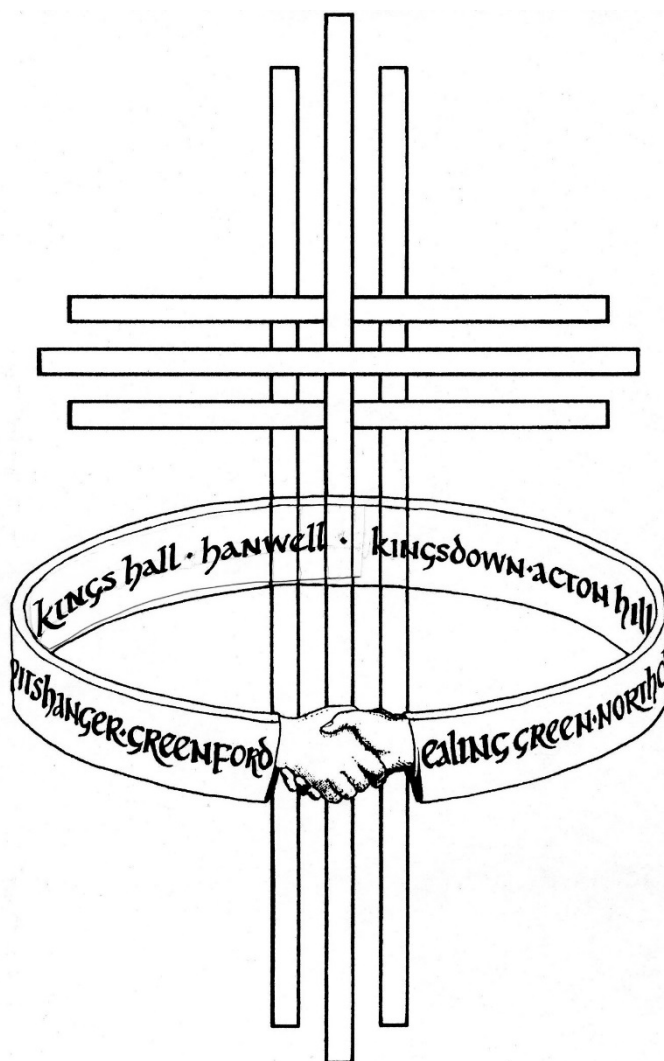


# In-touch

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No 69

September - November 2014



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The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

# IN THIS ISSUE

|   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| • From the Superintendent   | <b>3</b>    |
| • Christian New Media Conference: TRANSFORMERS  | <b>4</b>    |
| • Come over to Macedonia Acts 16 – <i>Rev Peter Catford</i>   | <b>5</b>    |
| • Healing Conference “Time to Heal” – <i>Yvonne Hill, Greenford</i>                                       | <b>6</b>    |
| • Quiet Zones – <i>Rev Peter Catford</i>  | <b>8</b>    |
| • The Extra Mile  | <b>8</b>    |
| • All We Can – <i>Alan Smith, Circuit AWC Co-ordinator</i>  | <b>9</b>    |
| • Jesus Kids and Compassion – <i>Margaret McCarthy, Northolt</i>  | <b>10</b>   |
| • World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women<br>European Areas Seminar – <i>Blossom Jackson</i> | <b>12</b>   |
| • Central Ealing Neighbourhood Forum  | <b>13</b>   |
| • Methodist Women in Britain News – <i>Blossom Jackson</i>  | <b>14</b>   |
| • He’s Not Dead Yet – <i>Donald Burling, Acton Hill</i>   | <b>15</b>   |
| • Re-enchanting Christianity – <i>Gerald Barton, Editor</i>   | <b>17</b>   |
| • Remember – Autumn 2014 - <i>Mary Newman, Pitshanger</i>   | <b>24</b>   |
| • Circuit Directory Update  | <b>27</b>   |
| • Events Around the Circuit   | <b>28</b>   |

**Circuit website**  
**[www.ealingtrinity.org.uk](http://www.ealingtrinity.org.uk)**

*Front Cover designed by Marion Narain*

## From the Superintendent

Welcome to the September edition of In-touch magazine! As our Circuit rolls forward into another Methodist new year, it is a joy to have good things to report.

This year we are looking to do some work to improve the consistency of our worship and welcome, to build on the Talents' programme of 2013-14, to continue in the widest programme of mission, and also grow our church attendance and memberships as Ealing Borough's population expands. A programme of interesting opportunities for training and personal discipleship development will help us with this, but it is about small things - the greeting and attention after worship, the encouragement to a friend to give church a try. This is an interesting and grace-filled time for this Circuit, a time when we begin to see some fruit from seeds planted! All is not complete, but we are in a healthy, engaged, and lively place. We have across the Circuit partnership with local schools and with the High Street, we have new local preachers and a vision for Christ-centred, joyful development.

On Sunday September 7<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm (Holy Trinity, Southall Park) we will welcome two new ministers to the Circuit: the Revd Rachel Bending comes most recently from the Victoria, Hammersmith and Fulham Circuit, and will serve the King's Hall churches and Kingsdown. Rachel is a minister of long experience and knows the area very well, and we are very glad to have her sent to us. Her husband Thomas is a lecturer nearby, and they will live at Elers Road. Linked to her pastoral role Rachel will be working with the developing partnership in Southall with Holy Trinity for well-being and health outreach, and also for some of our other projects in Southall; she has experience of much creative support of vulnerable people. She is a good teacher and leader of worship, and very keen to have church doors be open as much as possible. Welcome Rachel!

Probationer Deacon Lemia Nkwelah comes to us directly from Wesley House, Cambridge, where she has been in full time study for the last two years. She is originally from Zimbabwe, where she was an immigration officer, but has been in the UK many years. She will be leading the development of an MHA live at home scheme for Ealing, serving the King's Hall churches and working for Southall mission development at Holy Trinity and elsewhere, in addition to supporting social outreach in the west end of the Circuit. Lemia is not a preaching Deacon, so you will not see her name on the Quarterly Plan, but she will be leading worship around and about. She will be living at Costons Road in Greenford. Welcome Lemia!

Remember that this September Deacon Richard Goldstraw moves to our manse in Acton and begins work in Ealing Green and Acton Hill, while continuing his cross-circuit role and supervising our Probationer Deacon. Pray for him as he begins this new stage of ministry in this Circuit, and for the churches as they receive him.

By September we will also have appointed (God willing) our new part time Property Administrator, and you will see that person around the Circuit managing the Circuit properties giving the churches advice - that person won't replace property stewards or do property work directly in churches, but will be an advisor to the Circuit

Property Group that will be gathered this Autumn, and help to support churches to make the most of their sites for mission and worship. We look forward to seeing how that role will develop and grow.

