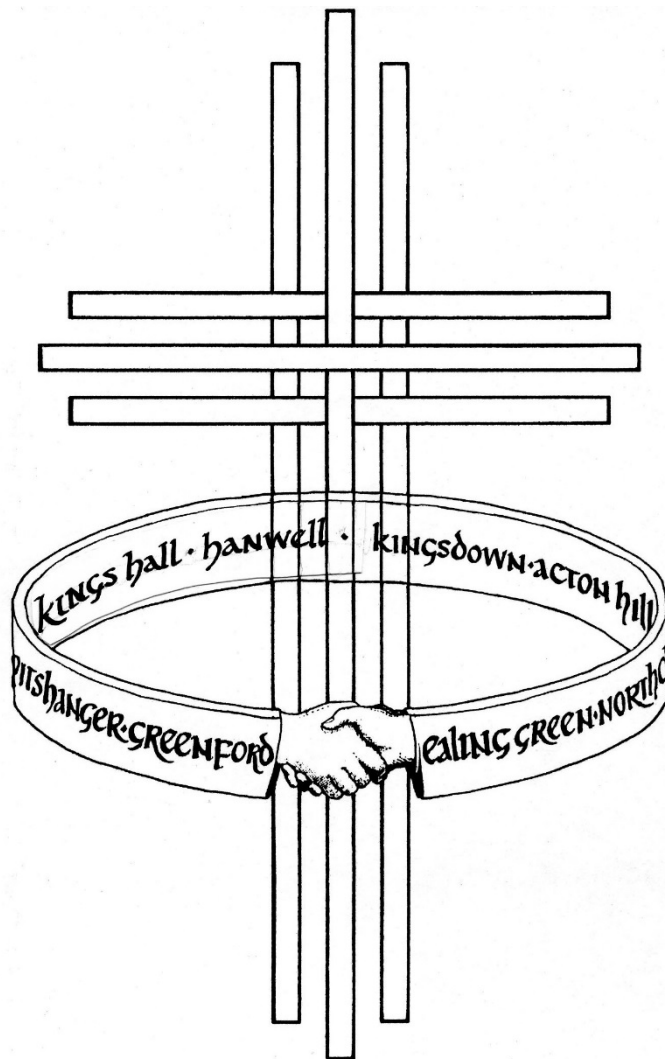


In-touch

No 71

March - May 2015



The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

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Circuit website
www.ealingtrinity.org.uk

Front Cover designed by Marion Narain

Rev Dr Jennifer Smith - Sabbatical

From the start of March until the end of May our Superintendent Minister, Rev Dr Jennifer Smith will be on 'sabbatical'. Whilst Jen is away, Rev Rachel Bending will be 'Acting Superintendent' and Deacon Richard Goldstraw will have pastoral charge of Acton Hill and Ealing Green. So, this time we start with a 'Superintendent's Letter' from Rachel followed by a letter from Jen outlining what she will be doing whilst she's away.

From the (Acting) Superintendent

Rev Rachel Bending

Welcome to the March - May edition of In-touch. This edition covers the period during which travels through Lent, Good Friday, Easter and to Pentecost and beyond. These central festivals and seasons of our faith ask us to pause and consider questions about who we think God is and, as a result who we are and how we should live as communities of God's Kingdom. This is also one of the main focuses of Mark's Gospel - our focus in the readings on Sundays this year.

As I write there are stories in *The Guardian* and elsewhere of comments made by Stephen Fry on God's nature. When asked what he would say in an imaginary conversation with God, Mr Fry is said to have responded that he would tell him, "How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault! It's not right. "It's utterly, utterly evil. Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world which is so full of injustice and pain?"

In his comment he raises one of the central questions about who God is and what our image of God is. It gets to the heart of the ultimate scandal of religion for many who look at it from beyond and for many of us who live and breathe within it. When we create an image of a God who is absolute power personified and who wields it like a spoiled oligarch, showering blessings on favourites and cursing randomly, we worship power itself and distort the Gospel.

The Gospel which we will follow through Lent to Good Friday turns upside down the worship of power. It has a power wielding Pilate left powerless by Jesus' refusal to speak. It shows God poor and humiliated, helpless on the cross, weeping for friends and for a beloved city. It shows a God whose nature is love rather than power who yearns for and weeps for our wholeness but does not enforce it.

