Mission in Britain

grants from The Methodist Church Fund for Home Mission, including its subsidiary fund Mission Alongside the Poor, and other Methodist sources for 2003/2004

This booklet describes just a few of the many projects receiving grants from FHM (The Methodist Church Fund for Home Mission) and MAP (Mission Alongside The Poor)

A full list is available from the Mission Education Office on 020 7467 5116
The Mission Statement of the **Methodist** Church

*The calling of the Methodist Church... is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.*

Worship in the Methodist Church is expressed in many ways. In worship the Church:

- Gives praise to God in Christ through the Spirit
- Opens itself to God's transforming love
- Receives and reflects on the gospel of God's ways in the world
- Offers itself to share in God's costly action in the world.

Methodism endorses many dimensions and methods of Christian mission. In particular it affirms that mission includes:

- Telling the good news of Jesus
- Calling people to faith in Jesus Christ and to Christian discipleship
- Caring for individual people and communities sharing the task of education and social and spiritual development
- Struggling for a just world
- Being alongside the poor
- Becoming friends with people of different cultures and faiths
- Caring for the earth
- Building partnerships with other churches and other groups who share some of our mission aims.
Mission in Britain

The following activities come under the umbrella of Mission in Britain:

- Evangelism training and resources
- Planting new congregations
- Prison and industrial chaplaincy
- Chaplaincy in further and higher education institutions
- Media relations
- Mission in rural areas
- Urban mission
- Cliff College
- Relations with people of other faiths
- Mission Alongside the Poor
- Grants to local churches and circuits
- Public issues
- Support for children’s & youth work
- Creative Arts in Methodism
- Political and parliamentary affairs

Religious Education Resources Project
(see page 9)
The Filwood Hope Project
(Circuit 07/04 : Bristol – South)
MAP funded project

The Filwood Hope Centre is an ecumenical project opened by the churches and a Christian Counselling Agency on the Knowle West Estate, one of the most deprived estates in the country.

The Centre, housed in two shop units, has a coffee bar where people can meet and receive advice and support over tea and coffee. Help with writing letters, filling in forms, and making phone calls is part of the day-to-day help offered by the manager and volunteers from local churches.

Specialist advisors come in weekly to advise on benefits, debt and housing problems. A number of individuals also receive counselling, generally in connection with relationship issues and/or depression.

A number of young men also need help as they struggle with dependency on drugs, some still to come off drugs, while others work hard to come clean with the help of Methadone or Subutex.

Once this happens, they also need support and encouragement in seeking work and housing.

The aim is always to offer a practical expression of God’s love through the service offered. Your gifts through the Methodist Mission Alongside The Poor enable this important work to continue.
The Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum is unique in the Connexion, as it seeks to express and interpret the 19th century revival, which became known as Primitive Methodism, to a wide audience of people within and beyond the Church.

The museum is a popular venue for school visits, offering an insight into early 19th century Sunday Schools which provided basic education in reading and writing for working-class children, unable to attend school during the week because they were at work. Today’s children have a chance to experience a Victorian Sunday School class. Children can dress in period costumes and take part in lessons where they practise reciting tables, writing on slates and learning about Victorian money. There are replica outdoor and indoor toys to play with and a Victorian magic lantern show to enjoy.

Visitors can examine artefacts belonging to Hugh Bourne, an enthusiastic founder of many Sunday Schools, as well as learn about the chapel. The library is open during museum hours and students of all levels make good use of this facility. A grant supports the work of Development Officer Rev Dr Stephen Hatcher, stationed at Englesea Brook since 1996.

Long before computers were dreamed of, learning tables by rote was the order of the day – and woe betide those who couldn’t remember!

Photos by Doug Gibbons
“Deacon in the community”
(Circuit 18/03 : Liverpool – North Central)
MAP funded project

The scheme’s principal aim is to engage with a range of projects in the neighbourhood of the circuit’s four churches in inner city Liverpool. One project, “Futures”, based at County Methodist Church, Walton, is a partnership between the church, local residents groups, youth project scheme and housing association. A steering group has set up structures and a constitution, looked at funding opportunities, safeguarding and other legal issues, and also applied for charitable status.

Futures is aimed at young people aged 13-18 living in the Walton and Kirkdale areas of the city. With support from the steering group, the young people run the project themselves and meet weekly, with plans to meet more often if resources permit. They have access to computers and the Internet and there are chill-out areas with music and television. Days out and weekends away are also organised.

County Methodist Church itself is over 100 years old and has had to undergo extensive building repair work, including a refurbished basement. The “Deacon in the Community” project, enjoying excellent contacts with other community groups, now hopes to use the basement for work among other age groups as well as Futures.