Please pray for Ealing Green as it begins its long-awaited refurbishment this Autumn. While the church and front is being redone, the church will be worshipping in the Hall and access will be from the Grove; other business will continue as normal at the church. The total time of work is planned for 9 months, and should get going in October. It is a risky, exciting time, and your friends at Ealing Green need all your wisdom and encouragement - it really makes a difference for a church to know it is not alone.

Also this year, I begin my two year open-ended re-invitation to the Circuit, agreed in September 2013. I will have a three month sabbatical in March, April and May 2015: I will be working at several libraries in the US on a project to do with a seventeenth century manuscript written by Roger Williams, an early proponent of civil religious liberty. During my absence, Rachel Bending will act as Superintendent, but other parts of my role will be supported by other members of staff or individuals in churches. Methodist ministers are asked to take a sabbatical after ten years of pastoral work, and then every seven years - we are 'forced' to take time out to refresh our knowledge and have a wider experience. No doubt you will hear more about this, as it progresses - a small group of people from the Circuit and my two churches has been meeting already to look at making the sabbatical as smooth as possible for all of us.

In the midst of it all, the foundation of life together continues in our weekly pattern of worship and care: gather the people, tell the story, break the bread.

With every Blessing, Jennifer

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## **Christian New Media Conference 2014: TRANSFORMERS**

Last year a group from the Circuit was sponsored to attend the new media conference at The Brewery at Chiswell Street, London EC1Y 4SD and found it very stimulating: registration is now open for Nov 1, 2014. If you are interested, please have a look at <http://www.newmediacentreofexcellence.org.uk/cnmac/conference> and register your interest with your minister or the Circuit Office!

If you want to register yourself, why not consider applying to the Circuit training fund for the cost of the ticket? See the Circuit website for details, under 'Forms and Policies'.

## **Come over to Macedonia: Acts 16**

*Rev Peter Catford*

On 19<sup>th</sup> May a group of 18 Methodists, including five from Ealing Trinity Circuit, took off from Gatwick and went over to Macedonia for an 8 day retreat exploring the sites, sounds and tastes of a country that is steeped in history, both European and Christian which is largely unknown to us. The retreat took us from mountain ranges to inland lakes, rural scenery to urban sprawl, small villages to the capital city, from poverty to wealth. It was a time to allow the unfamiliar to challenge the familiar, to push ourselves beyond what we know and try something different, especially the local food.

The retreat spent three days in the south of the country in Strumica, a very rural agricultural area. Staying in a local hotel, we travelled out to walk up a waterfall and taste the fresh air, visited three local Macedonian Orthodox monasteries meeting nuns and priests and saw the beauty and simplicity of icons and buildings from across the ages of Christianity. We also visited an outreach work by the United Methodist Church in the town which feeds over 140 people every day who are housebound, and where possible, helping with funding, medication and not least, the human contact needed.

From there a day's journey took us to the tourist resort of Ochrid, a town on an inland lake with a rich history in the development of the Cyrillic script. The statues of the creators of the script, two Byzantine brothers, St Cyril and St Methodius, were prominent in the town along with stories of Alexander the Great and many more as this area of European history developed. Over the two days we visited churches and monasteries in various states of repair as well as a trip across the lake to a bronze-age stilt settlement.

From there we journeyed to the capital Skopje, taking in another monastery with rich art and craft work as well as the natural beauty of the Matka Valley with its lake and hidden churches. Arriving in a hotel in the suburbs of the city, we took time over the next two days to explore a very different face of Macedonia, which included the national museum of the house of Mother Theresa, and a meal in the Turkish bazaar. The highlight was our visit to the Cathedral, just as worship was taking place. The church, which embodies heaven and earth, was filled with light as the priest processed the bread through the people, to the beautiful music of the choir. The icons, telling the story of God's people throughout history provided the backdrop to people coming together in worship, moving through the space. For many of the group this was a moment of God's tangible presence and much food for thought, challenging the discomfort some had felt with the icons, in contrast with a very obvious lack in the Methodist church.

A day's rest back in Strumica enabled a little shopping and plenty of ice-cream, before travelling home with much to reflect on. We hope to run another Macedonian experience in May next year - anyone interested please contact Rev's Suva or Peter Catford.

# Healing Conference – “Time to Heal”

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

**Speaker: Revd Dr Scott McDermott**

*From Yvonne Hill*

I am extremely grateful that I was able to attend this Conference along with Rev Peter Catford, Rev Suva Catford, Rebecca, Adina, Sara, Donney, Marcia (Greenford church) and two others from Kingsdown.

Marcia, Adina and I travelled together thoroughly enjoying each other's company, being conscious of the blessings of Almighty God. In the atmosphere at Central Hall, you could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit with its soothing balm as we worshipped.

A day of Prayer and Healing! The Conference consisted of a packed programme, which was very inspiring.

The main text for me was 2 Corinthians: 4:16 *“For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day”*.

Also from the talks: four words: four P's: **Prayer, Person, Presence and Power.**

There was a time for prayer and healing and my left knee which is sometimes painful was prayed for by a member of the Healing Team. I also received anointing with oil.

A few thoughts from some of the other people who attended -

For me, this was a very spiritual, inspiring, soul-filled day with immense gratitude to all who contributed as it has strengthened my journey in this area of ministry as we share Almighty God's gift in divine love of His Son, Jesus, to be our healer and friend.

*From Adina Brown*

My experience of the Healing Conference: the praises and worship at the very beginning of the conference. I felt it was very soul-touching, and that it set the stage and created an atmosphere which was conducive to what followed at the latter part of the conference, i.e. preparing the sick to receive healing. The talk throughout the conference also prepared people to know and believe that God is still very much in the ministry of healing, even in this generation.

*From Donny Samuel*

My experience of the Healing Conference:

- I joined from the second session.
- The most experiencing part was when people were invited in small groups to share and pray with.
- It was not a usual 'run of the mill' conference within our infrastructure.
- It was not a Cold Worship.
- The application of Holy Oil was amazing.
- To the best of my knowledge everybody wanted to have Holy Oil applied to them as people queued.
- People wanted more time to stay there.
- I had a pain on my left hand elbow, probably 'tennis elbow'. Twice I was prayed for and then I had a follow up call too. My pain is much better than before.
- As Methodists, we should have more of these services within our Circuit, District and more.
- We should move out of our cold, "sandwich" and routine usual way of worship services.
- Every worship service should bring new hope and light for the worshippers and should not be usual 'run of the mill'.
- May God bless all who were able to attend from Greenford Church, the Circuit, other attendees and organisers.

*From Marcia Pinnock*

This was the first time I had been to Central Hall or even a healing conference and I found it spiritually awe inspiring! It was amazing to see how God worked through people, sharing and praying for one another, people from all walks of life. I enjoyed hearing the testimonies from our American friends and seeing how God's healing grace permeated the vast congregation that attended. The atmosphere was amazing.

Listening to the speakers exposed me to an array of emotions and challenged me to ask questions of myself and God which was helpful to explore at our healing meeting later.

