

mission matters

Issue 8 September 2003



Service - Christians are called to be good neighbours to people in need and to challenge injustice

(Our Calling...moving on)

Valdozende: the Protestant village



Hearing a church bell strike the hour is not a new experience, but it was when I heard the Westminster Chimes – this was Portugal!

“Why?” I asked. “This is known as the Protestant village,” I was told. “Village clocks around here chime Ave Maria but we needed a Protestant tune” - so the Westminster Chimes were seen to fit the bill.

Thirty-two years ago the Roman Catholic priest left the village to go and serve further down the valley where a new dam was being built. The villagers complained

to the Bishop to send him back but the Bishop did nothing. Eventually one resident, who had lived in Canada, said that there were other churches people could join. A delegation went to the nearby city of Braga, a centre of Roman Catholicism, and found the Methodist church. The minister journeyed back to Valdozende and following the discussions that ensued there was a mass conversion to Methodism. The church boasts a membership of 175 (with many more adherents) and this out of a village population of around 400 members!

The church is at the centre of village activity. It provides day care for both children and the elderly. There is a crèche, activity rooms for crafts and meeting rooms for conversation and fellowship. It delivers 30 meals on wheels each day. Now there are plans for a new building to extend both the range of services and different opportunities for the community to share in

church life. Add to that the band Trevo Alegre – full of wonderful singers and musicians (when I was there Bishop Sifredo was one of the guitarists) – you encounter a vibrant Christian community in which faith is at the heart of life. Apparently harvest is THE festival to experience – if you need to go to bed don't bother coming!

It is easy to be deceived in an idyllic setting of orange, lemon, olive and eucalypti trees and a valley full of bird sound. Conflict is also a part of the village story. Fighting and death over water supplies for irrigation are a part of its history of not so long ago. Now water is supplied on a rota basis for the many smallholdings and orchards. And today there are many services which cannot be found in the village. There is no launderette and people who cannot afford washing machines still wash their clothes in open water. The nearest doctor is 12km away and a recent minister who was a qualified nurse found that his medical skills were as much in demand as his spiritual skills. Healing takes various forms and the church is at the centre of community through its caring and sharing ministries. What a difference it makes when faith is at the heart of community and not on the edge. Valdozende is a very special story and a very special place.

Colin Ride, Europe Secretary
Valdozende village



Fighting death

In South Africa, a terrible threshold has now been reached - the infection rate of the deadly HIV/ AIDS has reached 1000 people a day. Communities are overwhelmed by weekly funerals. Affected families are experiencing unprecedented levels of impoverishment.



Aids orphans in Southern Africa

Obviously the Church cannot be silent or sit with folded arms; in the tradition of Mr Wesley, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa has developed a holistic plan for response including:

- teaching about sexuality
- hospice ministries
- poverty-combating ministries
- pastoral care / home-care initiatives
- training counsellors

The Love Box scheme, consisting of boxes of medicines, has been implemented as a core outreach that characterises the Methodist response. We thank you for your generous giving; during the past year over £18,000 has been given to the Methodist Church in Southern Africa. Societies and Circuits are all encouraged to participate in the scheme. It is our way of saying: 'we're all in this together'.

Grace and Peace

Revd Ross Olivier, Executive Secretary,
The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Muslims and the Resurrection?

A local computer shop in Selly Oak is run by an Iraqi Muslim whom his customers call Mick. He is skilful, patient, generous with his time and a real help to many. At certain times of the day he withdraws to pray.

After negotiations between Mick, some friends and Richard Branson, a Virgin airplane was made available in order to take medical supplies, surgical equipment, volunteer nurses, doctors and civil workers to help restore water and electricity supplies in Iraq. This venture was supported by members of local churches who were also asked, by Mick, to pray.

