 'Reading your Community' which was led by Martin Robinson from Together in Mission. He gave practical ideas about how to learn more about your community, how to assess how the community views the local church, and vice versa. One church he was involved in conducted a door to door survey locally, and when he explained which church he was from, it became evident that people didn't realise there was a church there at all, but said it looked like an electricity sub-station! It made me wonder how the community sees the churches in our circuit. People who were surveyed were also asked to say three things they like about living in the area – some people struggled to come up with a single positive aspect! This underlines the desperate need for the gospel of hope and light in our villages, towns and cities.

I was privileged to go to a so-called 'Masterclass' one lunchtime. It turned out to be

a special treat for me. I was with five experienced church-planters, who asked me questions to clarify my situation (in my own mind as well as in theirs) and then offered advice and support, and finally prayed for me. It was such a blessing and encouragement and was worth going all that way just for those 45 minutes!

Another high point was the worship, which was inspiring and challenging. Some of us knelt where we were during the final act of worship in order to recommit ourselves to God and offer up our lives in his service again.

I'm still processing all that I learnt and had confirmed in my understanding. One key thing was that in any Fresh Expression, the core values must be laid down in the initial 'DNA' – in other words these values (for instance service, hospitality, building self-esteem etc.) must be an integral part of the project from the beginning. Such values cannot be 'tacked on' at a later date.

Finally, it was wonderful to hear highly-respected and learned speakers from the stage assert that no amount of strategic planning can work without the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Amen to that!

PASTORAL VISITORS DAY CONFERENCE

The role and responsibilities of Pastoral Visitors is a key role in the life of the Church but varies depending on how each church and circuit organises itself. In this changing context this day explores some of the issues pastoral visitors face.

Date: Saturday 17 July 2010
Time: 10am to 3:30pm (please bring lunch)
Venue: District Office, Bouverie Court
Northampton NN4 7YD

This Day Conference will allow Pastoral Visitors to share their experiences, worship together, participate in workshops and explore resources.

For more details and to book a place contact
Paul Taylor
☎ 07779 241087
✉ northamptontdo@btinternet.com

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.

Sheila O'Neill

PA to Chair of District

(Mon-Thur, 9:15am-2:45pm)

☎ 01604 630128

✉ oneills.dist23@googlemail.com

Rev Peter Hancock

Chair of Northampton District

☎ 01604 630128 (Office)

☎ 01604 622124 (Home)

✉ phancock002@googlemail.com

Gill Crippen

District Safeguarding Officer

☎ 07967 362885

✉ northamptondso@btinternet.com

Paul Taylor

District Director of Training & Development

☎ 07779 241087

✉ northamptontdo@btinternet.com

Rev Tim Woolley

District Director of Mission

☎ 01604 784424

✉ t.r.woolley.00@cantabgold.uk

BIBLEFRESH

... a movement of churches, colleges, agencies and festivals seeking to encourage and inspire churches across the UK to a greater confidence and appetite for the Word of God.

The centrepiece of the initiative is to make 2011 a **Year of the Bible** and asking local churches to make four pledges ...

1. **Read** the Bible
2. Be **trained** in handling the Bible well
3. Give to **translate** the Bible in Burkina Faso
4. Provide the opportunity for people to **experience** the Bible in new and creative ways

... to help the whole church gain greater skill in handling the scriptures and a greater passion for hearing and obeying the Bible.

More details from:

Tim Woolley

www.biblefresh.com

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

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 ... click on Youth Participation
- or contact Paul Taylor