Generally speaking I had a great time and was left feeling an immense sense of peace.

## Quiet Zones

*Rev Peter Catford*

Quiet Zones has been out on the road again after Holy Week at Northolt Park Baptist and has also been installed for five days on West Ealing Broadway thanks to the generosity of Christina Tom-Johnson allowing the Community Hub to be used as a prayerful space.

Volunteers from across the Circuit and from ecumenical partners stewarded the days. Over 200 people came in and spent time in creative prayer. The majority of the people who came were adults, from all faiths and none, who in the midst of busy days responded to the invitation, personally given, to come in and look around. Furthermore, the giving of invitations led to conversations with over 250 people who did not have time or felt uneasy about coming in to the zones.

Thank you to all who helped with the offer of space, setup, stewarding and putting away.

We ask your prayers for the coming months as Quiet Zones is back on the road again.

22<sup>nd</sup> September in Greenford for a week  
20<sup>th</sup> October at Northolt High School for a week  
10<sup>th</sup> November at Willow Tree School (Northolt)  
17<sup>th</sup> November at North Ealing School for a week

Anyone interested in knowing more or able to help out please contact Peter or Suva Catford.

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## The Extra Mile

Applecourt has produced a short film for the Social Responsibility Commission (SRC) exploring the Wesleyan tradition of social action. The film is designed to help inspire a passion for caring for others and to remind Methodists of the vital role social justice has had in forming the Methodist identity. A useful Study Guide resource has also been produced by Dr Paul Kybird, to enable further exploration and discussion for individual, small group and church based devotion.

You can find The Extra Mile and the study guide at [www.methodistlondon.org.uk/SRC](http://www.methodistlondon.org.uk/SRC) (towards the bottom of the page).

The Social Responsibility Commission advises the London District on policy and priorities for Methodist Social Responsibility in London; it co-ordinates and advocates involvement and encourages theological reflection on its nature and significance as an expression of Christian discipleship.





Methodist  
relief and  
development

*Alan Smith – AWC Co-ordinator Ealing Trinity Circuit*

Perhaps you think that AWC only asks for help – but the converse is also very much true. AWC can give help in the understanding of the needs of others. There is a wealth of material in AWC '**Resources**' and other sections of their website available for use in bible study, youth groups, house groups, fellowship meetings or as part of a service.

For example

- Learn about some of the causes of poverty
- Examine need issues from a Christian perspective
- Support long-term development for the world's poorest people
- Take action to challenge global injustice

This year's Harvest pack includes worship material, posters and more, supported with visual aids (*Powerpoint, Video and MP3*). The theme of the service is '**Potential. God sees it. Do we?**' The packs are not year dependent and much of the material can be used at any time in support of a range of study or service activities.

The '**Iota Course**' is an award winning multimedia course that looks at the causes of poverty and the things that Christianity has to say about global injustice. Containing eight sessions in total, you and your group can choose to include those that interest you most

The '[Testimonies from the Margins](#)' small group resource contains everything you need to learn more about the campaign, speak out and raise awareness in your church. This first action pack includes a Bible study focusing on the life of the prophet Amos, testimonies from garment workers in Bangladesh exposing injustice in the fashion industry and ideas for taking action.

Alternatively, do you just need some music and/or pictures as part of reflective intercession prayers – both waiting to be downloaded?

Need something to help with the church magazine - news items that can be downloaded, monthly e-news or perhaps just insert the quarterly 'News' (copies are free) which will help understanding how sustainable development aids some of the world's poorest peoples.

The new AWC Church CAN (Church Community Action for Neighbours) initiative builds on AWC's existing strengths in partnering with small local organisations, by working in collaboration with churches and offering training and support so that they can effectively respond to the needs of their local communities.

Look at the All We Can website [www.awc.org.uk/resources](http://www.awc.org.uk/resources), or contact me so I can assist you in getting the material that would help you. e-mail: [allwecan@questa.co.uk](mailto:allwecan@questa.co.uk) or call: 07802 446 835

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## Jesus Kids and Compassion

*Margaret McCarthy*

*Northolt Local Arrangement Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July*

Dorcas and Nicole (two of our older Jesus Kids) wrote and led the entire Sunday service at Northolt on 20th July on the theme of 'Compassion' which they told us meant '**Love in Action**'. To demonstrate this Catherine had written a short drama telling the story of the Good Samaritan with the chat show host Paige Turner (Isha) interviewing Ishmael (Rachel) the Jewish man and Peter (Catherine) as the Samaritan. The Jesus Kids Leaders thought you might like to read the simple powerful script.

### Showing Compassion Script - The Good Samaritan

#### Characters:

Paige Turner - a talk show host

Ishmael - a Jewish man who got mugged

Peter - a Samaritan Man

*\*Three chairs at front of the Church in talk show layout\**

**Paige Turner:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to 'The Word' with your host Paige Turner. On today's show we are joined by a Jewish man who was mugged on his way to Jericho. He was saved by a Samaritan despite the fact that the two groups didn't tend to like each other. Please welcome onto the stage Ishmael and Peter the man who saved him!

*\*Ishmael and Peter enter, shake hands and sit down\**

**Both:** Good morning, Paige!

**Paige Turner:** Now, Ishmael would you like to share your story with the audience?

**Ishmael:** Certainly, last week I was heading to Jericho from my home in Jerusalem when I was attacked by masked muggers who took all my possessions including my clothes!

**Paige Turner:** Sounds terrible!

**Ishmael:** It really was! As I lay there close to death, many people passed by me, including a Priest and Levite, yet they refused to help me. I had lost all hope when a Samaritan came up to me and helped me to my feet.

**Paige Turner:** What happened then?

**Peter:** Well, I'd seen Ishmael in such a bad way and I decided that despite the fact that my people dislike the Jews, I decided to help the man. I picked him up and clothed him then put him on the back of my donkey. From there I took him to a hotel where I asked the owner to look after Ishmael for as long as he needed and I'd pay the fee when I passed through again.

**Ishmael:** He literally saved my life! I'd have been dead without him!

**Paige Turner:** Peter, I'm sure all the audience are wondering what drove you to save Ishmael when you could have walked away?

**Peter:** Well, I was always taught that you should love others as yourself and show the greatest compassion to all you meet. Ishmael needed my help so I did what any man would do and helped him. To all you (*points to audience*) sitting in the audience, I plead with you to follow my example and be compassionate to your fellow man or woman. It will surely make our world a better place!

**Paige Turner:** What a great message! Thank you for sharing your amazing story with us! Give it up for our special guests Ishmael and Peter! (*applause*). Join me after the break when we meet a blind man who was healed by Jesus the carpenter's son from Nazareth.