The first of a number of planes left for Basra and, with a British army escort, the people and supplies were taken to Baghdad to set up base in a mosque known well to Mick. They have chosen to focus their efforts in a hospital for disabled and injured children where there has been looting, where the morale of the unpaid staff is low and where the water, electricity and drainage have been impaired. Other flights are planned.

Pondering the positive, humane influence of the imams who, through the mosques, are restoring order amongst the

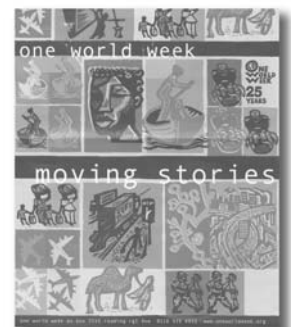
looters and bringing control to Baghdad's increasing traffic chaos, a friend dared to ask "could this be a sign of resurrection?" I have wondered also if Mick's journey carries the marks of resurrection.

Donald Eadie

One World Week – moving stories

This year's One World Week is 19 - 26 October and provides the opportunity to explore people's stories of moving from poverty towards sustainability.

**For resources and further information contact OWW Central Office,
PO Box 2555, Reading
RG1 4XW,
Tel: 0118 9394933
www.oneworldweek.org**



Building mission

- A perspective from the Share Jesus International team

Maybe there are still those outside the Church who, when 'Mission' is mentioned, think of an American in a sharp white suit preaching to thousands of people on the TV. They might also think of a group of enthusiastic but slightly scruffy guys holding their Bibles aloft on the tube or street, attempting to preach to an audience considerably smaller in number, and in interest! Although these two examples may be at opposite ends of a spectrum, they still have the common denominator of soapbox preaching.

Hopefully, however, the holistic view advocated by the Methodist Connexional team for many years, going back to Wesley and Jesus has now become more apparent. In the summer of 2000 Soul Survivor took ten thousand young Christians on mission to Manchester. They spent two weeks digging gardens, clearing derelict areas on estates, and serving people in real ways that demonstrated the love of God to them. They went to show the love of Christ in both words and deeds. As the old saying goes, "Preach the gospel at all times, with words where necessary." And the result of this style of social action based mission? – a new church being planted in the centre of a council estate, explosive growth in existing churches, and over 1000 people giving their lives to following Jesus. Mission and evangelism was made successful through service.

This summer at Share Jesus, our annual Dawn Patrol mission is spending a week in Camborne. The Cornish town is filled with kids who love nothing better than to practise their skateboarding outside the local churches and are often seen as a nuisance. So we're going to build them a skate park! People will be asking why we're doing things for them, and the name of Jesus will be our constant answer! Evangelism and service hand-in-hand; service and preaching, hand-in-hand.

Mark Williamson

For more information check
www.sharejesusinternational.com



A changed life

Betsy Lafferty has spent the last year in Zambia at the Mission Station in Mbereshi, as part of the Experience Exchange Programme.

"The last year has gone all too quickly. I feel I have only touched the surface of understanding and of relating to Africa. I am so thankful that I was given the opportunity of being part of a different culture, and grateful to God for his support in every way. I have learnt so much about life and myself in such a short space of time.

Most of the people who I met were so friendly and genuine and would go out of their way to help me. They were willing to give me what they could not spare and not expect payment.

Corruption is rife. The poor know there is a better way to live and some will try to achieve this by any means. Many of the married women are in complete submission to their husband. Prostitution, in spite of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is a common way of life. They would rather die of AIDS than of poverty and hunger. Churches are well supported by all age groups and one finds a small core of really committed Christians whose trust and belief in God has remained strong through their sufferings".

If you would like to find out more about Betsy's experience contact the Mission Education section. If you would like to know more about the Experience Exchange programme contact Gabrielle Grace. Tel: 0207 486 5502

Funding for Mission

Following a connexion-wide consultation, the Methodist Conference of 2003 decided to keep the situation as it has been (ie separate Funds for Home Mission, World Mission and Property, plus the Methodist Church Fund). It particularly encouraged all Methodist people to give generously to these funds to support the wide-ranging mission of the Church.

