



Follow

Up

Notes

RAINBOW

September 2004

Dear Rainbow Users

I have enjoyed hearing news of Rainbow being used more widely. It is the magazine of JMA but we love it to be used far and wide. So when I hear of it being used at Brownies and BB, in school or in worship, I am delighted. You can always order extra copies for this. It's just as important to have one or two copies in the church or on the notice board for people of any age to see. Lots of people, adults and children, in Methodist or United Churches haven't seen Rainbow yet. It gives people a good glimpse of how the Church is busy changing the world for the better – so let's make sure everyone sees it!

Rainbow also gives you a way to tackle important topics such as justice, trade and change. In this issue the story from Chris Bold in Sierra Leone is all about football, but the real message is about AIDS and the enormous number of people it is killing. I hope you will be able to talk about this with both children and adults in groups and in worship. World AIDS Day is December 1st and the free booklet 'Speak out about AIDS' is available from Methodist Publishing House 01733 325002. It describes the many information and education resources available.

I am about to board a plane for Papua New Guinea and that will be our theme next time.

Best wishes,

Steve Pearce

PS Please could you fill in the Churches Together questionnaire for us? If you can, please make copies and give one to everyone who is working with children in your church. We are really keen to know what everyone thinks before we start the new children's ministry training material. Thank you very much indeed.



Dates to use!

One World Week 17-24 October 2004

The One World Week theme for 2004 should suit JMA, it is **Your Move!** 'A thought which does not result in an action is nothing much, and an action which does not proceed from a thought is nothing at all' George Bernanos – French novelist and political writer. You can download a taster action kit and leaflet at www.oneworldweek.org Tel: 0118 9394933

Parents' Week 25-31 October 2004

info@nfpi.org

AIDS Day 2004 December 1

www.worldaidsday.org

On the Wings of a Dove 25 November-10 December 2004

'On the Wings of a Dove' is a worldwide campaign initiated by the World Council of Churches to help overcome violence against women and children. Churches are invited to share in the 16 Days of 'On the Wings of a Dove', 25 November-10 December 2004, linking the vision of the Decade to Overcome Violence with the season of Advent, when we prepare for the incarnation of God's peace in our world.

Mission Adventure 4-6 February 2005

Details from JMA Office about this fab conference at Swanwick.

Networks

Children and Bereavement

Do you know anyone particularly interested in or knowledgeable about the subject of children and bereavement? If so, I would like to hear from them and build up a network of interested people. I also would like to sponsor people to attend a mid-week day conference in the Midlands on 12 October.

Environmental Network

Steve Hucklesby is responsible for International Affairs on the Connexional Team and is creating a more formal network of people concerned about climate change, environment and lifestyle. It's important that people with knowledge of the many children's activities and projects are involved in this. Again please encourage people to make a move and find out if it's for them. Contact Steve Hucklesby or me for details hucklesbys@methodistchurch.org.uk

JMA News

We're bananas

Sophie Key (aged 7) wrote to me from Madeley Methodist Church.

At our Harvest Festival we did a sketch about two bananas having a chat in the supermarket about where they had come from and comparing the differences between the lives of the people who had helped them to grow. One banana (me) was grown on a banana plantation where workers worked long hours all week, had a very hard life and was sold to a big banana company. The other banana (Gaby) was grown on a small banana farm in the Windward Islands where workers had much better lives. This banana was sold to a Fairtrade company. After the service we had homemade banana cake (delicious) and had Fairtrade tea and coffee to drink. On the Members' Page photograph I'm on the left and Gaby is on the right.