**\*END\***

Our Jesus Kids invited 'Rose', a young woman who had experienced real poverty as a child in the Philippines and had been sponsored via an organisation called 'Compassion' and now lives in London, to address the congregation. After hearing Rose's story, the Jesus Kids challenged us as a church to sponsor a child and take him or her out of poverty via Compassion. With a donation of 25p per week from 30 people we can raise the £360 per year needed to sponsor a child.

*You can find out more about Compassion by going to their website at [www.compassionuk.org](http://www.compassionuk.org) - Editor.*

# World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women (WFM&UCW) European Areas Seminar

*Blossom Jackson*

The 9<sup>th</sup> WFM&UCW Joint European Area Seminar 2014 that took place in Pomezia, Italy on 5<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> June, was attended by women from about 19 European Units from 25 different countries, plus World Conference executives from other parts of the world. It appeared that the greater number of women, who represented their countries, were from the UK and Northern Ireland. There were three delegates from Ealing Circuit - Rev. Suva Catford (World Church), Rebecca Catford and myself.

This year, 2014 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> of WFM&UCW the foundation of which was inspired by Helen Kim from Korea in 1938. So it was fitting that our current UK Helen Kim Scholar, Rachel Coates, was a member of the UK planning team. Alison Judd, our Area Officer and member of the MWiB executive, played a key part in the organising the conference.

The theme for the Seminar was '**Forward Together...in Hope.**' The logo consisted of three figures with arms stretched upwards on a road surrounded by the colour green, with a Dove and Cross hovering on a circle that encompassed them. The Circle is said to represent the wholeness and unity of the sisterhood of Christian women. Whilst the three figures purport to represent us all walking hand in hand on a winding path that God has called us to walk, the dove symbolises God's presence and the green colour represents hope.

The conference activities were as diverse as the preceding one held in Erskine Bridge in 2009, with its theme '**Be salt, be light**', which I also attended.

Our hotel was located just outside Rome and we were greeted by a welcoming party and travelled there by coach. As usual, the program included the obligatory 'keynote' speeches and the first was delivered by Gabriel Lio, Baptist Pastor and secretary of the Dept of Evangelism, Italian Evangelical Churches. Her talk focussed on her work with immigrants from Ghana, the Philippines and the Waldensian people. The Waldensian church has its origin in the middle ages and took its name from Valdo, a merchant, who after conversion in 1170, decided to preach the word of God to his fellow citizens. In 1979 the Waldensians united with the Methodist church of Italy and have since then had a united Synod

The other keynote speaker, was the charismatic Elise Lindqvist, from Sweden. She works with prostitutes and does advocacy work relating to people trafficking. She gave a graphic account of how she herself was forced into a life of prostitution, and her subsequent conversion that has led to her current acclaimed work. The two Bible studies including the one by Jill Baker, our past President, on the life of Miriam, was inspirational.

There was a good selection of seminars and workshops as well as prayer stations on the 8 UN Millennium Goals, to which WFM&UCW & MWiB subscribe. Delegates

could visit these and see an illustration of a selection of activities that is currently being delivered in pursuance of the achievement of the goals. They could also attach a prayer or some emblem that might be relevant to an individual station. There were copious opportunities for engaging with other people during discussion at meal times or elsewhere.

On Sunday we had an opportunity to worship at different Italian/English Churches in Rome. I chose the Chiesa Valdese in Piazza Cavour, close to the Vatican. It is celebrating its centenary year. The congregation was warm and the historic church with its painted windows was beautiful. The service was in Latin and the welcome to us was said in English. The tunes were mainly Wesleyan, so we could sing, albeit in Latin\*! During communion the congregation lined the walls of the church for the bread and wine of which there was much evidence of alcohol. In acknowledging our time honoured practice of using individual glasses in the UK, some were specially brought in for us! This was followed by a tasty lunch with wine, which we all enjoyed.

The closing session was on the 8<sup>th</sup>, as most people left by early the next morning. The bonus of conferences such as this one, is that it gives the opportunity for women to meet not only women from the UK, but also women from different parts of the world to hear each other's stories, learn something new and have fellowship with them. It is always a privilege to attend conferences such as this one and to be able to have our mission and service enhanced. My hope is that more young women would take up the opportunity to attend conferences such as this one for all of the foregoing information in this report!

*\* Or, more probably, Italian - Editor*

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## **Central Ealing Neighbourhood Forum**

Central Ealing is undergoing a time of fast development, not least with a new plan for Ealing Broadway station, and the new Morrisons in the Arcadia Centre. How do you want the centre of Ealing to look in ten years' time? What amenities or services should it have? Is a cinema more important than flats, or cultural venues more important than retail? And what kind of retail and transport?

The Central Ealing Neighbourhood Forum is a volunteer group of local people (including Jen Smith, on behalf of the Circuit) writing a 'Neighbourhood Plan' to guide planning policy and decisions. In order for the Council to accept the plan, it has to demonstrate wide consultation in the community. Have your say in a community survey - follow the link at <http://www.centralealingforum.com/>. It is free, fast, and truly can make a quiet difference to the shape of the Broadway. Be counted, and think about what kind of community you would like to live in, and pass through.

## Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) News



*Blossom Jackson, MWiB*

From September 2014, I will join the membership of MWiB Connexional Forum having been elected by the London District executive 2 years ago. The Forum is the policy making body for the MWiB movement and is headed by an executive that consists of:-

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Linda Crossley   | President: in office for 2 years  |
| Ann Judd         | Vice President: 1 year prior to being Vice-President and 1 year as Vice-President |
| Alison Judd      | WFM&UCW Area President: in office for 5 years                                     |
| Liz Marriot      | Communications Officer: in office for 5 years                                     |
| Gillian Wormsley | Finance and Resources Officer: in office for 5 years.                             |

The organisation also has a part time Administrator - Margaret Williams. Forum members' terms of office lasts for two or three years and the new members, including myself who will represent their districts, start in September. The staggered length of time allows for continuity and this change is the first since MWiB was launched in London, 3 years ago.

Details about MWiB can be found on its web site - [www.mwib.org.uk](http://www.mwib.org.uk). These include pictures and details of not only members of the executive, but also the Forum members.

Please also, put in your diaries the date of Ealing Circuit MWiB Promotional Open Day which will be held at Kingsdown on Saturday 4th October from 10.30am - 3.30pm. All are welcome, including men, so that hopefully more people can gain a better understanding of the work of MWiB apart from the Annual Easter Offering Service and MWiB Circuit services. The programme planned includes worship; 2-UN Millennium Goals Prayer points; Living with Disability- Rev Karen Bell; Bible study - Jill Baker, 1st President MWiB; Group work.

People could come for sessions if this would be convenient, but attending the whole day's event would allow people to engage with each other more meaningfully.

I ask the Circuit to continue to pray for me, as I try to give back to my church and community the rich array of skills and experiences from my personal and professional life, for which I most probably cannot fully repay.