Giles Fraser, in a comment in *The Guardian* writes "God is the story of human dreams and fears. God is the shape we try to make of our lives. God is the name of the respect we owe the planet. God is the poetry of our lives. Of course this is real, frighteningly real. Real enough to live and die for even. But this is not the same as saying that God is a command and control astronaut responsible for some wicked hunger game experiment on planet earth. Such a being does not exist. And for

precisely the reasons Fry expounds, thank God for that. I don't believe in the God that Stephen Fry doesn't believe in either" (Giles Fraser 2nd Feb 2015).

How will we respond to God's love and its challenge? During Lent and Holy Week the Circuit staff invite you to join with them and reflect and worship using the Gospels as our focus. You will read later of our Lent exploration that will travel from church to church giving us space to ask questions, to lay down our burdens and to offer prayer. You will also read our invitation to join us and enrich our exploration of Holy Week by your presence and your prayers.

Please also hold in your prayers all that is developing and changing in the Circuit at this time:

Jen as she travels and works on her sabbatical

Our churches as we explore and pray for visions for the future and put them into practice

The Circuit Policy committee and the Circuit Meeting as they review and reflect on our mission priorities - the hopes for a Schools Worker in Southall, the MHA 'Live at Home Scheme, and much, much more...

With love and prayers,

God bless,

Rachel

From Rev Dr Jennifer Smith

As you read this, I have begun my sabbatical, March - May 2015: Rachel Bending is acting Superintendent and Richard Goldstraw is looking after Ealing Green and Acton Hill, and I wanted to give you a little window into what I will be doing in these three months out of the circuit.

Methodist ministers are asked to take a sabbatical after ten years of active service, and then every seven years thereafter. During mine, I will be working at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts to do background research about a manuscript written by Roger Williams, (1603 -1681), the man about whom I wrote a PhD many years ago. The manuscript itself lives at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston, and I'll probably spend some time there as well, and perhaps at a library in Los Angeles.

The manuscript has a tangled title sounding more like a table of contents than a catch phrase, but it is a long attempt to explain the Jacob and Esau story. Or more properly, to read the 'typology' of the Jacob and Esau story to show how the

brother's lifelong conflict and final reconciliation prefigured conflicts in Roger William's own time and place. The large question he faced in the southern New England colonies in the mid-1600s was this: could a diverse society without state mandated belief be a peaceful place to live, or would it tear itself apart?

This was a man given to colourful prose. He had a best seller in London in 1644 with his polemic in favour of liberty of conscience, *'The Bloody Tenent of Persecution.'* His chief Boston adversary responded within the year with *'The Bloody Tenent washed clean in the blood of the lamb,'* and Williams followed up with an epic 300 pages called (you guessed it) the *'Bloody Tenent yet more Bloody by Mr. Cotton's attempt to wash it in the blood of the lamb.'* This was a man who was serious about freedom.

However, Roger Williams thought the state authority should control economic, personal, and household behaviour, to reinforce people's sense of obligation to one another and protect the 'tender religious conscience.' He was hopeful for reconciliation within society, much as Jacob and Esau were reconciled at the end of their lives - by his way of reading the Bible, the fact that they were reconciled proved that his society would be reconciled. He was hopeful.

I'll be reading church records, sermons, court proceedings, correspondence and anything else to give me a window into whether people in the network of small towns south of Boston in the later 1600s shared his hope. Did they feel safe and protected? Did they have confidence to build and save? Where were the threats they perceived? How did they manage and approach conflict in their churches, businesses, households? Fundamentally, how do people work out how to live peacefully in a diverse, changing society where economy and migration shift with the season?

With a sabbatical, the purpose is spiritual and intellectual refreshment. I am hoping to revisit the themes that were important to me when I first offered for the ministry, and think about them again now with the eyes of experience. I don't expect to have any earth shattering epiphanies, but I do expect to encounter God in the lives and hopes, fights and dreams of these seventeenth century companions. And I do expect to have insight about the role our small communities can play in their own diverse, changing society where economy and migration shift with the season, and perhaps write something about it. We shall see!

With every blessing,

Jen

Please pray that Jen has a fruitful time whilst she's on sabbatical and that she will returned refreshed and renewed. - Editor

Circuit Lent Course 2015 - Lent Zones

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday 18th February.

This year the Circuit Lent course is a little different. The Circuit Staff have planned together a series of reflective spaces that will travel around some of churches in the Circuit who have offered to open during Lent. The spaces use our experience of Quiet Zones over the last 16 months and bring them into the church and community.