Best day

Valerie Farley's letter about Susan made me think and that's why I offer you the chance to hear Susan's story. We are hoping you could include Susan's picture in the magazine, as collecting in her JMA box is the most important thing Susan does, and collecting her badge the best day of her year. Years ago John and Barbara Clarke from Stoneleigh Methodist Church became a social 'Aunt and Uncle' (now called advocates) to a young mentally handicapped girl. Sue was 14 at the time and living in a nearby mental hospital. Over the years, improvements have taken place in her life, and Sue, now 46, lives in a group home very near our Church. Susan has had a JMA collecting box for years, her first bar is dated 1987, and Sunday by Sunday has enjoyed collecting hundreds of pounds.

Sponsored and Fun

Ainsworth shared news of their Sponsored Swim. It started out as a 'Swimming Gala' so long ago no one knows when. Now 11 churches take part in an event where there is something for everyone. If you want to get sponsored you can swim up to 10 lengths during the first hour and raise money (for JMA, of course), then all the floats and balls are thrown in for an hour of games. About 100 children take part and it sounds fun!

Israel/Palestine

Lizzie Jeans of World Action had a moving experience visiting Israel and Palestine and sent me news of the East Jerusalem YMCA Newsletter. You can find it at www.ej-ymca.org

Challenge Walk

Dolphinholme Chapel involved some other circuit members for a walk. Fifty of them joined in inspired by the story of the feeding scheme in Uruguay, which was featured in the last edition of Rainbow. In that poor part of Uruguay's capital city, Montevideo, 180 children are regularly fed by the local church.

Afternoon Tea

Hinckley arranged afternoon tea with a difference, says Kath Emmonds. There was wonderful entertainment to accompany it. Sarah played her clarinet and Grace played piano and viola (not at the same time). There was singing, 'Our God is so big'.



Do you remember the story of the fat cat and the thin cat from a JMA service leaflet? Well,

Elizabeth and Sophie, with the help of Elizabeth's grandfather, turned it into a sketch.



A retired JMA Collector (18) wrote this poem.

A child doesn't get his own way and he makes a fuss,
But there are other people in the world, who are a lot
worse off than us.

We go out to places, play games and use our mobile
phones,
But others don't have these things, honestly they're just
skin and bones.

How much food do you think you throw out each day?
Who do you think is starving? It's them who have to pay.
Working so hard each day to feed a family member,
You see it advertised on TV, a number, "Do you
remember?"

"Phone this number and donate some money."
Give them a couple of quid a month, then there's no
need to worry.

If it was only as easy as that, it'd be good,
We live in posh houses, they live in the mud.

All I'm asking is for you to think twice,
As life isn't as simple as rolling a dice.
As the high numbers equal to our 'high life' of today,
But there's the other people...It's up to
you by the way.

Robert Healey



HIV/AIDS

Take those precious five minutes to think about the five people who will die of AIDS in each minute of every day.

Remember at least one of each five will be a child.



Last year, the global AIDS pandemic claimed an estimated 3 million lives, and an estimated 5 million people acquired HIV - bringing to 40 million the estimated number of women, men and children living with the virus worldwide. 14 million children are orphans because of AIDS.

In the UK, newly diagnosed cases of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) increased by 20% between 2002 and 2003. Almost a third of the 49,500 people currently living with HIV in the UK are still unaware they are infected. This increase has been seen amongst women, heterosexual men and gay men.

You may not find it easy to talk about AIDS. The adults may not find it easy to hear what you say. That is a major reason for the devastation HIV/AIDS is causing. If we talked about it more, it would spread less.

Talk about why football tournaments and comedians and drama groups are being so effective to educate people about HIV/AIDS as you look together at page three of Rainbow. You'll realize that the woman with a banana is helping people to learn about condoms, a major way to stop the spread of the virus.

Children will have talked and learned about keeping healthy in school and may be willing to share their learning.



The 50th anniversary of the united Mission to Nepal is a big event. The way so many denominations and organizations have worked together has been a good, if not always easy, way to work. Nepal has many needs and not least is the need for peace. The pictures on the front and back covers are both from Nepal.

