

One Mission bible study

One Mission



Over the past sessions, we have seen that as Methodism began to grow in the late eighteenth century, it spread from these islands around the world like seeds blown upon the wind. As Wesley focused on Britain and Ireland, Coke had pastoral oversight of Methodism as it spread to North America, across Europe and the Caribbean, and eventually into Africa. At this time both Wesley and Coke were ordained ministers of the Church of England and the people called Methodists were held fragily within this communion.

As we saw in the second session, Methodism did not set up a separate missionary society (as did the Baptists, Anglicans and other churches) because of the unique realisation that the Methodist movement was by its very nature a missionary society. So it could be argued that it was never the intention to separate God's mission into 'Home' and 'Overseas'. There are many milestones in the history of mission and one of these was the 1910 Conference in Edinburgh, at which it was decided that churches should work together ecumenically in sharing the gospel of Christ. In 2010, over 70 Methodist and ecumenical Church partners came together in London to listen again to what the Spirit was saying to the Church. This eventually led to the Methodist Conference in 2012 unanimously affirming that there is only "One Mission" – God's mission – which is both local and global.

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Mrs Harvard's sentiments could be said of many in the Church today: "I no more feel prepared for parenting than I do for any of the other tasks that the Lord has set me to do, but if I don't do it then no one else will."

Read together: Matthew 9:35-10:5

There are some wonderful insights into mission and ministry in this short passage.

Jesus knew the importance of the itinerant preacher. As his ministry developed, it centred on preaching, teaching and healing. At the heart of this was the compassion he had for all the people he lived and moved amongst.

Any thoughts and conversations about mission in our community must come out of compassion for people – not a desire to fill empty pews!

He encourages his disciples to pray that God would raise up more people to share in this ministry and mission to share the Good News of God's Kingdom.

Then comes the great shift in this gospel. In the space of one sentence, the 12 disciples become apostles. The 'learners' become those 'who are sent out'. There is a need for this same transformation to be happening in our churches – that disciples become apostles!



So how are we to take the challenge of the Revd Lynch – “It seems there are only two choices: to continue or to fail.”

Our approach to mission locally and globally continues to be transformed.

Developing new partnerships

We now relate to over 65 autonomous Churches. Many of these have been our traditional partners; others are new churches often planted by neighbouring Conferences, such as:

- the Methodist Church in Tanzania planted from Kenya
- Fijian and Samoan Methodists taking the gospel to New Britain and New Ireland of the coast of Papua New Guinea.

Healthy Church



St Andrew's Methodist Church in Basingstoke struck a deal to demolish its old building. In return for a new church, it will hand over some of the land to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to enable the creation of a new health centre.

The Revd Margaret Locke-Wheaton, superintendent

Methodist minister for Basingstoke, said, “In many ways the new church is the new beginning for us. We will have something wonderful and we want to share that.”

The Revd Stephen Poxon, former President of the Conference, added, “Lots of churches in the country are finding new ways to engage with their communities, and that's what this project is about.”

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council found £3.2million to fund the new church and medical centre. A local dental practice will also move from its current base into the purpose-built health centre. Among the ideas now being discussed at St Andrew's are a lunch club, prayer requests and enabling those visiting the surgery to drop into the church.

Here in Britain, there are new partnerships being developed between churches and caring agencies.

New ways of working

In all parts of the World Church, there are new and innovative ways of working. The last century was the period during which dependency evolved into inter-dependency and the MCB developed maturing and

exciting partnerships. The master-slave relationship has become a brother-sister one.

Here in this part of the Methodist Church Family, we have seen new ways of working – with Venture FX and Pioneer ministers.

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New ways of working/ FX

Mission Partner Andy Dye writes how the Messy Church format he introduced to the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) South Caribbean District in Grenada is thriving.

“The group that was started meet once a month in a primary school and it is run by the women’s fellowship from one of the churches. The format has developed under their guidance to suit them. It consists of a short time of worship and a message (short by Grenada standards at an hour or less), then a craft activity, usually just one activity for everyone to do. This is followed by a short time back together and then some food. Although the group have been working hard to get families to come, it is mostly about 30 children ranging from 2 to 18 and one or two couples with their children.

It is not called ‘Messy Church’ in Grenada as people don’t like that name; it implies dirt or worse. So here, it is called Saturday fellowship.

One of the big attractions for the kids is a good meal, as many of them do not get a lot to eat, especially in the way of protein.