The Lent Zones can be used by churches both inside the building and outside. The minimum commitment from each church is to open Tuesday evening and Thursday morning but it is hoped that spaces will be made available at other times in the week.



The Lent Zones will be made up of three spaces to reflect, as Jesus did in the wilderness, on the big questions of the day. Our aim is to discern where God is in these issues, which have been drawn from the questions and comments made in Quiet Zones.

The first space will be displaying some of the many questions asked during the Quiet Zones and people will be invited to reflect on them whilst walking or sitting among them and invited to add their own.

The second space will invite us to let go of some the baggage that we carry, the expectations of self and others, the guilt and hurt of the past and recognise our own buried emotions, that can hinder our living in God's kingdom.

The third space will be a place to pray for the world, using ribbons to symbolise our prayers.

Churches are invited to offer hospitality, with a place to sit and share - over a drink and some refreshments, so that questions that are raised and the thoughts that the Holy Spirit prompts can be shared with others, who are our companions on the journey, especially this journey through Lent.

The churches that have offered to host the Lent Zones are listed below. Times of discussion, reflection and prayers will be on Tuesday evenings and Thursday mornings at these venues. We are hoping to offer Quiet Zones after Easter, in partnership with the Welshore Community Hub Shop in West Ealing Broadway.

Week beginning	22 nd February	Greenford
	1 st March	Hanwell
	8 th March	Acton Hill
	15 th March	Kingsdown
	22 nd March	Northolt

Holy Week begins on the 30th March and the Circuit staff hope to spend time reflecting and praying at each of the Circuit churches throughout the week. The invitation is to join together, to spend time as a community of Methodist people, reflecting on this important week in Jesus' and our lives. Further details and the timetable of events will be announced.

Please offer one another time this Lent to watch and pray with Jesus.

Travelling through Holy Week

Rev Rachel Bending

Often in church we can find ourselves going from the excited crowds of Palm Sunday to the joyful resurrection of Easter Sunday without experiencing any of what lies between them.

The stories of Holy Week are intense and inspiring, raising questions that lie at the heart of our faith.

As a staff team we long to explore them together and invite you to join us.

We're in the process of planning what we hope will be an exciting, thoughtful and meaningful set of services for each night in Holy Week travelling across the circuit. Each service will focus on one aspect of the story of Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. They will take us from foot washing and sharing a meal, through arrest and trial to crucifixion and waiting. It will be possible to join us for all of the services, or to come to one or two as you are able.

We hope that

- Churches will be willing to vary their normal pattern and try something a little different
- People will travel across the circuit to each other's churches and get to know each other
- We will be enriched by sharing with many of you as the week goes on
- Together we might enter into the stories of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and be challenged by them and that through them our experience of Easter might grow and change.

Further details of services during Holy Week will be circulated soon - please look out for the invitations when they arrive in your church and come and join the services!

Why am I a Minister? – Rev Rachel Bending

When new ministers arrive in the Circuit I ask them to write a piece about why they became a minister. It's now Rev Rachel Bending's turn - Editor

The simple answer, I suppose, is that I could do no other and, believe me, I tried!

The feeling that I should become a minister was something that grew slowly but powerfully. There were no great visions or voices calling. I could tell you that if there had been I'd have been more likely to have listened and got on with it, that if the message had been unmistakable, a neon sign flashing in front of me, I would have known for certain and acted but I doubt it.

My first dispute was with the timing. I'd started a teacher training degree in good faith, felt that teaching was the path I should take and was excited by working with children (most of the time). Then in the middle of training I felt a disquiet pulling me towards ministry. If God is God surely the call could have come at a more convenient time for my career!

My second was also timing. I'd met this rather nice man called Thomas who I loved but who wasn't a Christian. How could I possibly have life with him and be a minister?

So I waited... Life with Thomas developed into marriage and teacher training developed into teaching in a tough school in Harlow where the children's lives were unbelievably hard and filled me with a yearning to make things better and a deep sadness about how things were. I found that in teaching I could only go so far towards making their lives better and felt called to do more to transform things.

Meanwhile the disquiet also developed and grew. While at university I had trained as a local preacher. In Harlow I became a circuit steward, joined in the life of a Methodist, Anglican and URC circuit and of a church share by Anglican/Methodist and Catholic communities. But as my church work increased so did the unease. I found myself working and reflecting with an Anglican curate and, almost unconsciously, exploring ministry again.

