

And finally ...

By **Tim Woolley**, director of mission

You may know what it is like. You get to the end of a gruelling interview and are finally asked, "Is there anything you would like to ask us?" If you are anything like me, at this point you are desperately trying to think of something to say that is not along the lines of, "So, have I got the job, then?"

But not this time, when I was being interviewed for my new district job. This time I was prepared. "Yes," I said, "Why is the job called director of mission? Sounds a bit 'top down' to me." At this point, it did occur to me that questioning the title of the job was perhaps not the best way of getting it, and that I might as well make my way back to the M1 and head for home. Happily, the district's interviewing panel thought otherwise, and so here I am.

The question I asked at the interview was very helpfully answered for me by a comparison of a mission director to that of a spiritual director. A spiritual director is one who accompanies, resources, challenges and encourages a Christian on his or her spiritual journey. A spiritual director does not have all the answers but does help someone to ask the right questions and suggests where answers might be found.

So, as I say, here I am, and my task is to accompany, resource, challenge and encourage Northampton District Methodists in mission and evangelism. If I can help your church or circuit, please get in touch, ☎01604 784424; email: t.r.woolley.00@cantabgold.net. I certainly won't have all the answers but I can help you ask the right questions and suggest where answers might be found as together we seek to demonstrate Jesus Christ in the ever-changing world of the 21st century.

*Read Tim's blog: Mission Shaped District, at
<http://tim-mission23.blogspot.com>*

District News

The **Methodist Church** 
Northampton District
February 2008

New chair chosen

The Northampton District's executive committee has unanimously nominated Rev. Peter Hancock to be the new chair of the district from 1 September 2009, when the current chair, Rev. Alison Tomlin, retires. Peter is currently the superintendent minister of the Huddersfield (Pennine) Circuit.

The nomination now needs to be confirmed by the spring session of the district synod and the Methodist Conference, which meets in the summer.

Presidents to visit district

The president of the Methodist Church, Rev. Dr Martyn Atkins, and the vice-president, Ruby Beech, will visit the Northampton District from 16 to 19 May 2008. Book the dates now!

Change all around I see

By **Ruth Bemrose**, district executive secretary

At its December meeting, the Northampton District's executive considered a number of changes and exciting challenges facing the district. Adding to the sense of occasion was the fact that the executive met at Bouverie Court, the offices of the Diocese of Peterborough, on the outskirts of Northampton. This is where hopefully the new district office will be based. Executive members were, therefore, able to see the room in Bouverie Court that could eventually be used, and also experience other spaces where regular meetings will be held.

Opportunity

One of the biggest challenges and opportunities currently facing most circuits in the district is how to respond to "new build" schemes. One of the major tasks of the district's new director of mission, Rev. Tim Woolley, is to see that the district encourages circuits to grasp opportunities as they arise.

The executive decided to recommend to synod that some of the District Advance Fund's resources be set aside for small pump-priming grants to circuits and churches. District officers will have the discretion to approve grants for new ventures in mission, and for those places that need an immediate grant to get going.

Training

The implications of wider changes in Methodism that will take place this coming September are gradually becoming clearer. One challenge has been to work out how the Northampton District, given its geographic position, will be able to relate to three of the new regional training networks that will come into being, and how training might be delivered across the district. The executive heard details of a possible solution to the problem. Watch this space for further developments!

Boundaries

Discussions about boundary changes between circuits continue. The executive confirmed that all decisions about any proposed changes must be mission oriented, and that changes made should best serve this aspect of the church's work.

contd/

Stationing

Stationing within Methodism is the process by which ministers are appointed, and it is regularly reviewed. The Methodist Church's latest stationing review group has been at work for some time. The executive heard that the group now wishes to discuss its findings with districts, and to do so before the end of February. Finding an opportunity will be a challenge!

"Fresh Expressions" events

Three new training opportunities are available to those interested in new ways of being the church.

A ***Methodist Fresh Expressions consultation*** for leaders and other key practitioners of "fresh expressions of church" will take place 3 to 4 March at the Wycliffe Centre in High Wycombe. The event will look at the opportunities, problems and issues faced by those engaged in fresh expressions work. For more information and to book, contact Ian Marden, Methodist Church House, 25, Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5JR; ☎020 7467 3793; email: mardeni@methodistchurch.org.uk, or go to www.methodistchurch.org.uk/downloads/ev_Methodist_FE_Consultation_Mar08_flier.pdf.

Mission Shaped Intro, a new course introducing the idea of "fresh expressions of church", will run as a joint venture between the Northampton, Nene Valley, and Kettering and Corby circuits. The course begins on 1 April. Contact Rev. Tim Woolley, director of mission, for further details, ☎01604 784424, email: t.r.woolley.00@cantabgold.net.

A ***Mission Shaped Ministry*** course, organised by the Northampton and Birmingham districts together with four Anglican dioceses, will take place at Rugby Methodist Church beginning 12 April. This event will prepare individuals and teams for pioneer ministry in fresh expressions of church. Contact: Jane Cain, email: missionshapedministry@gmail.com.