Thank you for your responses to the consultation and for all you do to encourage giving in your churches, circuits and districts.

Best foot forward



Sunderland Samba Football Club was founded in the year 2000 for the purpose of sharing football, friendship and faith in Jesus Christ. This was the response of two young men after returning from a mission trip to Romania and the Czech Republic with the football missionary organisation, Ambassadors in Sport.

It started with a few friends for a 'kick about' in the local park, who then decided to enter the first National Christian Football Festival held in Manchester. After a legendary weekend they now play in the festival every year whilst working on projects through the year for the benefit of the local community. This year they undertook an anti-racism project and are continuing to support refugees and asylum seekers by providing opportunities to play football and to build friendships with local young people.

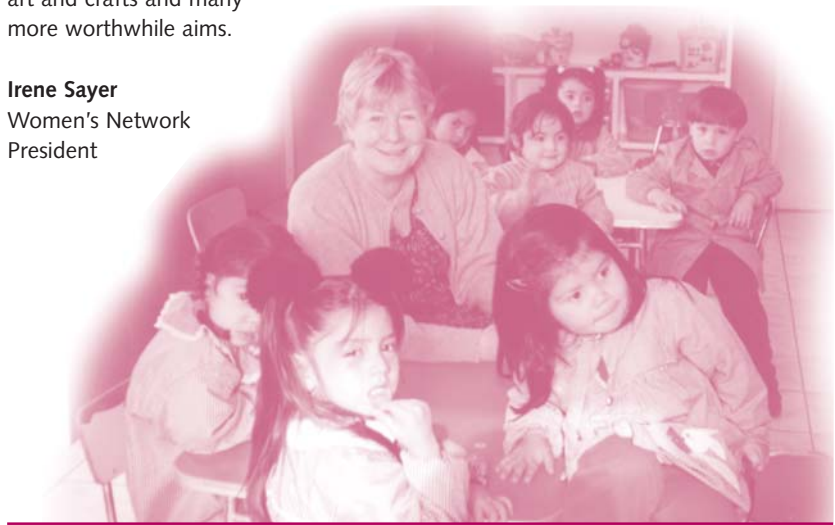
I support Sunderland Samba as part of my work and we try to encourage each other to play football to our full potential whilst also giving the opportunity for young men to think and be challenged about faith. We have a regular curry and faith night when a church member is interviewed about their life and faith.

John Boyd
(Circuit Youth Worker)
E-mail: jboyd@fish.co.uk

Dreams of Chile

First, may I thank the World Church Office for the gift of my wonderful visit to Chile. The people I met love Jesus and want to work out their faith in practical ways. There is such commitment to sharing Jesus and improving the conditions of the people around them. For me they seem to have the balance right between social work and sound Christian teaching. Every Chilean I spoke to has a dream. Of the people I met, never was the dream about self-advancement. All the dreams were practical: more room to do God's work; a small van to be able to carry more soup and bread round the city; windows in the ceiling to bring some light into the elderly people's rooms; enlarging the Sunday school room; increasing capacity at the market garden at the Agricultural College; resources for art and crafts and many more worthwhile aims.

Irene Sayer
Women's Network
President



Serving and being served

Our new neighbours are young doctors, Muslim and from Baghdad. The weeks earlier this year have placed a visible strain on them as they have waited for news of parents and family.

The day after war began we popped a candle-card into their door to say that we also prayed with them for their families. After the war, late one evening the doorbell went and there was Asif with a packet. He said that it is a custom within Islam to say thank you to God for prayers answered and to take a gift of freshly baked bread with herbs to those who have prayed with them. "You prayed for our families and they have survived and we thank God. And this gift is also our way of thanking God."

Donald Eadie

Grant aided work in British Methodism

Among other things the Fund for Home Mission enables the provision of Connexional Ministry and Mission grants that are given to support projects and posts throughout the country. In most cases circuits produce matched funding to accompany the connexional grants.