So I now developed fresh objections to do with the fact that I lived and worshipped in a deeply ecumenical world and worked with and was enriched by many faiths that I worked with and taught. Offering for the ministry would involve tying my colours to one mast. It felt restricting.

Each time the feeling of calling and the disquiet grew I found a new argument, a new reason for not responding.

The Bible is full of people who, when called, think of countless reasons why God must be wrong or the call must be a mistake. I'm in good company! The only difference was that my doubting and excuses went on for 11 years until the fateful day when a friend (that same curate who reflected with me for years) said "isn't it

time you stopped sitting on the fence?" and I found I had no more excuses and knew I could do no other.

At that point I candidated for ministry in the Methodist Church, my religious mother tongue, certain that the church would prove me right and God wrong and that I'd be turned down! The same friend commented that I seemed almost disappointed when I was proved wrong and the church accepted my candidacy and sent me for training.

Am I still disappointed? My answer is a strong "no." One of the amazing gifts of the church to those of us who are ordained is the resounding "they are worthy" proclaimed at ordination. So I finally got my deafening and undeniable message but its meaning had been proved before then and continues to be proved.

But I'm also content to have had those long years of avoidance, prevarication and searching. Thomas' way of seeing the world has opened my eyes to new visions and deeper questions than I could have asked if I just saw church and faith from the inside. And those children in Harlow still give me a rage and frustration when I hear politicians talking in ways that show they have no idea of the realities of such hardship. The yearning for their lives to be transformed, their struggles and their resilience are a constant sign of the need for transformation, for God's Kingdom, a living symbol of the world and God groaning and longing for transformation.

So there, right at the end of a list of excuses and reasons why not, is the real reason I'm a minister: I look around at a world which is filled with God's glory and is God's Kingdom but I also see a world which is not yet whole, where there is need beyond our imagining and I long to be part of the recreation and renewing. I'm called to preach good news, to help people to open their eyes to catch glimpses of God's glory so that I, as well as they may be enriched and inspired by their vision. I'm called to hear the cries that call for change and to help them to be heard.

Christian Aid

Ruby Warne, Kingsdown

Christian Aid week this year is 10th – 16th May and many of us will be taking part. Christian Aid Sunday throughout the UK will be on 10th May and will be followed by house-to-house collecting. Flag Day (London Area) is 16th May and the 'Circle the City' sponsored walk will be on Sunday 17th May.

The focus this year is on Ethiopia and especially on two women, Adi and Joki. Resource materials, including DVDs with films for adults, young people and children are now available and your co-ordinator can take any orders. Christian Aid daily devotional booklets are also available – you can read the words of a Christian Aid volunteer – *"It's not much use going on your knees on a Sunday and praying for the poor if you're not prepared to actually get up and do something. One of the big*

strengths of Christian Aid is that it gives you the chance to put something that matters to you into action, because you believe in it.”

‘So the poor have hope and injustice shuts its mouth’ – Job 5 v 16

Last year most of the churches in our Circuit participated and the amounts collected, including Gift Aid were –

Acton Hill	£262.00 (<i>incomplete</i>)
Ealing Green	£2,028.50
Greenford	£279.25
Hanwell	£1,903.84
Kingsdown	£3,767.24*
Pitshanger	£955.18
Total	£9,196.01

**Includes Circle the City (£352) and Richmond Park (£333) sponsored walks*

A prayer for Ethiopia

Dear God,
Let your hands rest upon your people of Ethiopia,
widows and orphans, aged and children, strangers and wanderers.
And join us also with them;
Protect and strengthen us, from all evil works keep us apart,
And in all good works unite us.
You are life for our souls.
You are the life of the world.
Amen

Christian Aid Week – www.caweek.org

From the Christian Aid website -

Christian Aid Week is the single biggest act of Christian witness in Britain and Ireland.

For thousands of people throughout the country, it's a way of answering Jesus's call to help people in need, and showing the community just how much good the church is doing in the world.

House-to-house collections raise almost £9m across the UK every year. Asking people to deliver and collect Christian Aid Week envelopes is the perfect opportunity to get your church out into your community while demonstrating God's heart for the poor.

Circuit Website

www.ealingtrinity.org.uk

Gerald Barton, Circuit Administrator

The Circuit website has been running for a few years, but it's worth reminding people that it's there and what it contains.