Hyde Park Churches Detached Youth Project
(Circuit 16/03 : Leeds - Headingley)
MAP funded project

The project was set up as a result of the Hyde Park riots which took place in 1995/96 caused by rivalry amongst the drug gangs in the area. It seeks to reach young people on the streets in their locality and space; to take on board their concerns and to communicate with them on a one-to-one basis.

Hyde Park ‘Next Generation’ -
Thursday evenings - 9-13-year-olds
There are youth activities in the form of a Drop-in Centre for 13 to 19-year-olds and a club for 8 to 13-year-olds; youth workers supervise ‘break dancing’ and it is hoped to open a Youth Café. In addition to the above, a number of one-off activities are organised, such as go-karting, snooker tournaments and visits to theme parks.

The aims and objectives are to continue to develop relationships with disaffected young people in a positive and constructive way and to address issues such as drugs, crime and family breakdown.

Members of the Senior Drop-In. Monday and Wednesday evenings – 14+ years

“Opening doors to God?”
(Circuit 29/05 : Hull Mission)
MAP funded project

The Hull Mission coffee bar/pop-in, open five days a week, operates an ‘open door’ policy. Friendly staff and sensible prices attract people daily (home-made baking helps, too!). Some regard the pop-in as a safe haven, spending many hours there just to get off the streets. Whether you are living rough, taking drugs, unemployed or just lonely, you are sure of a warm welcome and a listening ear. Situated in the town centre, the coffee bar/pop-in is an important part of the church’s mission and outreach. A lay-worker is funded to manage the coffee bar with the help of a team of volunteers.
Meanwhile, at Selby Street Methodist Church, with only five members, there is much food for thought! The church is celebrating its Girls Brigade Company’s success in the District Drill Competition and in winning the district challenge trophy - two fantastic achievements for the girls and their leaders. The latest church venture, after a major makeover including a new heating system, disabled toilet, new chairs and kitchen is the provision of community lunches for up to 30 people each week. Grateful help is received from the Hessle Road Community Network plus a willing band of volunteers. Certainly a case of extending the love of God to those around them.

**Touchstone**

(Circuit 27/14 : Bradford)

MAP funded project

“A movement of faith expressing the good news of Christ, through the words, deeds and lives of those who share a vision for the city.”

Is a ground-breaking agency of urban mission in multi-faith Bradford, specialising in city issues and interfaith work but also sustaining chaplaincy and Resources work. It explores new ways of being church and proclaiming the gospel. Without conventional church building or congregation it has developed extensive networks across the city which have led to a remarkable level of influence both among city leaders and hard-pressed local communities. It is at the heart of a major new training initiative.
Staff include a presbyteral Team Leader and City Worker, a Diaconal Chaplain and a lay Pakistani Christian serving as a Faith to Faith Worker, and lay administrative and resources staff backed up by volunteers. Touchstone’s style is highly collaborative, disciplined yet flexible, working with partners from other denominations, other faiths and other agencies in the city.

Faith to Faith Worker, Awais Dominic, and Rev Geoff Reid, Team Leader, hosting Interfaith Writers for Peace in November 2002.

**Religious Education Resources Project**  
(Circuit 01/17 : Barking, Dagenham and Ilford)  
FHM funded project

Led by Circuit Minister Rev Keith Underhill, the project’s aim is to provide high quality advice, resources and training for school staff, pupils and governors in the field of religious education. Some 17 schools, from nursery to secondary level, in the Borough of Redbridge are contacted regularly and strong working relationships have been established with head teachers and community leaders.

Areas of work include:

- Leading assemblies often on themes suggested by schools
- Developing and supporting RE work within the curriculum
- Arranging visits to churches, sometimes acting out a baptism or wedding
- Longer stays in an out-of-school setting to build up relationships
- Encouraging co-operation between faith communities
One exciting initiative in the teaching of RE, is Godly Play. Children are encouraged to experience God in the midst of play and drawn into the telling of stories, with questions asked to get them thinking or wondering. After sessions, pupils illustrate what they have learnt through painting, drawing, modelling, etc. The children’s creative work has revealed a surprising depth of understanding and rewarding evidence of spiritual development.

**The Colne Open Door Centre**

(Circuit 21/06 : Pendle)
FHM & MAP funded project

The Centre was set up to respond to the needs of disadvantaged people in Colne, particularly within the deprived wards of Waterside and Vivary Bridge, where poor housing and the high maintenance problems because of the damp climate plus a lack of employment opportunities was having an energy-sapping effect on residents.