# He's Not Dead Yet

*Donald Burling, Acton Hill*

Do you remember Billy Graham at Earl's Court in 1989? I was there as a choir member and counsellor. Some memories may stretch back to 1966 or even 1954.

Born just before the end of World War 1 and brought up on a dairy farm in North Carolina, Billy Graham made a commitment to Christ at the age of 17 following an appeal from a visiting evangelist. Very early he felt a calling to preach the Gospel to others. Ordained in a Southern Baptist church, he began conducting evangelistic campaigns in many places. In 1946/7 he visited United Kingdom twice, the second time staying six months, travelling around and preaching in many different places. No spectacular results are recorded.



It was while preparing for a campaign in Los Angeles in 1949 that he began, like many people, to have doubts about the reliability of the Bible. He decided to commit his doubts to God, and to accept it as His Word.

It was at Los Angeles that his preaching ministry really took off. Hundreds of thousands flocked to hear him, and among those who made decisions to commit themselves to Christ were a number of Hollywood stars - among them singing cowboy Stuart Hamblen, author of the song "It is no secret what God can do". There was nothing spectacular about Graham's preaching, but he had a gift for putting the message of the Gospel across in a clear and simple way, and of making people see that they had to decide whether to receive or reject it.



His 1954 London crusade, based on the former Harringay Arena, a dog-racing track, was well planned and advertised. But the greatest publicity coup came from what may be called a divinely inspired clanger. A calendar had been produced containing the following quotation from Billy Graham: "*.... what Hitler's bombs could not do, socialism with its accompanying evils accomplished.*" In Britain that would obviously look like an attack on the Labour Party, and "socialism" had been corrected to "secularism". But some unrevised copies found their way to England. A journalist

spotted the quotation, and in no time the British popular press was up in arms. Thus before Billy Graham arrived he was already notorious - everyone had heard of him and many were curious to know what he was like. The crowds wanting to attend the meetings far exceeded the capacity of the stadium. More than three million are reckoned to have heard him preach, and over 38,000 decisions for Christ were recorded.

Of course not all these "decisions" were genuine and long-lasting, but a great many were. Converts were told to join churches near where they lived, but the tragedy was that many were put off by the welcome and support they did not receive there.

Billy Graham continued to conduct evangelistic campaigns in many parts of the world, visiting Britain again several times from 1955 to 1989. His "Mission England" campaign of 1984 concentrated on the north of England, since it coincided with Luis Palau's Mission to London. The first edition of "Mission Praise" (282 pieces) dates from that time.

Now aged 95, Billy Graham is scarcely able to get up from his chair without help, but he remains as keen as ever on evangelism. In his last book, "The Reason for My Hope" published last year, he argues for a grassroots evangelisation movement based on local churches. As an aid to this, the Billy Graham Evangelisation Association UK has produced a half-hour video entitled "The Cross", which will be released on the 7<sup>th</sup> November, Billy's 96th birthday. It will include a number of recent interviews with him, recorded at his mountain-top home in North Carolina. Recently I had the opportunity of attending a presentation about this at Lambeth Palace.

Will this video and the proposed campaign make any difference? That depends on us, among others. Do we want to see people around us saved from damnation and brought into the joy of knowing Jesus Christ, or doesn't it matter? Unless we Christians are willing to commit ourselves to serious prayer and action, it will probably come to nothing. Let us take to heart Charles Wesley's words that we sometimes sing:

*I would the precious time redeem,  
And long to live for this alone:  
To spend and to be spent for those  
Who have not yet my Saviour known.*

For further information and details of how to pre-order the 'The Cross' DVD go to [www.myhopewithbillygraham.org.uk](http://www.myhopewithbillygraham.org.uk)

*"My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which, I believe, comes through knowing Christ."* Billy Graham



# Re-enchanting Christianity

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

Readers of the Methodist Recorder will be aware that the continuing decline in membership and attendance at our churches has been exercising various correspondents of late. The message is stark, and has been for some time. The Methodist Church of Great Britain is on the slide. One recent letter described how, three years ago the writer's chapel had to close after 119 years. The decline, he felt had probably set in 50 years ago. Despite active efforts to become family-friendly, and welcoming with social and community activities, numbers had dwindled to the point where the chapel was no longer sustainable. People had come, but had not stayed to join in the worshipping life of the chapel. The writer went on to describe how he felt that, for people outside the church, what goes on inside with its peculiar language and customs has little, if anything to do with their daily lives. In sum, 'church' as we know it was irrelevant to them.

I grew up attending the local Methodist church on the Hartcliffe housing estate in Bristol. However, the faith which I acquired as a youngster did not withstand my university studies. As an organist, I stayed associated with the church, but did not regard myself as 'belonging' to it. For quite some years I stopped going to church altogether, hanging up my organ shoes in the process. I can certainly attest that stepping outside the church does not cause the sky to fall in. Life goes on – work, play, social activity and so on. When I lived in Palmers Green I recall passing the local Baptist church on the number 29 bus. It had a notice outside saying "Seven Days without Church makes One Weak". The pun was amusing in its way, but the message was essentially nonsense – if you're outside the church, you almost certainly do not feel any the weaker for it.

On another occasion outside the Safeway supermarket in Wood Green, members of the Southgate Evangelical Tabernacle were evangelising. The message, which was being barked out by a man with a very hoarse voice, was that "God had to have blood in order for our sins to be forgiven. That's why Jesus had to die on the cross". The queue for the bus did not exactly look convinced, or interested for that matter. The language made no sense to them, whatever one might make of the message, which I have to say made God seem a pretty strange blood-thirsty character. This question of language came home to me when I attended an Alpha course in the mid-90's. Having not attended church for some years, I was struck that the language of Christianity was one I recognised, but had not heard for quite some years. The language we speak in church is not one that is much used outside. Little wonder that there is a disconnect.

The question which has to exercise our minds is whether the church and Christianity can connect with people again. Once people regard Christianity and the church as irrelevant, they no longer listen. It then doesn't matter how good the message, it just gets lost. I recently read a book entitled '*Re-enchanting Christianity*' by Dave Tomlinson which attempts to address this question. The author is an Anglican priest at the liberal high church end of the spectrum. He grew

up in a Brethren chapel, moved into the house church movement following a 'charismatic' experience and became one of its leading lights before becoming disenchanted with its fundamentalist conservatism and moving on again into the Anglican priesthood.

Tomlinson's faith has not been static. Whilst many of us might feel that faith ought to be something that grows and deepens over time in a smooth progression, he argues that faith goes in 'arcs'. The faith one has at any given time may not withstand the test of time and may have to be given up. Given up, that is in order to move on to something more profound, retaining what is most valuable but shedding what is no longer tenable. One arc gives way to another. For Tomlinson, the narrow faith of the Brethren chapel had to give way to something new following his charismatic experience. That new faith lasted for many years, but eventually he had to move on again finding that, in its turn that faith had ceased to be up to dealing with life as he was experiencing it. Perhaps in the future he will experience the need to make further moves. He doesn't rule that out.