The website aims to provide information about our Circuit and its constituent churches both to people beyond our Circuit and to people within the Circuit. For example, people moving to the Ealing area may look for information about churches in the area, so there are individual **Church pages** for each church providing basic details – location, services, ministers, other contacts etc. plus links to individual church websites so people can get more specific information if they wish. These pages aren't intended really intended for ourselves, but for 'outside' enquirers.

The **Contacts** page gives phone and e-mail details (but not postal addresses) for the Circuit staff including Monty Grigg as Circuit Property Administrator and myself in the Circuit Office. The **Links** page includes links to individual church websites within the Circuit, plus other useful Methodist websites.

Recently added to the website is a page for the monthly **Healing Service** at Greenford. This page gives people some background to the service, what happens at healing services, how to make prayer requests and so on.

All notices sent out to churches from the Circuit Office are reproduced on the **Notices** page. This is kept up-to-date and old notices regularly removed. Events and the various Circuit level meetings are also listed in the **Calendar**. Although it sounds a bit obvious, I can only circulate and put on the website the information about events etc. that people send me - please let me know what your church is up to and I will tell everyone else!

As every Methodist should know, the Quarterly Preaching Plan is central to the functioning of the Circuit. You can download a copy of the current and next plan (when it becomes available) from the **Preaching Plan** page. This contains details of who is preaching where and when, but does not contain the contact information that is available on the printed plan sent to church stewards and included in In-touch.

The **Living & Dying Well** page gives details of the series at Ealing Green. Both current and past sessions are listed so people can see the kind of topics that are covered. The **Lent Course** page gives details of this year's Lent Course. This page will 'disappear' when Lent is over and 'reappear' next year. The **Summer Service Series** page lets people download each of the services put together for last summer. Although summer is well behind us, I've kept the page 'live' as the services may be of interest to people beyond our Circuit.

The **Forms & Policies** page contains useful information for our churches and church officers. Included here are details of how churches can apply for grants from the Circuit, the Circuit's policy on grants for training, the Circuit's Safeguarding Policy and a link to the various safeguarding forms churches might need and a form for claiming expenses from the Circuit. The **Treasurers & Finance** page has links which allow you to download the Circuit's accounts.

The **In-touch** page has downloadable pdf versions of In-touch from edition no. 53 September – November 2010 onwards. These are the same as the print version, although they don't include the quarterly preaching plan and the Circuit Directory Update section has all details removed.

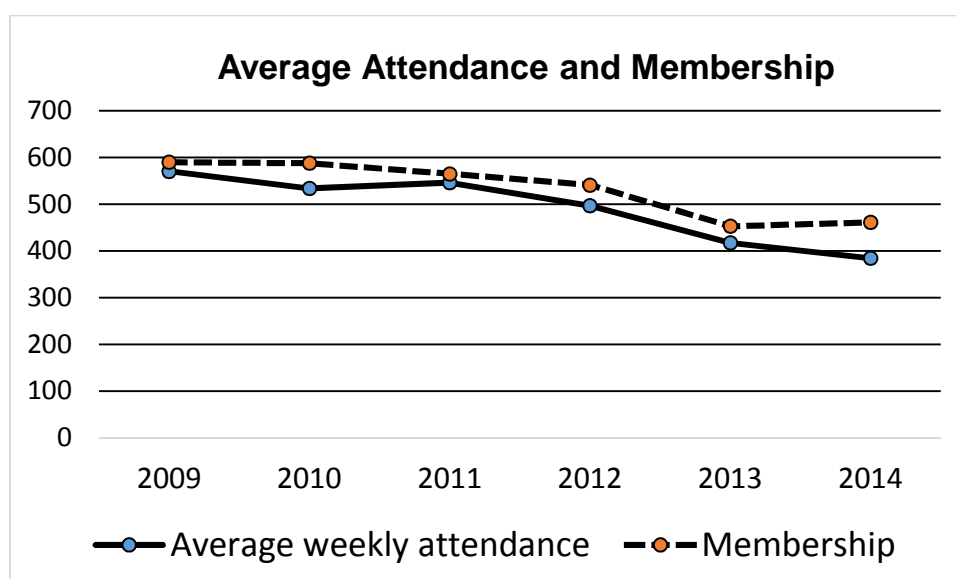
Finally, **The Buzz** page links to the website for 'The Buzz' where you can read stories about what's going on from around the Methodist Church nationally.