In 2003, a number of chaplains for higher education and agriculture, lay, youth and interfaith workers, as well as evangelists have been appointed. Projects working in community development such as those in Brunswick, Wythenshawe, London, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, Manchester and Reading have also been supported. If you would like to know more about these and other projects and people please contact Mission Education.

Margaret Addicott - Mission Partner extraordinaire!

I am quite sure Margaret wouldn't wish to be called that at all, yet she is a truly remarkable woman. Her faith and commitment to God and the work she saw as her calling to be an evangelist, pastoral care giver and praying worker, mark her as one of the saints of the Methodist Church.

Margaret's story begins in Hull where she was born in 1936. After school she trained as a pharmacist and while at college her commitment to mission became much more focused. When she spotted a notice in a Methodist Missionary Society publication for a pharmacist vacancy in a Church of South India Mission hospital, she answered the call. In 1963 she set sail for India and worked in a number of posts in and around the Tamil Nad District, South India.



After 22 years service in 1985, Margaret returned to the UK to look after her aged mother for whom she cared and nursed until her death. Margaret returned to Madurai, India in 1989 and this time began work as superintendent of the Arulagam, a home for young women at risk. When many think of retiring, she began a new work and became founding superintendent of a new HIV/AIDS hospice. Over the past eight years she has worked with great energy and enthusiasm and the Arulagam Hospice is a place of great hope in the midst of suffering and death. Wherever Margaret is, there seems to be energy and vitality yet calm and serenity. There is no pomposity in Margaret's life but a wonderful grounded quality of practical work and deep spirituality working together in harmony.

As she retires and takes on a different way of being and living after 40 years in India I am sure there will be times when she misses that land immeasurably, yet I know she will be glad that she is able to live out her Christian witness here in these islands. And I know that here, her life will show all the hallmarks of a life of prayer and reflection, full of the joys of being a Christian and being alive and able to praise her Lord.

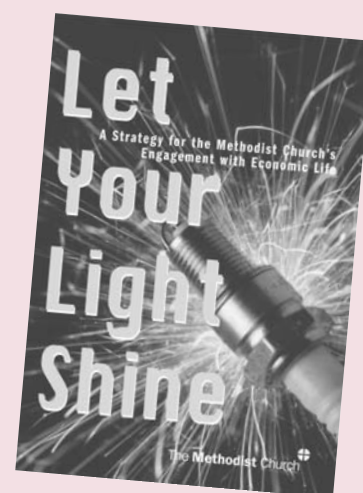
Margaret Baker Addicott, Mission Partner extraordinaire - a very practical star!

Chris Elliott-Hall
Asia Pacific Secretary

Is your light shining?

Money issues are all around us, from the loss of pension rights to the pressures on those in work; and from debates on tax policy to the morality of advertising. Christians cannot cut their Sunday lives off from these issues, which shape our communities and affect our relationships. And in the midst of them all, how does being a Christian make a difference at work?

To help local churches, policy committees, house groups and others find a way into some of these big questions, the booklet *Let Your Light Shine* is now available. Written by John Ellis, the Connexional Secretary for Business and Economic Affairs, it reviews briefly the history of Methodist engagement with the economic world, especially through the work of Industrial Chaplains. It then sets out the new Connexional strategy for effective work in the future. Five sets of Action Points are included to focus discussion around the issues. Each offers Biblical material to ponder and plenty of practical ideas to develop locally.



Copies of Let Your Light Shine are available from Methodist Publishing House free of charge (see page 8 for their address).

Get the picture?

Normally people shy away from the prying lens of a camera. If you are a film star, you might jealously protect your right to have whom you wish take your wedding photos. If you are a television presenter, you may not want to be exposed! If you are at the FA cup final, you may wave vigorously at the camera, as it flashes your image to the millions watching. A starving child will look bemused at the instrument pointed at them, oblivious to the impact they will have on the sentiments of millions.