Here's an extract from the most recent letter from two of our Mission Partners in Nepal, Michael and Maureen Hawksworth. First they give us a bit of a flavour of life outside their window, they begin with the traditional greeting,

Namaste!

It's Sunday morning as we write this and a band is playing loudly and raucously in the garden adjoining our house. This is to celebrate a wedding which is taking place today according to Nepali religion and culture. The priests must have declared it to be an auspicious day! The band consists of drums, various brass instruments and the odd clarinet. We shall be subjected to this (to our western ears) rather tuneless 'music' on and off throughout the day. It's hot and all our windows are open so we are getting the full benefit of it! Actually, we enjoy witnessing such occasions, when family and friends come together and really enjoy themselves. For most Nepali people, life is hard and humdrum and it's good to have these high spots. In April, we were privileged to be invited to the wedding of the sister of Rajanee, Michael's colleague at work. This was according to Newari tradition (the Newaris were the indigenous people in the



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Kathmandu Valley) and lasted a full week. It started on Monday when the groom's family sent gifts to the bride's home. There were over 40 trays of gifts, mainly foodstuffs but the essential item was some nuts, which the bride accepted to signify her agreement to the marriage proceeding. The groom wasn't present. The actual marriage ceremony was on the Thursday morning between 11.30 and 12.00 as determined by the priest. This was again at the family home and was followed by a bhoj (feast). We were the only non-family members present and it was very special to be welcomed into their home and treated as family. The groom's parents were not present. In the evening, we gathered with the bride and several hundred of her family and friends in a huge hall to celebrate the marriage. The groom was not present! The following day, the wedding band came from the groom's house to fetch the bride and escort her to her new home. The day after that, gifts were taken from the bride's family to the groom and on the final day (Sunday) the groom's family and friends celebrated together. It was so different to our own daughter's wedding the previous month but both were very enjoyable and happy occasions.

Until 1951, Nepal was closed to the rest of the world and Christianity was completely prohibited. Many Christians prayed for years along Nepal's borders because they felt very clearly that this was where God was leading them to serve. In 1951 their prayers were answered and exiled Nepali Christians, who had been living in India, were able to return to their homeland.

UMN was the vision of missionaries who believed that the work in Nepal should be undertaken by 'The Church' as a whole rather than by denominations individually. At a conference in India on 5 March 1954, eight churches committed themselves to this outreach and UMN was born. In the early years, most of the work was medical and it was through care and compassion for the Nepali people, especially the poor, that the Gospel was demonstrated since open evangelisation by foreigners was, and still is, prohibited. Wherever a hospital or clinic was opened, there is now a Church. The work has long since spread beyond medical care to other areas in which the needs of the poorest people can be met e.g. education, rural development, food security.



Sierra Leone



We are supporting Chris Bold to work as a volunteer Project Officer at the Methodist Youth Centre in Bo and it sounds exciting! Here's his report.

Football fever grips Bo, the second city of Sierra Leone. 2004 has been a good year with not just Euro 2004 in Portugal, but also the African Cup of Nations in Tunisia to add to the Premiership and European Cup. Despite being over three thousand miles away from England, everyone in Bo has their favourite Premiership team and knows in exactly what position they lie.

The video shops where local entrepreneurs have wired together a TV and satellite dish to a small generator charge 500 Leones (ten pence) a game; half the population are living on less than one pound a day and inflation is running in double figures, it is perhaps surprising how popular the games are.

The Bo Youth Centre was opened in April 2004 with a grant provided by Christian Aid. The aim of the Youth Centre is to teach young people about HIV and to help them to protect themselves and others from the spread of the virus.

40% of girls aged 15-19 have not heard of AIDS yet and 37% of adolescents surveyed did not know what a condom was. The government says, 'HIV prevalence has by all indicators passed the five per cent threshold and it is fast becoming an epidemic that requires urgent action to control it.' So the Youth Centre launched a huge football tournament with the aim of raising awareness about HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and how its transmission can be prevented.