That gives you a summary of what's on the Circuit website. Some parts will stay the same and won't change much. Other parts get updated regularly. Whichever way, I hope you find the site useful!

The Circuit in Numbers

Each year during October churches are required to compile details of attendance and membership which are then collated together by the Methodist Church centrally to give a snapshot of the Church overall. How do things look for our Circuit?

This graph shows the overall trend in average attendance and membership across the Circuit from 2009 to 2014. Both average attendance and membership fell between 2009 and 2014, although membership increased a bit between 2013 and 2014 - the first time membership has increased from one year to the next for many years!



This table gives details of the number of members at each church in 2013 and 2014 and the number of new members recorded during 2014.

Church Membership 2013 - 14

	Members		New Members
	2013	2014	
Acton Hill	68	68	
Ealing Green	66	69	4
Greenford	80	84	4
Hanwell	50	50	4
Kingsdown	79	79	
King's Hall (am)	18	16	
King's Hall (pm)	24	24	
Northolt	46	50	2
Pitshanger	22	21	
Total	453	461	14

There were 14 new members recorded in 2014 and an overall increase in church membership of 8. This follows the successful membership classes that have been held in the Circuit in recent years.

This table gives details of average attendance at each church, showing firstly just adult attendance and then average attendance including children.

Average Attendance 2013 - 14

	Average Adult Attendance		Average Attendance incl children	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
Acton Hill	35	35	43	42
Ealing Green	46	46	50	51
Greenford	70	74	76	79
Hanwell	46	40	54	52
Kingsdown	70	50	80	65
King's Hall (am)	12	10	12	10
King's Hall (pm)	17	31	20	33
Northolt	45	29	58	37
Pitshanger	22	20	34	28
Total	351	323	414	382

Note: Hanwell's averages quoted here are for 3 weeks only excluding the well-attended Circuit Services held during October 2013 and 2014 as these distort the averages for the church.

The story here is not so good. Whereas some churches showed little change, or even some increase (King's Hall (pm) and Greenford) between 2013 and 2014, others showed markedly lower average attendance. Hanwell, Kingsdown and

Northolt all showed reductions. In the case of Hanwell and Northolt this was despite an increase in membership at both churches.

In short, our Circuit is broadly following national trends in the Methodist Church with gradual overall year-on-year reductions in membership and attendance. Taking a view over the last 20 years, in 1994 the churches that went on to form the Ealing Trinity Circuit had in total 844 members. By 2014 total membership had fallen to 461, a drop of 45%.

Against this rather depressing backdrop, it's worth remembering that many in our churches do a considerable amount of quiet good work. Many of us are involved in such initiatives as the Ealing Foodbank, the Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter, Ealing Street Pastors, the Volunteer Link Scheme, Acton Hill's Saturday Meals, Messy Church and others. Numbers aren't everything!

Oxfam's 1%

Gerald Barton, Editor

Oxfam recently published a report indicating that by 2016 1% of the world's adult population will hold as much wealth as the remaining 99%, up from about 48% today. This feels like staggering inequality. However, I am always a bit wary of the pictures that emerge from broad statistics as we can easily make assumptions about the figures that may not be entirely correct.

Firstly, 'wealth', which should, of course not be confused with 'income'. 'Wealth' is all the stuff – property, investments, holdings of shares, savings plans, cash etc. that we own. 'Income' is what we earn or receive in pensions etc.

According to Credit Suisse, household wealth in 2014 grew strongly as a result of strong housing markets and growth in the value of equities despite a sluggish world economy. Wealth can vary over time without us doing anything. If you own, or part own a house your wealth will have increased over the last few years merely because house prices have gone up.

Secondly, who are the 1%? Much of the Oxfam report is about the wealthiest 80 or so billionaires whose share of global wealth has, indeed increased and become concentrated in a smaller number of hands in recent years. However, it begs the question - how much wealth do you actually have to have to be in the top 1%?

In 2014, the world's population was estimated to be about 7.2bn people, of whom about 4.7bn were adults. So, the top 1% of the world's adult population must comprise about 47m people (i.e. almost as many as the UK's adult population of 48.4m). That's quite a lot of people and many, many more than the Oxfam report focusses on.

Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report 2014 gives a helpful breakdown of global wealth-

Number of Adults	Percent of adults	Income band US\$	Total wealth US\$trn	Percent total wealth
35m	0.7%	\$1m+	115.9	44%
373m	7.9%	\$100k - \$1m	108.6	41.3%
1,010m	21.5%	\$10k - \$100k	31.1	11.8%
3,282m	69.8%	Less than \$10k	7.6	2.9%
4,700m			263.2	

Although not the same as Oxfam's 1% vs 99% figures, the Credit Suisse analysis shows that 0.7% of the world's adult population owns 44% of global wealth. The two analyses are broadly in line with each other and underscore the point that the world is a very unequal place.

To be in that top 0.7%, your wealth has to be above \$1m. At current exchange rates (£1 = US\$1.5236) that would equate to about £656,000. So, to get into Oxfam's top 1% your wealth would be a bit lower – about £500,000. That feels wealthy, but not perhaps as wealthy as you might have thought. If I browse the estate agents' windows in Northfields Avenue, I see that the terraced houses in my street are on offer for around £650,000. I only own half of our house (my wife owns the other), but we do have other assets and I'm feeling rather too close to being in that 0.7%, let alone Oxfam's 1% where the criterion must be lower. Thinking about it, if you're single, for example a widow or widower living in many parts of Ealing on your own in a house without a mortgage, then you will almost certainly fall into Oxfam's top 1%, irrespective of the size of your income.

Oxfam's 1% of adults owning as much as the other 99% is an eye-catching statistic, but it's beside the point. Oxfam doesn't make too much of it itself, focussing in its report on the share held by the top 80 or so individuals.

The world always has been an unequal place, and always will be. Some argue that this inequality doesn't matter – the very wealthy use their wealth to generate economic growth the effects of which, over time 'trickle down' and raise people at the bottom out of poverty. Others argue that the fundamental issue is one of re-distribution – governments need to take action to ensure wealth is more evenly spread as it won't happen by itself. I'm no economist, but I suspect there is truth in both sides of the argument. Whilst the very wealthiest will have plenty of money to play with, much of their wealth will be in productive capacity which will provide jobs and employment to many people further down the scale. However, people further down also need to get their fair share of the cake – the benefits of economic growth should be shared throughout societies, not just at the top.

Andrew Carnegie was the world's wealthiest man of his time, but he considered that "to die a rich is to die disgraced" because a man should use all his wealth to benefit others in his lifetime.

A Sideways Thought on Advent Sunday

Gerald Barton, Editor

As I sat listening to the familiar words of the prophet Isaiah on Advent Sunday, a 'sideways' thought went through my mind.....

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

But.....

On hearing the plans to make a new straight highway the local residents along the route were up in arms. The new highway would damage the local environment, they said, be a threat to wildlife, create noise, destroy their views of the mountains, hills and crooked places especially if all these were made low, and have an adverse impact on their property values.

Environmental campaigners argued that there were enough highways already and making a new straight highway would only generate more traffic, noise and pollution, and would not relieve traffic on existing straight highways. Furthermore they considered that the business case for a new straight highway had not been properly made and the environmental impact study was incomplete. They pointed out that making mountains and hills low would be an extremely expensive undertaking unlikely to be justified by any benefits gained from the new highway, not that they thought there would be any anyway.

Some thought that other alternatives should also be considered, a new rail link in place of a highway for instance. Campaigners thought this would still be too expensive especially as to avoid making low the mountains and hills most of it would have to be in tunnels. Property owners along the route were concerned about the disruption that would be caused by the construction of a new railway and the impact this would have on property values. They called for greater detail of the proposed compensation schemes should either a new highway or a new rail link be built.

Because of the controversy surrounding the proposals the Minister for Transport, Mountains, Hills and Remote Places decided that the proposed new highway would have to be subject to a full public enquiry. Campaigners weren't satisfied that this would be sufficient and called for a judicial review of proceedings so far.....

And the prophet cried in the wilderness.....

Remember - Spring 2015

Compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger

In the Morning

New every morning is the love
Our waking and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought.

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of heaven in each we see;
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care.

Prepare us, Lord, in your dear love
For perfect rest with you above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.