Meet through this photograph Liliane, aged 18, and her 5 month old daughter Jaisa. They live in San Paulo, Brazil. They are two of the ten thousand people that are served by one centre, which caters for the many thousands of street people in San Paulo. They were made homeless because Liliane's mother-in-law could not support them. The Methodist Church in Britain, through its Fund for World Mission, enables Revd José Carlos do Prado Ramos, a Nationals in Mission Appointment, to coordinate the activities of the centre. Here people receive four basic, but



nutritionally balanced meals per day, a bed, a place to keep their few personal possessions, a place to wash and clean, a place to learn and get support and, above all, a place to build self esteem in people who would otherwise have none.

Liliane was very anxious that I took her picture. She had no idea what would happen to Jaisa in the next few months - she could get ill and die. If anything happened to Jaisa, Liliane wanted to have something to remind her of what she looked like. In an instant a common thing is transformed and becomes sacramental as it brings healing, hope and peace; like bread broken and shared by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Tom Quenet Secretary for the Americas and Caribbean

Mission Matters!



Methodist Church at Porto, Portugal

Mission doesn't matter, it's more important than that! It is the primary purpose of the church, not just in worship, preaching, and activities, but in the life of each and every Christian.

I know a woman who is an example of someone who lives such a life, despite living with advanced cancer. When she is asked, "How are you?" she always answers with a cheery smile "Fine!" and she quickly turns the question round to enquire how the other person is. She then listens quietly to the joys, but more often problems of the other, offering understanding support and care.

It is remarkable how her vulnerability enables people to talk about their own situation. Recently, when she was in hospital for chemotherapy, a lady in the bed opposite died. She had been giving comfort to the relatives as they awaited the death and after the death used her bereavement counselling skills to give them the support they needed.

Many people, especially those outside the church, offer their love and support in a very natural way, revealing the love of God in the everyday world which is mutually recognised. Moved by this woman's example of courage, love and support for others, even atheists have started to pray. God moves in all kinds of unexpected ways.

Every Christian can do this, for it is simply following the example of Jesus and sharing in God's mission in the world.

A Methodist minister

Resources

The Women's Network Racial Justice Pack

The Women's Network of the Methodist Church have produced an information pack supporting us to be good neighbours to people in need and to challenge injustice. The pack builds on the experiences gained from participating in Racial Justice training and workshops, raises awareness of the problem and challenges us to make a response. The pack costs £9.95 (£3.00 p&p) and is available from Methodist Publishing House. (See page 8)



Interfaith CD ROM

The Life We Share resource helps you to understand people of other faiths and reflect on your own faith. Voices from five faiths, printable activity sheets, and a booklet of Bible study and worship material will inform and assist you in your fellowship and worship.

Available for £10 from Dr Elizabeth Harris or Ms Christine Elliott-Hall at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London.

New posters

Three more posters in our new 'Mission isMission matters' series are now available from Methodist Publishing House.

GA315 'Calling people to faith in Jesus Christ and Christian discipleship'

GA317 'Struggling for a just world'

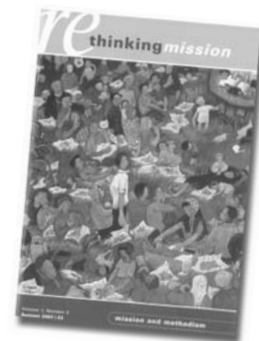
GA318 'Caring for the Earth'

Each poster features an artistic image to illustrate one of our key mission statements. The final three posters in the series of ten will be available by end of September. For More information, please contact Mission Education Tel: 020 7467 5116.



