

# 7. Managing Trustees Of Central Hall Westminster

## **Introduction**

The Managing Trustees are pleased to report that the year 2007-08 has been one of continued growth in the Ministry and Mission of the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. The successful working relationship between the Church and the Conference Centre and the new opportunities provided by the refurbished premises help to facilitate such development.

## **Ministry of the Church**

Sunday morning services in The Great Hall offer vibrant worship in the presence of a large congregation drawn from those who live and/or work in London, but also visitors from across the world. Former members make welcome return visits whilst new-comers regard Central Hall as their home-base whilst in London. It is therefore a privilege but a challenge for the ministerial team, led by the Superintendent Minister, The Revd Martin Turner, and lay helpers, to meet the spiritual, pastoral and social needs of such a diverse congregation. Pastoral work in general is led by Sister Jane Middleton who, with the pastoral leaders, sustains a caring community spirit. The ministerial team has also been strengthened by the arrival of The Revd Gordon Newton as Honorary Associate Minister from September 2007.

Music of high quality plays a key part in the services and has been expertly led by the Directors of Music Mr Alistair Lilley and Mr Mark Stringer. In December 2007 the Church bade farewell and gave much thanks to Alistair as he prepared to take up a musical appointment in The Netherlands. His successor, Mr Gerard Brooks, took up his post at Central Hall in March 2008 following distinguished years of service at All Souls, Langham Place.

Sunday evenings in the Chapel give opportunity for a variety of forms of worship from the traditional to the more informal. A regular feature is a monthly service of healing and Holy Communion, with a further healing service held monthly on Thursdays in the lunch hour. The latter attracts workers from nearby offices. Thus the place of healing and prayer has become a vital part of ministry at Central Hall under the guidance of Revd Dr Malcolm White. It is gratifying to note the helpful ecumenical link which has been made with Canon Robert Wright, the Sub-Dean of Westminster Abbey, and his work in the healing ministry. The annual Prayer and Healing Conference, which is well established, had as its theme in May 2008 "The Spirit who heals".

The Sanctuary, Westminster, begun in 2006 on an experimental basis, is now a lively collective of young adults who are exploring what a life given to following Jesus Christ means for today. Mr Jonathan Green, the Young Adult Pastor, has developed creative ways of involving the young people in considering their values and to commit themselves to church and community involvement. The Trustees have been impressed by what has been achieved and will give financial support for a further three years.

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Another innovative venture has been “The Gathering” led by The Revd Tony Miles and held on occasional Sunday evenings in The Great Hall. In November 2007 it took the form of a “Big Sing” when well over 1,200 people gathered to celebrate the life and hymns of Charles Wesley. As the congregation entered up the Grand Staircase they were greeted by members of Sanctuary dressed in eighteenth century costumes, and folk musicians playing music from the period. The music for the service was led by the choir accompanied by an orchestra and the Great Hall organ. Charles Wesley, in the person of Tony Jasper, made an appearance and marvelled that so many had gathered to sing his hymns and celebrate the tercentenary of his birth.

### **Special Church-Related Events**

A memorable and moving celebration of the life of Revd Dr Rob Frost took place at Central Hall on a Saturday in January 2008. It was an inspirational gathering of 2,500 people drawn from family, friends and colleagues from across the Connexion and from the many organisations in which Rob had ministered. The scene was set for ‘Pentecost People’, Rob’s final offering, which others will now take forward in May 2008.

The London District gathered at Central Hall in February 2008 for a special Saturday event with the theme ‘Sharing Treasures Celebrating Gifts – an inspiration for Ministry and Mission in our Global City’. Leaders and members from around the District participated in music and words, together with Bible Study and Reflections by the President of Conference, The Revd Dr Martyn Atkins and the Vice-President of Conference, Ms Ruby Beech.

The Daffodil Day Rally, sponsored jointly by the Church and Network, again drew large numbers from across London and the South East. The theme “Like a Child” was explored in music and mime. The Revd Steve Wild, from Cliff College, on his first visit to the Rally, held and challenged the congregation in his inimitable style with more than a touch of humour.

As Leader of the Parliamentary Methodist Fellowship, The Revd Martin Turner conducts an annual Covenant Service in the Chapel of St. Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster. The preacher in January 2008 was Ms Ruby Beech at a service attended by Members of Parliament and Peers, Connexional and District representatives and members of Central Hall.

Significant links with the Roman Catholic community in Westminster includes work for the homeless. In October 2007 the annual fund-raising celebrity concert for ‘The Passage’ homeless project was held in The Great Hall, at which a sum in the region of £100,000 was raised. The St Vincent’s Family Project, a joint venture between the Church and the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, is flourishing in its newly refurbished suite of rooms at Central Hall. It will soon extend its opening to seven days per week to give further support to disadvantaged children and their families, especially those affected by family break-up.