John Keble (1792 – 1866)

A Prayer of Thanks

Let us give thanks:

for light and darkness, sunrise and sunset, morning and evening;

for the light and warmth of the sun, and the beauty of the moon and stars;

for the strength of the mountains and hills, and the quiet of the valleys;

for the beauty of water, both still and in motion, for streams and rivers, lakes and seas;

for the wind in its gentleness, or its strength, and the rustling of leaves and grasses;

for the multitude and variety of wildflowers and plants that grace the alpine plateaux and valleys;

for the wonder and beauty of snow flakes that so silently cover the countryside with a pure white mantle.

for the joy of the resurrection at Easter and promise of eternal life. Amen

A Story of Sharing

A man went into a café that sold coffee and doughnuts and after making his purchase looked round for an empty table. There wasn't one but there was a table for two with an empty seat, so he put his coffee and bag of doughnuts on the table, took off his coat and put it on his chair and put his brief case on the floor.

He started to drink his coffee and took a doughnut out of the bag of doughnuts and started to eat it. He was shocked when the stranger opposite put his hand in the bag and started to eat one of his doughnuts. "The man's a thief," he told himself.

The first man picked up the bag and pulled it nearer to himself, took another doughnut and ate a second one. He was even more angry when the stranger leaned across the table, took another doughnut and ate it, even smiling as he did so. The first man said nothing but gave the stranger a very angry look.

The second man stood up, smiled and leaning over the table again, took the last doughnut, broke it in half and put the other half back in the bag. Then he put on his coat and left. The first man was so angry and disgusted that he said to himself, "I'm not even going to eat the rest of the doughnut. The man's a thief and he probably has lots of germs on his hands."

Feeling really angry he stood up, put on his coat, bent down to pick up his brief case and then..... He was horrified to see that there, on top of his brief case was his bag of doughnuts. He realised then how he had misjudged the stranger, who was not only not a thief but who had been happy to share his bag of doughnuts with a complete stranger.

Knocking on Heaven's Door

As I was about to start writing "Remember", Pointless came on TV. One of the questions was who sang "Knocking on Heaven's door"? The contestant said, "Cliff Richard." "Wrong," said Alexander Armstrong. Quick as a flash Richard Osman said, "Cliff doesn't have to knock. He's got a key!"

Just like you and me!

For Christians and non-Christians alike there are times when life can be very tough. We pray for someone to get better and they don't. In spite of many prayers, maybe a young person dies and we ask "Why?"

If we believe that there is life after death maybe that is a comfort when life seems very bleak.

Those of you who have seen the film “Forrest Gump” may remember how Forrest’s mother had wise sayings to explain things simply to her son (who had a moderate learning disability).

One of these was “It will be all right in the end and if it’s not all right, it’s not yet the end.”

Maybe this thought will help one of you if you’re struggling with the question “Why?”

Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity

Some years ago a journalist went to India to write an article about the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta. He told Mother Teresa “I’ve seen all the good things you and the Sisters do, but I hope you won’t mind me saying this but what you are doing is only a drop in the ocean.” “Ah yes” said Mother Teresa, “but you know the ocean is made up of drops.”

Some Thoughts at Evening

So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings. Matthew 6 v 34

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 Easter

The Resurrection - Mark 16 v 1-12

The Empty Tomb – John 29 v 1-16

We are raised to life - Colossians 2 v 12

Raised to a better life – Hebrews 11 v 35

Circuit Directory Update

Kingsdown Jill Richardson is the new chair of Babies & Toddlers

Forthcoming Events around the Circuit [as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

March

- 2nd Mon 20.00 **Local Preachers Meeting at Greenford (Room 2)**
Preceded by Training Sub-group at 19.15
- 6th Fri 13.30 **Women's World Day of Prayer Service**
Salvation Army, Leeland Rd, West Ealing, London W13 9HH
- 7th Sat 10.30 **Ealing Animal Welfare Bazaar at Hanwell**
16.00 Admission free - many participating societies
For more info go to www.animalwelfarebazaar.info
- 12th Thurs 20.00 **Circuit Meeting at Northolt**
- 14th Sat 10.00 **Book Fair with Stalls at Kingsdown**
12.30 Proceeds to Charity of the Year – Contact a Family
- 21st Sat 09.00 **Circuit Sponsored Walk in support of MHA Live at Home Scheme**
18.00 Starts and ends at Greenford via all Circuit churches

April

Holy Week services – to be announced

May

- 9th Sat 10.00 **Book Fair with Stalls at Kingsdown**
12.30 Proceeds to Christian Aid
- 13th Wed *Deadline for Grant Applications to Circuit Policy Meeting*
- 20th Wed 19.30 **Circuit Policy Meeting at Kingsdown**

Articles for '**In-touch**' Issue No 72 (June - August) 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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