I get asked to go along occasionally to lead and speak, but I can say that it has become part of the Methodist church fabric here and is seen as part of ongoing outreach in this relatively impoverished part of Grenada.

It has been great for me to see that a simple sharing of an idea can be an ignition point for local mission under God’s direction.

We have a few boys that have come through the Saturday fellowship and have now also decided to come along to Sunday morning worship each week in the town.”

Garden-City

Hello!

Glad you found us. We’re Garden-City, a small community of people across Nottingham, who together are exploring what it means to follow Jesus.

Why ‘Garden-City’, you ask? Well, tradition has it that life began in a beautiful garden where men and women lived in perfect harmony with themselves, with each other, with God and with creation. But as we know, this all went horribly wrong. Fortunately, tradition also has it that this holistic harmony will one day be rediscovered in a heavenly city. We live in the in-between time – hence the hyphen in the name Garden-City.

Together we’re on a journey; a journey towards

finding this harmony, a journey towards this eternal city. We’re also trying to grow our own food in an allotment in the city. As you can see, the only sensible thing to do was to call ourselves Garden-City!

Things we do

Garden-City isn’t really about meetings; it’s about friendships. Having said that, we’ve found that to best explore what it means to follow Jesus, it helps if we gather together regularly. So we meet on Mondays (which means we can lie in on Sundays!).

First Monday

On the first Monday of the month, we meet upstairs in

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the function room of Trent Bridge Inn, around 7.30pm. We've been working through the book of Luke, learning more about Jesus and how we can follow him. We do this in a very informal way (no sermons!), simply discussing how we can apply the stories of Jesus to our lives. This sets the theme that we explore through the rest of the month.

Second Monday

On the second Monday of the month, we meet in groups of three (in homes, the pub or wherever). We've found this helps us get to know each other better and support and encourage each other on the journey.

Third Monday

On the third Monday, we're back at Trent Bridge Inn. This time we spend the evening exploring prayer and meditation. We do this in really relaxed, informal and creative ways; no bowing of heads and long awkward silences!

Fourth Monday

On the fourth Monday, we meet in two small groups (in homes). This is probably the most informal gathering as we simply discuss how the month has gone, what extra support we might need, and any questions we may have.

We're also beginning to explore what it means to serve our local community by sharing with others what Jesus has been doing with us, so we're starting to help local people who are struggling to stay on top of work on their gardens. We put on one-off contemplative experiences to help people begin to explore a Jesus-centred spirituality. We host a prayer tent and put on art installations at local festivals.

The world on our doorstep

Today we are seeing the rich diversity of British Methodism beginning to bring renewal to our Church. In London, the Church is growing and much of this has been due to the welcome people from

Africa, Asia, Latin America and other parts of the world have found. We now have the whole world on our doorstep offering new ways of worship, challenges to our commitment to prayer and studying Scripture and encouraging us with their generous giving.

Amity Bibles

China is the most populous country in the world. Official figures give the number of Christians in China as 23 million but it is likely to be higher – probably 50 million. Though a huge number, this is really a tiny proportion of China's population. Christianity

in China is growing very quickly, as are Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Taoism. As a result, providing adequate numbers of well-trained ministers is a priority for the Church.

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The Amity Foundation is an independent Chinese voluntary organisation and was initiated by Chinese Christians to promote education, social services, health and rural development. The Methodist Church in Britain, working through the China Forum of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) has been a partner of Amity since its earliest days; it is the only effective way to support such work in China.

Amity's first project was a printing press. This was launched in 1985 and now produces a million Bibles a month. In 2013, Amity celebrated the production of its 100 millionth Bible with speeches from a variety of guests, including the Communist Party and government officials. This is a great achievement and it means that China is not only meeting its own need for Bibles but also exporting them to other parts of Asia and Europe. How great is our God!



The 100 millionth Bible coming off the Amity printing press.

How can I/we be involved?

Response

- **We can all be involved in mission both within our local community and the wider world church. Here are a few ideas:**
- **Carry out an audit of your local community to discover what the needs are... and then see if God is leading you to some new or renewed areas of mission and ministry.**
- **Discuss the possibility of developing church/circuit/district partnership with another part of the World Church family. This could lead eventually to mission teams, exchanges of young people/women's groups and a renewed sense of mission locally.**
- **Is there a possibility of a developing a partnership with another church here in Britain? Say, for example, a rural chapel linking with one in an urban area, or an inner city black congregation with a congregation in a 'white middle class' area?**