The saddest thing for Tomlinson is that many people who grew up in the church drift away when they find their early faith wanting. They assume that there is only one way of faith, and having lost it, close the book and largely forget about it. Indeed, he believes that within the church, many regard faith as essentially fixed and that doubting shows a kind of weakness which should remain hidden. Faith, he argues is something that waxes and wanes. Doubting is not just normal, but essential if there is to be growth in faith. Within the church there needs to be space for people to doubt, and to express those doubts without feeling that they are somehow 'second class' Christians, out of place or simply not welcome.

Tomlinson seeks to address some of the reasons why the church fails to connect with people as well as expounding on aspects of Christian faith and belief. In various areas he shows that some of what we might take to be the church's settled teaching - the nature of the atonement for instance, is but one way of interpreting things. He might seem liberal to some in the views he expresses, but his message isn't simply that we must 'move with the times' and abandon chunks of traditional belief. He is clear that Christ, and the person of Christ is absolutely central to his Christian belief. Christ, he asserts is the decisive embodiment of God's message to humankind. So, it isn't just Christ's message that's important, but that through Christ God enters this world and becomes part of it.

That said, Tomlinson firmly believes that the church must take account of how society has developed and evolved over time. This involves recognising that much of Christian belief was formulated in very different circumstances from today's society. Religion (whether Christian or any other) needs to develop and adapt in order to continue to speak to people in ways they can relate to and to be able to respond to their deepest needs.

Many Christians (still) take the Bible literally. Evolution is loudly rejected by many in the United States on the basis that it contradicts 'God's Word'. Yet it seems foolish to try to maintain that the Bible is some kind of repository of *scientific* truth. Science

has its own very powerful methods of enquiry and discovery. These have changed the way we view the world immeasurably, and will continue to do so. Our faith needs to encompass this vast increase in our knowledge or risk becoming an irrelevance. The prophets of the Old Testament, and Jesus himself, I'm sure would have thought the world to be flat, because that's what people believed then. We would scarcely want to continue to assert that the earth is flat just because it formed part of the world view at the times when the various books of the Bible were being written.

Similarly, we cannot ignore the ways in which society has changed. At the height of the slave trade, many would have used various Biblical passages to justify slavery. Some slaves refused to read Paul's letters because of his statement 'slaves be obedient to them that are your masters' and the way Christian ministers used that passage in preaching to them. Similarly, one can cite passages from Exodus and Leviticus that regulate (and therefore condone) slavery. For example, Leviticus 25:44 clearly allows the ownership of slaves, but only if they are taken from neighbouring nations. Doubtless, many of these passages would have regulated and ameliorated the practices of the day and may have reflected advances in the way people were treated at that time. Using them to justify slavery *now* would, however fly in the face of all we believe.

So, how does Tomlinson suggest we approach the Bible? We need, he says to read it critically. He starts from a presumption of God's all-inclusive love and justice. Does a given passage seem to exclude some group of people or other? If so, maybe it belongs to a different era and should be laid aside. Read in this fashion, Tomlinson believes the Bible retains its relevance for contemporary society.

Society in Britain today is vastly different from what it was a hundred, two hundred or three hundred years ago. One prominent change is the mixing of cultures and religions in our contemporary society. Like it or not, religions rub up against each other. The days when this country could be regarded as simply 'Christian' have passed. It is now not just multi-cultural, but multi-religious. This poses a problem, and not just for Christians, but for all people of faith. This might be summed up in a conversation heard by a primary school teacher between two children of different faiths,

*"Jesus is the Son of God you know."*

*"No, he's not"*

*"Yes, he is."*

*"No, he's not."..... and so on, ad infinitum.*

In truth, we have no way of deciding between the truth of different religions. Arguments to support why my religion is more true than the other man's come from within the religion itself. There is no way of comparing them on some common basis and determining which is 'true' and which 'false'. Christians believe that Christ embodies God's decisive message to humankind, Muslims believe the Qur'an contains God's final message. One can decide which one *prefers*, but not determine which is true and which, therefore is false.

Tomlinson argues that we need to respect people of other faiths. In all likelihood the various religions all contain at least something of God's message which means there will be something we can all learn from each other. That does not, however mean compromising our own beliefs, but respecting and listening to each other. The problem, in truth is not new. Christianity has lived with it for some centuries ever since Catholic and Orthodox diverged, and Protestant diverged from Catholic.

A further trend that Tomlinson notes can be characterised as 'spiritual but not religious'. This reflects a desire amongst many people to develop a sense of the depth and mystery of life. A casual look in many bookshops will show extensive 'mind - body – spirit' sections indicating a demand for things 'spiritual' but outside of traditional religious frameworks. Much of this might be described as 'New Age', but it reflects a wide thirst for the spiritual nonetheless. By and large this thirst has not been satisfied by the church. Tomlinson goes further and notes that this thirst for something 'more' also exists within the church.

Often, however Tomlinson finds that Christian spirituality is one of 'exile' and can be traced back to the Gnostic idea that things material are essentially evil whilst things of the spirit are essentially good. 'Spirituality' has often been viewed as a process of trying to transcend the material, and the body in particular with all its desires, in search of a higher, spiritual plane. If I close my eyes for a moment one image of spirituality that comes to mind is of something closed in, frigid and dry, lacking the marvellous sense of joy and wonder that comes if I imagine standing high on a hill viewing a vast panorama of countryside on a bright summer's day. Spirituality needs to embrace a sense of the sacred permeating our lives and the world around us, that we can find a sense of God in all things. In short a spirituality of 'belonging', a sense that we belong here, in this world, in these bodies, that God has given us these things to cherish and enjoy. As an old Jewish saying has it, "a good person will have to give account on the judgement day of all the good things which he or she has refused to enjoy when they might have done so".

For Tomlinson, Holy Communion is the central symbol of this spirituality of belonging. Holy Communion, as he puts it "*not only celebrates the love that God revealed in Christ, but also declares boldly that both the natural creation and the realm of human endeavour can bear the divine.*"

The foregoing gives a flavour of some of the issues Tomlinson raises. In the final chapter of his book, he sets out some ideas as a kind of 'mission statement' for the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century under a series of five headings –

### **1. Christian mission requires a 'kingdom' rather than a 'church' orientation.**

By this Tomlinson means a focus on Christ's central message of love, healing, hope, new life, justice, empowerment and liberation. This is about the possibility of transforming lives through an experience of the love of God, rather than the perpetuation of the Church. It is about God's love transforming not just individuals, but communities and ultimately the world.