The tournament organisers named it the 'Bo Cup of Nations' and each team chose an African country after which to name their team. 16 teams took part in four groups, with two teams from each group going forward to the quarter-finals.

For the first time since the long civil conflict ended in 2001, teams from four camps of Liberian refugees were competing with a team from the newly reformed Sierra Leone Armed Forces (SLAF) and teams from local schools, churches and community organisations in Bo. The tournament provided an important opportunity for integration and increased understanding between these different groups. 'South Africa' - the Army team - reached the quarter-finals where they were knocked out by 'Tunisia' - the best performing refugee team - which reached the semi-finals.

Liverpool FC kindly donated a set of jerseys, shorts and socks so that teams that did not have their own kit would still be able to compete in the competition. The majority of players did not have their own football boots and so played in sandals. Despite these hindrances the tournament was of a very high standard and competition was spirited, but without any trouble.



Awareness raising on HIV was carried out at half time. Local comedians performed sketches and short dramas about HIV, its methods of transmission and control. Condom demonstrations were given with plenty of audience participation and condoms were distributed to the crowd who were made aware that they could get more condoms from the Youth Centre on a confidential basis at any time.



Teams were encouraged to prepare banners on HIV/AIDS. Prizes were awarded for teams and supporters that showed a high level of knowledge about the virus as well as to the winning teams and those



players and teams that displayed good conduct throughout the tournament.

The tournament finals attracted a crowd of nearly 2,000 to watch 'Zambia' - a local church team - take on



'Senegal' - a team from one of the districts of Bo. The Rt Hon. Cecil J. Hanson MP, Minister of Youth and Sports, kicked off the game, which ended in a 3-3 draw. The final outcome was decided by a tense penalty shoot out which saw 'Zambia' lift the trophy. The award ceremony was held at the Youth Centre and celebrations lasted until late into the night.

I'm enormously grateful to some wonderful women in Shildon Methodist Church, County Durham, who, when I asked for a presentation of the parable of the talents in a service (Matthew 25, 14-30), found this copyright-free sketch on the internet and adapted it to fit their locality. The result was hilarious, moving and very educational.

The parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30)

Scene 1

Zelda *(old, hard matriarch, enters, pounds cane on floor)* All right, let's take it from bar 16, but this time with more extension with the arms and hands.
(beats with cane) 5, 6, 7, 8.

Nancy *(follows on Zelda's heels, hurries to piano, on cue plays a passage from "Dance of the sugar plum fairy")*
(Three sweaty dancers dance onto stage single file)

Zelda Right and together and point and together and bow and straight and right and together and point and together and...

Ashly *(arms out of sync with others)*

Zelda Watch the arms, Ashly!

Ashly *(looks to other dancers, brings arms back into sync)*

Zelda Where are your smiles? This is a happy dance. Let me see some teeth.

Dancers *(all smile broadly, all in sync)*

Zelda Side and slide and spin and bow and straight and ...
(pounds cane several times) Stop.

Nancy *(stops playing)*

Zelda *(hands Nancy a cheque)* Nancy, here is your fee. I won't be needing you any longer.

Dancers *(exchange questioning glances)*

Nancy Did I do something wrong, Madam Zelda?

Zelda No, Nancy, you did a fine job. I've taught my students everything I set out to teach them. So, I won't be needing you anymore. In fact, I have a letter of recommendation to your next employer sitting on my desk. You may pick it up on your way out.

Nancy Yes, Madam Zelda. Thank you. *(exits)*

Zelda Ladies?

Dancers Yes, Madam Zelda?

Zelda My work with you is finished. I chose each of you to be my students because I saw great potential in you. I have worked tirelessly with you for many months and I did it without pay. Now it's time for you to pay me back.

Katie But, Madam Zelda, we have no money. There is no way any of us could pay the fee of the world's greatest dance teacher.

Zelda Yes, there is a way.

Janey But, how?