**Objectives**
- To develop the drop-in facility/café giving volunteers employment experience and training
- To develop practical local projects to help those in need to take an active role in improving their living circumstances
- To support the work and establishment of other new local community groups
- To signpost disadvantaged people to existing support agencies

Young people as well as those of all ages are made to feel at home at the Colne Open Door Centre.
Achievements

The café has become a busy and important meeting place as well as providing low-cost nutritious meals. Many who frequent the café have problems associated with poverty, benefits, misuse of drugs and alcohol. They always find a listening ear and a good level of support. Amongst those who are helped are the homeless and those just released from prison or on community service.

Many volunteers have gone on to further education or paid employment following training and job experience. The centre is also a base and venue for several other community organisations.

Churches in Reading
Women’s Centre
(Circuit 26/13 : Reading)
MAP funded project

In 1992, Constance Gooding, a Methodist from Guyana, began planning a drop-in centre for women that would be safe, accepting, and supporting, where skills could be developed. Today the centre is a registered charity, run ecumenically and open three days a week, with ages ranging from tiny babies to the eighties! Many women are lonely, some with learning difficulties, others coping with mental ill health. The centre offers a loving and supportive atmosphere with a wide variety of activities – both for fun and for learning, plus information about benefits, healthy eating, etc . . . and a cooked meal for £1.

Learning felt-making with a tutor from the college
Grants have enabled staff training and the establishment of Creative Projects with tutors from Reading College, who also run Life Skills courses. (Two women now have the confidence to attend the college and are thrilled at the thought of learning.)

The centre is a resource for professionals aiming to help people back into the community.

The manager, deputy and child-worker are paid; other helpers are volunteers. Although run by Christians, women come from Muslim, Hindu and Sikh faiths, as well as none. God’s love is still the motivation and prayer the under-girding strength.

**Kara Family Project**
(Circuit 13/02 : Middlesbrough and Eston)
MAP funded project

*From reality to hope . . . . .
urban mission in
South Bank, Middlesbrough*

On the south Bank of the River Tees lies a community of almost 7,000 people who experience some of the worst hardships in Britain today. These include poor housing, lack of shopping, transport and leisure facilities; third generation unemployment; poor mental and physical health (mortality rate for men is just 58 years); high proportions of under-11s (many with behavioural difficulties) and teenage pregnancies . . . . the list goes on.

In 1998 the Kara Project was born to address some of the needs of this community through supporting parents, young people and children. Although initial funding was obtained, a crisis point was reached in March 2002 with the very real threat of closure. As the need for help increased through more people learning of the Kara Project, funding received from the Home Mission Fund was a lifeline and kept the project afloat until long-term financial support, including MAP funding, could be found. It meant that the workers could
continue to be Jesus to a community brought to its knees by unemployment and social exclusion of every form.

Some of the “All about Me” confidence building group, who also completed a parenting course, receiving adult learners awards from the local mayor.

Today, the project offers extra support to individual families; holiday activities for children and families; opportunities for volunteering; parenting courses; parent support groups; group and one-to-one work with children and young people from 3-13 years; training; consultancy; celebration of family life.

It is a joy to see how individuals and families can and do find the strength to overcome painful histories and go on to be successful pupils, good parents and responsible community members – truly a move from despair to joy and hope.

Men at loose in the kitchen! Some dads enjoying a cookery course
About ten years ago, in Fair Ford Leys, Aylesbury, the church was approached when land was being developed. 1800 new homes were planned, with 700 still to be built. Five years ago a Deacon was appointed by the Methodist Church to build up the pastoral work in this area. Talks began between four denominations in the town (Anglicans, United Reformed, Baptists and Methodists), the aim being to form a Local Ecumenical Project and to build a new church and community centre.

A Methodist minister, Fred Ireland has become the lead person in this exciting project that has seen 67 children christened since 2000, with seven in September 2003. The building was opened in March this year at a cost of one million pounds and is attracting new faces every week. It is a 'paperless' church, using screens for songs, hymns, Bible passages and liturgy, that aims to provide access to the richness from all traditions in worship and mission.

The Deacon appointment and some funding for the building was provided by your giving to the Methodist Church Fund for Home Mission.
These are only a few of the projects supported in the UK.

Articles are regularly included in the *Methodist Recorder’s* Breaking New Ground article, and in our quarterly newsletter, *Mission Matters*. If you would like to know more, or make a donation to the Fund for Home Mission, contact:

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Religious Education Resources Project
The Creation
Religious Education Resources Project

YOUR GENEROUS GIVING TO THE FUND FOR HOME MISSION FUNDS MUCH OF THIS WORK.
THANK YOU