

One Mission bible study

Giving all we can



The generous giving of Methodist people for world mission through these past 200 years is a story in itself but it has not always been so. As Thomas Coke began to expand the story of God's grace for all into Europe, the Caribbean and North America, there was a need for more people to be sent overseas and money became a problem!

By 1813, the work had expanded into Sierra Leone. There were now 42 missionaries to be supported, but little by way of giving.



WATCH

Video Clip 3

The rousing meeting did manage to part Yorkshire people from their money, and from this meeting the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) for the Leeds District was established. Others quickly followed. By 1818 the Wesleyan Missionary Society came into being, its sole purpose being to raise the funds needed to support and expand the foreign missions.

Some may wonder why it took so long to form the WMMS as other Churches were establishing their own mission agencies. Part of the answer lies in Coke himself, as he was the superintendent of foreign missions and used his own money generously. The more fundamental reason was that the whole of the

Methodist movement was the missionary society – both in Britain and overseas (still at this time within the established Church of England). “Wesleyan Methodism did not so much found the Missionary Society, it realised that it was a Missionary Society by the calling of God.” (Findlay & Holdsworth vol 1 p183)

This has been a fundamental part of our history as a church. Until recently, “every member of the Methodist Church was a member of the MMS”. Today our Standing Order reads:

“every member of the Methodist Church is expected actively to engage in mission”

The vision of the Conference is to encourage the Methodist people to move from passive to active participation.

Through generations of people, giving to the World Church has been both extravagant and sacrificial. One of the key factors in people's generosity has been the stories missionaries share from different parts of the world. It soon became more than supporting ministers and their families in their call to go overseas, as lay people heard the call of God to serve as doctors, nurses, teachers, agriculturalists, evangelists, etc.

Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital, Sierra Leone

Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital in Sierra Leone was built in the 1930s by Methodist missionaries, and was the pride and joy of the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone. Recently, this hospital played a key role in the fight against the Ebola outbreak.

Thanks to donors to the World Mission Fund, the Methodist Church in Britain was able to send two grants totalling £22,500 to the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone, to assist Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital and other clinics in the country with tackling the Ebola outbreak.

The grants allowed the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone to inform rural communities about the damaging effects of Ebola and its implications for community life. The Methodist Church in Sierra Leone Conference administration collaborated with key health partners to share valuable information on the spread, prevention, and management of the Ebola epidemic. This included organising sensitisation training, airing jingles on community radio, house-to-house meetings, newspaper coverage, church sermons, and posters with advice on how to avoid contracting the virus.

One beneficiary of the training was Musa Kallon, a local chief. He said, “As chief, I have had my

own bitter experience of what Ebola can do to a family. My wife contracted the disease and died from it. I therefore considered this training process an opportunity to learn about the virus so that I can make informed decisions when I need to. I scheduled a meeting for all chiefs in my chiefdom to share my experiences with them. We developed various ways of raising funds for District Medical Officers to train them on the basic knowledge and understanding they needed to guide people in their communities.”

Bishop Beah, President of the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone, has expressed their gratitude to the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB) and asked for our continued prayers.



Bible Study – 2 Corinthians 8

Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth encouraging them to be generous. This is a message we need to hear loudly today. Paul is speaking about the collection he is organising for the Church in Jerusalem (the ‘mother church’), who were in great need. Paul encouraged them to express the genuineness of their faith through their own giving

Paul reminded the Corinthians that the churches in Macedonia had given generously at a time of great hardship for themselves. Those of us who have

been privileged to work in some of the developing countries around the world know how generous poor people can be. Those who have so little have so much to teach us about giving – about giving generously and graciously.

Out of the evolving liberation theology of Latin America came this deeply profound statement:

We need the poor to teach us dependence, for unless we learn dependence we will never experience grace.

It is through the discovery of our dependence on God that we experience more of God's grace in our lives.

Response

- **In what way is our faith expressed in the generosity of our giving?**
- **How often do we recall verse 9 as we decide how much of our income to give?**

Today – do we still need to give?

Due to the generosity of the past, we have been able to develop partnerships with churches across the world. Many of these were daughter Churches which are now autonomous but still need us to be generous to them.

Each year, the MCB shares around £4,500,000 with over 65 Partner Churches. Some of this is through offering block grants so that the Partner Church determines where their priorities are for mission and outreach. Other grants are given through Scholarship and Leadership Training (SALT) programme; where once students came to study in the UK, more and more are studying in countries closer to home. The Nationals in Mission Appointments (NMA) programme has been developing for 25 years now. This is where a new mission initiative is identified by a Partner Church and they also have a person who is trained and ready to go but there are no funds. A grant for three to five years enables some exciting work to get started.



There can still be a dilemma about supporting mission locally and globally – not only wanting the preachers for ourselves in Britain but also the money! Now that the Conference has affirmed that “Mission is One” (Session 4 will develop this more fully), there is an acknowledgement that mission is both local and global. So our giving must also be for initiatives here in Britain as well.

Jabez Bunting reflected that the British Church was “resource rich” and should be able to support

the sending of ministers and the raising of funds to support the work. Today many of our Partner Churches are resource rich in having many ministers, vibrant youth programmes and outreach to all, a richness of worship and liturgy and much more which is being shared with us here in Britain. Mission is now truly a partnership and there are over 80 ministers from Partner Churches now serving the British Church.

Response

- **Share together how your church is involved in supporting mission locally and globally; through individuals as well as the congregation, all giving their time and talents as well as money.**
- **Many churches support mission initiatives which are not specifically Methodist. Discuss the importance of still needing to support the Funds for Mission in Britain and the World Church.**
- **Share together your understanding of the difference in giving to mission and development.**