Zelda You will dance for me.

Dancers *(exchange glances)*

Ashly I don't understand.

Zelda I am a very wealthy woman. I will invest in a separate dance production for each of you and you will give me all the profits from your ticket sales. My investment in each of you will be in proportion to your individual talent.
(hands Ashly a cheque) Ashly, here is a cheque for £10,000.

Ashly £10,000?!

Zelda It should be enough money to rent the Civic Centre in Shildon with enough left over for scenery, costumes and other production costs if you watch your pennies.

Ashly But what if the production loses money?

Zelda Ashly, you are a very talented dancer. Your talent should keep the Civic packed for at least a two week run.
Janey, here is a cheque for £100,000.

Janey £100,000?! *(inspects cheque)*

Zelda Yes, with your talent, you could easily

make money in the Telewest Arena with a lavish production.

Janey Yes, Madam Zelda.

Zelda And, Katie, here is a cheque for a million pounds.

Katie Excuse me, Madam Zelda. Did you say a MILLION pounds? (*inspects cheque*)

Zelda That's correct, Katie. You are undoubtedly the best dancer in the country. People will want to watch you on television. This is about how much money it takes to do a decent TV production.

Katie Yes, Madam Zelda. (*pause*) Madam Zelda?

Zelda Yes, Katie?

Katie Will you be helping us with our dance productions?

Zelda No, Katie. After working intensely with you for all these months, I am very tired. I'm going on a round-the-world cruise to rest and relax. When I get back in six months, I expect to see a decent return on each of my investments. Do I make myself clear?

Dancers Yes, Madam Zelda.

Zelda Well, get going then. Time is wasting. (*exits*)

Dancers (*exit opposite, mumbling among themselves, comparing cheques*)

Scene 2

Zelda (*enters wearing coat, pounds cane on floor*) All right, you three, don't keep Madam Zelda waiting.
(*All dancers enter wearing long skirts*)

Katie (*beaming*) Sorry to keep you waiting, Madam Zelda. How was your cruise?

Zelda It was very relaxing. I'm ready to begin working again. So... What kind of a return did I get for my investments in you?

Katie When people heard that I was a student of Madam Zelda, they couldn't wait to get me on Tyne Tees and Look North. Here, (*hands Zelda a check*) your million

pound investment is now TWO million pounds.

Zelda Well done, Katie, well done. Janey, how did your dance production come out?

Janey Well, the opening night audience filled only half the seats in the Telewest arena, (*smiles*) but when people saw the reviews in the paper, they flocked. It was standing room only for the rest of the run (*hands Zelda a cheque*). Your £100,000 thousand pound investment is now £200,000.

Zelda Well done, Janey. Well done. Ashly? How about you?

Ashly (*hands Zelda a cheque*) Here's your cheque for £10,000.

Zelda But that's no more than what I invested in you. You're a very talented dancer, Ashly. Don't tell me people didn't flock to the Civic Centre to see you.

Ashly I didn't rent the Civic Centre.

Zelda You what?! You didn't do a production at all?

Ashly No. I was afraid it would lose money and then you'd be mad at me.

Zelda Ashly, I am a very wealthy woman. I wouldn't have been nearly as angry with you for losing my money, as I am that you've wasted my investment in your talent. There's no excuse for wasting your talent.

Ashly (*tearful, turning to exit*) I'm sorry.

Zelda Before you go, I want you to know what it really cost you to waste your talent. During my round-the-world cruise, I met a producer who arranged for a world dance tour for the three of you. Katie and Janey now will each receive salaries in excess of one million pounds.

Katie & Janey (*jump and yelp for joy*) One million pounds!

Zelda But, Ashley, because you wasted my investment in your talent, you will receive nothing. Get out of my sight! (*dismisses Ashly with her hand*)

Ashly (*runs to exit weeping*)

Zelda Well, you two, let's step into my office, so we can sign the contracts.