## **2. Christian mission needs to be focussed on spirituality rather than apologetics**

Tomlinson suggests that far from becoming ever more secular, contemporary society is seeing a growth in 'spirituality'. A significant proportion of people (76% according to some surveys) admit to having had 'spiritual experiences'. The church needs to connect with these experiences by offering people a deeper sense of the mystery of God's loving presence in their lives. Worship needs to move from being 'devotional' to being 'spiritual' embracing art as meditation, workshops on different approaches to prayer, deepening self-awareness, discussions on the meaning of Christianity for us today and so on.

## **3. Christian mission needs to be holistic rather than dualistic**

By this, Tomlinson means that our mission should speak to the whole person, body-mind-spirit. A focus on 'saving souls' is too narrow, focussing on only a part of our being. He goes further and argues that holistic mission should embrace the world that God has given us. This leads to a greater concern and care for the world around us – the environment, matters of our communities and social justice both at home and in the wider world.

## **4. Christian mission needs to be dialogical rather than monological**

Here Tomlinson is contrasting monologue with dialogue. Monologues are spoken by one person, dialogues by two, if not more. Much of the time the church has spoken to, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say, at people. Has it listened? To engage with people, to pursue a dialogue with them implies listening to what they have to say and, perhaps letting ourselves be changed by them.

## **5. Christian mission needs to find expression through open, empowering church communities**

Tomlinson sees the church as a place to 'belong', a place which is genuinely open to all comers whoever they may be and whatever their position on matters of faith. The contrast is between 'believing before belonging', ie having to be a 'Christian' before you can belong in a church community, to one where there is a place for everyone irrespective of where they are on their faith 'journey'. In other words, belonging should not be a matter of having been 'converted' or 'saved', but simply being on a faith journey in a community which encourages and accepts expression of where we are on that journey.

*'Re-enchanting Christianity'* is a powerful and challenging book and I don't think I've really done it full justice. It's well worth reading for one thing is sure, without finding ways to connect, or re-connect Christianity with the world as it now is, the church will remain on a path of long-term decline.

*'Re-enchanting Christianity'* by Dave Tomlinson was published in 2008 by Canterbury Press, price £9.99.

## **Circuit Services this Quarter**

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 2.00pm at Holy Trinity, High St., Southall  
*Welcome Service for Rev Rachel Bending and Deacon Lemia Nkwelah*

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October at 6.00pm at Hanwell  
*Sacred Songs of Praise*

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30pm at Greenford  
*Local Preacher Recognition Service*

## **Circuit Discipleship – “Jesus through Asian Eyes”**

As part of the Circuit’s Discipleship programme, in October and November there will be an 8 week course on Sunday afternoons at Greenford – “Jesus through Asian Eyes”. For many people western culture is intertwined with Christianity. So, how do people from Asia view Christianity? This course seeks to answer questions and to dispel misconceptions about Christianity as seen by people from Asian backgrounds. The course will run on Sunday afternoons at Greenford between 4.30 and 6.00pm from 5<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October and 9<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November and will be led by Soul in Northolt & Greenford (SING).

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## **Pews to Enjoy for Furniture, Presents and More**

Ealing Green Church will be removing their pews the week of September 21<sup>st</sup>. Some are oak 157cm (L)x 51cm (W) x 96cm (H) with one side (possibly two sides but with extra carpentry) and others are pine 665cm (L)x 45cm (W) x 86cm (H) that can be cut down. The money raised from their sale will be put towards Ealing Green’s refurbishment fund. If you are interested in the pews to buy or to make a donation to refurbishment funds please contact the church administrator (Rebecca Catford) or secretary (Anita Oji) as soon as possible at [egcadministrator@btconnect.com](mailto:egcadministrator@btconnect.com) or [egcsecretary@btconnect.com](mailto:egcsecretary@btconnect.com) or call 020 8810 0136. Note that the church is unable to arrange transport of the pews.

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## **Choir Music Available for Free**

Hanwell Methodist Church no longer has a choir but has a lot of sheet music because the church had prize-winning junior and senior choirs in the past. I have catalogued and counted the secular sheet music sets. If anyone is interested in them and would like a list, please email me, Mary Blackwell on [mleverettb@gmail.com](mailto:mleverettb@gmail.com)

A list of religious sets will follow eventually but this collection is more extensive and may take a while to catalogue. Watch this space for it.

## Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) Open Day

Kingsdown Methodist Church

4<sup>th</sup> October 2014, 10.30am – 3.30pm

- Worship & Fellowship
- 2 Millennium Goals - Prayer Points
- 'Living with Disability' – speaker Rev. Karen Bell
- Bible Study with Jill Baker

*Come and learn more about MWiB*

## Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill

Sunday afternoons at 4.00pm

Programmes at the door £6.00, concessions £5.00, children £2.00

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> October  | Richard Cooper, clarinet with Robert Bottriel, piano |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November | Richard Boothby, solo viol da gamba                  |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> December | Kaleidoscope double wind quintet                     |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> February | Julia Chaplina, piano                                |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> March    | Daniel Ciobanu, piano                                |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> May      | Yoshiko Miyagawa, soprano                            |

## Events at Hanwell this Quarter

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2.30 – 5.00pm

### All Age Autumn Art & Craft Day

*Bulb planting, children's crafts, painting competition, cake stall, face painting,  
Harvest decorations, scarecrow making and more...*

Admission free, refreshments available

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November at 7.30pm

### Gareth Knox in Concert

Works for the piano by Mozart, Schubert and Chopin

*Tickets in advance £10.00, children £5.00 including finger buffet*

*Call Barbara on 020 8991 1913, Mary on 020 8579 0373 or Rita on 020 8813 1871*

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 10.30am – 2.30pm

### Frost Fayre

Admission free, refreshments and light lunches available

*Further details nearer the time*

## Remember – Autumn 2014

*Compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger*

The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue,  
Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise,  
The Lord is all I have, and so I put my hope in him.

*Lamentations 3 V.22-24*

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;  
His faithfulness continues through all generations.

*Psalm 100 V.5*

I am a little pencil in the hand  
of a writing God who is sending  
a love letter to the world.

*Mother Teresa*

## On Being a Christian Aid Collector (May 2014)

I'd got up early, had a shower, washed my hair and thought I'd scrubbed up OK before setting off to collect for Christian Aid outside the Co-op in Pitshanger Lane. A man came up to me and asked how the money was spent. Truth to tell I hadn't read up anything about it for a few years, so said the first thing that came into my head (which may or may not be right!).

"It's used to help people in underdeveloped countries to help themselves," I said. "Christian Aid buys them machinery for agriculture, also seeds to sow and money to help them dig wells and things like that."

The stranger said, "You said that right from the heart, not as though you were reading from a paper. I'm a scientist. I don't believe in God but I do believe in helping humanity, and I think it's lovely to see someone of your age standing in the street doing that."

With that, he generously put some money in the tin and left.