Rethinking Mission

The first issue of a new quarterly magazine was issued in spring 2003. *Rethinking Mission* is published by the Methodist Church, USPG and the United College of the Ascension. Its aim is to stimulate new thinking about the theology of mission, enlightened by the perspectives of Christians from around the world. An annual subscription costs £6.50 (€10) in the British Isles, £8 (€12) overseas and £5 (€7.50) for students. Cheques payable to 'USPG' should be sent to *Rethinking Mission* subscription, USPG, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XA. Discounts available on bulk orders.



www.forum18.org

Forum 18 News Service (F18News) is a Christian e-mail and web initiative reporting religious freedom threats objectively, truthfully and quickly. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right despite, for example, Turkmenistan demolishing Christian and Muslim places of worship, and confiscating houses used for Christian services. *F18News* reporting is without 'spin', looking at all aspects of situations. Webmasters put a link to us on your website. And do pray for us and the persecuted we serve.



Events



REACHING THE UNCHURCHED (RUN) EVENTS

Wed Oct 8 - Nottingham or
Wed Nov 5 - Guildford.

'Shapes of the Church in the 21st century'.
Graham Cray, Bishop of Maidstone and an experienced speaker on gospel, arts and culture, will be leading two one day conferences in the autumn. Brochures will be out soon but you may want to reserve one of the dates in your diary now.

RUN NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Wed 11 - Fri 13 Feb 2004

We are planning a major 3 day RUN conference to be held in Derby. Being the first event of this kind that we have organised since 1998, we believe that it will be both highly significant and strategic. Our aim is to address issues of church and mission in the context of 21st Century culture. The programme will be visionary, practical and resourceful with a strong emphasis on sharing stories.

SHAPES OF FUTURE CHURCH 5th -9th

January 2004

Cliff College are

holding a conference addressing such questions as:

Where is the church going?

What are the recent trends and developments in Ecclesiology and Missiology?

Cost £155-£175. For further information contact the college on 01246 582 321



Puzzled by mission?

*God's mission? My mission?
Next door mission? World Mission?
How does my church fit with the world church?*

*Mission - why should it matter?
Culture and context?
What can the church in other parts of the world teach us?*

*How can I help?
JMA, youth adults - what is the connection?
Mission - why should it matter?*



Susan Johnson and Steve Pearce are willing to work with you to try and answer these or other questions about God's mission, to share mission stories, to reflect, to lead worship and/or to eat together. We could offer:

1. A Saturday evening, to include a shared meal, followed by Sunday morning worship
2. Sunday morning worship, followed by a shared meal and then an afternoon session.

We are happy to focus on a particular country of the world or a specific issue, such as trade justice or HIV/AIDS. A donation of £60.00 to cover travel costs is all that we ask for a visit of this nature. The only Districts that we haven't visited in the last three years are Channel Islands, Chester and Stoke, Darlington, East Anglia, Isle of Man, Cymru and Shetland so we'd love to go there, but are happy to go anywhere you can use us.

The available weekends during the first part of 2004 are:

- Both**
15/16 May
22/23 May
- Susan**
24/25 January
21/22 February
- Steve**
27/28 March
24/25 April

We look forward to receiving your invitation.

Susan and Steve

Welcome

John Nutt joined the Mission Education Team in June, as our Administrator after temping for us since January.

We hope that he will enjoy his time with us and that you will enjoy your contact with him.



Further Information

Please contact John Nutt, Mission Education Administrator, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR
Tel: 020 7467 5116 Fax: 020 7467 5281
E-mail: missioneducation@methodistchurch.org.uk

This insert is free. **Further copies** are available at £2.25 per 10 copies as a contribution towards the distribution cost from MPH (see address below)

This is part of the Connexional Link Mailing, provided for the Methodist Church in Britain. Methodist Churches and others in linked ecumenical projects may freely copy this resource for their own use.
© Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

Who has been sent copies direct?

- District Mission Officers
- Circuit Mission Officers
- Ministers and Deacons in pastoral charge
- Mission Funds supporters

Who else in your church might find this useful?

- Members of your local mission committee
- Local preachers
- House group leaders

Please write their names and get them to tick the box when they have received or seen a copy.