From an international perspective concerning children, a remarkable concert took place in The Great Hall in late 2007 by the choir of Milton Margai School for the Blind from Freetown, Sierra Leone. The singing, dancing and African drumming by the children, each of whom had been blinded during the civil war, captivated the audience. It was the final concert of a three week tour, all profits being

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donated to the school for urgently needed building work and education resources.

### **The Conference Centre**

The General Manager, Mr Michael Sharp and the sales team have worked tirelessly to promote the interests of the Central Hall as a venue for a wide range of meetings, conferences, receptions and exhibitions. Inevitably competition exists in Central London, but the feedback from clients to the Central Hall has been most favourable particularly in terms of the care given by the events managers and the quality of the facilities. Great efforts have been made to induct staff into understanding and embracing the ethos and workings of a conference centre within a Methodist building. We are pleased to note the appointment of a new events manager specifically tasked to develop church and charity work. Ms Beth Kuria, who has given exemplary service as an events manager for five years, resigned in February 2008 having gained promotion.

The Conference Centre was successful in securing a booking for “The World Leaders’ Conference” held over several days in the autumn of 2007. Eminent, world-wide speakers were involved which gave the Central Hall considerable media exposure on an international stage. Likewise bookings from political organisations, pressure groups, the banking sector and I.T. companies have brought the world of business, politics and commerce into the confines of Central Hall. College graduation ceremonies held at strategic times during the year have seen thousands of excited new graduands receive their education awards on the premises.

The Visitor Centre off the Entrance Hall is an essential part of the hospitality and information on offer to visitors. Modifications to that part of the building are complete, and by Summer 2008 a fully equipped centre will be open. The Visitor Services Manager, Mr Mervyn Appleby together with Mr Richard Ratcliffe, the archivist and the Superintendent Minister, The Revd Martin Turner, have provided text for fourteen panels setting out the story of Christianity, Methodist history and the history and ministry of Central Hall. Museum type cases are being provided to display artefacts including a Wesley exhibition generously loaned by The Revd Roger Lee. State of the art technology will greatly facilitate presentations to groups within the Centre, and help visitors become acquainted with the Central Hall in its broader context.

### **Future Priorities**

Future priorities over a three to five year time frame are being carefully considered by the Trustees, in association with the Church Council and anticipated developments of the Conference Centre. By this approach it is possible to move forward in a way which takes account of the varied aspects of the life and work of the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. The Trustees are most thankful for what has been achieved thus far and, under God’s guidance, look to ensure that Mission and Ministry will be nurtured and grow to meet the needs and aspirations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

7/1. The Conference adopts the Report.

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7/2. The Conference appoints the following Managing Trustees of the Conference Property at Central Hall Westminster.

The Revd Jenny Impey (Chair of the Managing Trustees and Convenor – ex officio), The Revd Martin H Turner (Superintendent, Westminster – ex officio), <sup>¥</sup>\*Mr Jacob Baiden, Ms Ruby Beech, The Revd Stuart Bell, <sup>¥</sup>\*Mrs Joan Broadhurst, <sup>¥</sup>Revd Dr Stuart Burgess, <sup>¥</sup>Mr Alan Clarke, Mr Dudley Coates, \*Ms Angela Cobbina, Mr Ian Hume, Revd Dr Howard Mellor, <sup>¥</sup>Ms Sarah Middleton, Mr Alan Poole, Mr Richard Reeves, <sup>¥</sup>\*Revd Dr Malcolm White, \*Ms Sarah Willison, <sup>¥</sup>Miss Christine M Wykes, Mr Henry Yentumi.

\*Indicates the people nominated by the Westminster Circuit Meeting.

<sup>¥</sup>Indicates Trustees who have served for 6 years or more.

### **REASONED STATEMENTS**

Mr Jacob Baiden (1997) Essential church link in capacity as Senior Circuit Steward.

Mrs Joan Broadhurst (2000) M.A. Church link as Circuit Steward and Secretary of Leadership Team.

Revd Dr Stuart Burgess (2000) Wide connexional experience is much valued.

Mr Alan Clarke (1998) DipEE, C.Eng, MIEE, MCIBSE, MSLL Professional skills needed.

Ms Sarah Middleton (2002) Connexional experience and Art related skills.

Revd Dr Malcolm White (2001) Ministerial contribution is much valued.

Miss Christine M Wykes (1999) M.A. Secretary. Needs to remain in post to sustain continuity.

### **NEW TRUSTEES**

The Trustees are working towards a slightly smaller Trust, hence no new Trustees are proposed.