How did that stranger make me feel? Well, I felt a warm glow on the inside and quite a bit older on the outside! It was only when I got home and realised I'd forgotten to mention how Christian Aid goes to the rescue of the victims of earthquakes and so many other disasters we read about quite often.



## **Simple Ways to Bless Your Day**

Take joy in the gift of today  
and count your blessings.  
Shine in the light of God's love,  
but try to forgive and forget.  
Grow gracefully and seek simplicity.  
Stand and be counted but  
be true to your belief.

Encourage those around you but only  
invest your time in things that matter.  
Keep the faith by filling your life with love.  
Share God's Word to be strong in the Lord.  
Pursue what is true to fuel your faith.  
Listen with your heart, but speak with care.  
Delight in creation by memorising the scriptures.  
Celebrate God's promises, so say your prayers.

Believe in miracles,  
so live the life, for minutes count.

*Anonymous*  
(found on the of a 12<sup>th</sup> century church)

## **Looking for God**

I sought to hear the voice of God  
and climbed the topmost steeple.  
But God declared: Go down again,  
I dwell among the people.

*Louis L Newman*

## **A Prayer for Those in Need**

Heavenly Father, remember in your love all who suffer; the sick, especially those with life limiting conditions and the disabled. We remember those who have died or been injured in the areas of the world where peace does not reign.

Remember in your love all who mourn the loss of loved ones, whether through sickness, accidents, violence or natural disasters.

May all in need find comfort, strength and freedom in the living Christ.

Amen

## **The Power of Touch**

I don't know who it was who gave me a card about 'Maggie's'. The card said *Being at Maggie's is like having someone put an arm around and say, "You are not alone; we are here to help."*

Some of you may have visited or been helped by Maggie's, the centre next to Charing Cross Hospital, which offers support to anyone affected by cancer, whether as a patient, a relative or a friend. As well as a friendly welcome, cup of tea and counselling, Maggie's offers massage to those who would like it. I'm sure that many people have benefited greatly by having caring hands massaging their back and easing their stress and strains.

I watched a TV programme recently that focused on patients in the A & E departments of a hospital. An elderly man was there with his wife. She had Alzheimer's and they had gone to hospital when she had fallen at home. The man told the doctor, "I know she is going to deteriorate. All I can do is hold hands."

There are some lovely stories about touch in the New Testament. One of my favourites is about the woman who had been sick for twelve years who touched the hem of Jesus' cloak. We read in Matthew Chapter 9 v21: she said to herself, "If I can only touch his cloak, I will get well." You will remember what happened next: Jesus turned round and saw her and said, "Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well." At that very moment the woman became well.

There are many other examples of the power of touch in the Bible. Perhaps you, too, have a favourite one.

## **What is Faith?**

Faith is putting your hand out in the dark and finding it held.

Amen

## Remember at Evening

Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

*John 14 V 27*

Jesus,  
Hope of our hearts,  
You always live within us, and by your Gospel  
You say to each one of us,  
“Do not be afraid;  
I am with you.”

*Brother Roger of Taizé*

## Readings for Autumn about Touch

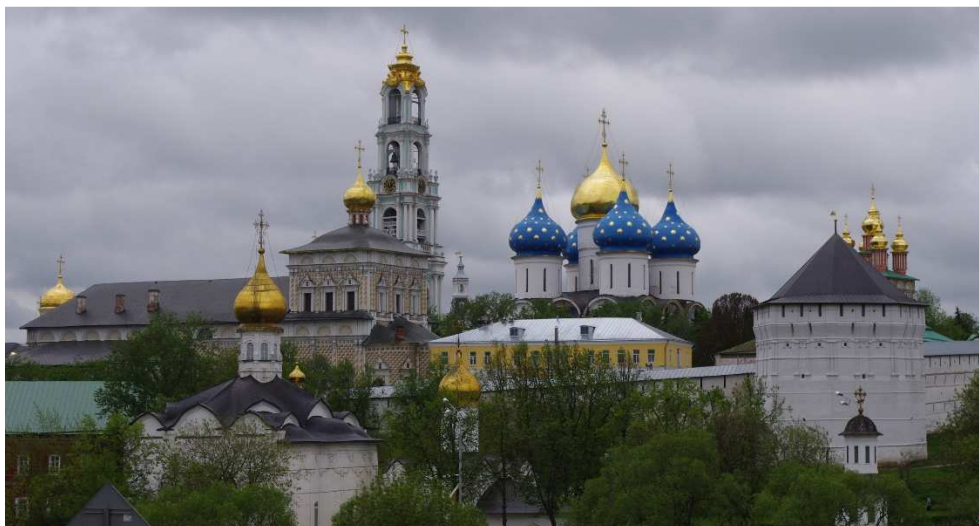
Matthew Ch. 9 v. 19-22

Isaiah Ch. 6 v. 5-8

Luke Ch. 18 v. 15-17

Mark Ch. 10 v. 13-16

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*Trinity Monastery of St Sergius at Sergiev Posad, Russia*

## Circuit Directory Update

The 2014/15 Circuit Directory is currently being finalised

## Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

[as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

### September

7<sup>th</sup> Sun 2.00pm **Circuit Welcome Service** for Rev Rachel Bending and Deacon Lemia Nkwelah at Holy Trinity, Southall

17<sup>th</sup> Wed 8.00pm **Circuit Meeting at Hanwell**

27<sup>th</sup> Sat 2.30pm **Hanwell: All Age Autumn Art & Craft Day**  
Admission free, refreshments available

### October

4<sup>th</sup> Sat 10.30am **MWiB Open Day at Kingsdown**  
3.30pm *see p23 for details*

5<sup>th</sup> Sun 11.00am **Hanwell: Harvest Festival** followed by Harvest Lunch  
*All welcome!*

5<sup>th</sup> Sun 4.00pm **Acton Hill - Iris Axon Concert Series**  
Richard Cooper (clarinet) and Robert Bottrliell (piano)  
£6.00, concessions £5.00. children £2.00

19<sup>th</sup> Sun 6.00pm **'Sacred Songs of Praise' Circuit Service at Hanwell**

22<sup>nd</sup> Wed 7.30pm Quarterly Plan Meeting

### November

1<sup>st</sup> Sat 7.30pm **Hanwell: Gareth Knox in Concert**  
*Tickets in advance £10.00, children £5.00*

9<sup>th</sup> Sun 6.30pm **Circuit Service at Greenford**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sun 4.00pm **Acton Hill - Iris Axon Concert Series**  
Richard Boothby, solo viol da gamba  
£6.00, concessions £5.00. children £2.00

22<sup>nd</sup> Sat 10.30am **Hanwell: Frost Fayre**  
2.30pm Admission free, refreshments and light lunches available

Articles for **'In-touch' Issue No 70 (December - February)** should be sent by e-mail headed **'In-touch'** to the Editor, **Gerald Barton**, or as hard copy to the Circuit Office.

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**Deadline for next issue: 1<sup>st</sup> November**