



**Methodist Church Circuit**

**IN TOUCH**

**June**



2009

## From the Manse

Dear Friends,

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month we will be welcoming several hundred Methodists from Cornwall who will be coming over for the day on the Scillonian. Some of you will remember that they made a similar trip three or four years ago.



I am grateful to all of the people who have worked hard to make this a success, both here and on the mainland. But I am most grateful for this opportunity to welcome others to our Islands and to the fellowship of our Methodist community here. We are not a large company of people who meet week by week in our two chapels, so it is good, from time to time, to be reminded that there is a bigger church out there. We get reminders of this practically every week of the year, of course, through the many visitors who join us for worship. But it is good to receive a group who are coming specifically because they share our Methodist tradition and heritage.

As we welcome them, we are grateful for all that they will bring to us. And we are pleased, too, to be able to offer them the hand of fellowship and friendship. I hope all of you who live here will be able to share in the day in some way or other, either through the service on Holgates Green, or in helping with the lunch which we will be providing and, of course, in making sure those who have come across for the day are made as welcome as possible. I hope that the weather will be fine enough for some of the friends from St. Martin's to come and join us.

Every blessing,

David.

## **A Visit by Cornish Methodists, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2009**

Most of you will remember the Ascension Day visit by several hundred Methodists from across Cornwall a few years ago. Steven Wild, Chair of the Cornwall Methodist District, will be leading another group on Monday June 1<sup>st</sup>. The programme will be similar to last time, when there was a service on Holgate's Green and we then provided a sandwich lunch. Please keep this date free and, of course, all offers of help will be gratefully received.

### **Dear God by Barbara Hasler**

Congratulations to Barbara on writing and publishing her new book 'Dear God'. Not only has she offered a new slant on familiar events but also the scripts for Thought for the Day which she broadcasts on Radio Scilly. Barbara is not selling this book but requests gifts for Medicins Sans Frontiers and following a donation they replied with this small account of their work.

"Your gift is of huge value both to our field teams and our patients. Donations such as yours make our work possible as they allow us to remain independent from political, religious and economic interests to ensure the freedom to provide medical assistance whenever and wherever it is needed. Your support ensures that MSF can negotiate armed checkpoints and borders, to reach those most forgotten and at risk. It also enables MSF to offer treatment for infectious diseases, to people who lack access to even the most basic medical care, due to conflict, exclusion, or poverty".

Thank you Barbara.

Mary

### **Frank Smith**

It is with great sadness that we hear of the death of Frank Smith. We send our sympathy, love and prayers to Steve, Lois and the family.

## Perfect love casts out fear

How true are these words to you today? Are you fearful of some happening which you will not be able to cope with? Or are you bound by some happening in the past which still has a binding effect of fear on you today? If so you are not alone, for each of us experiences moments of great trauma which threaten our well-being in the future. We bear the scars of sorrow just as Jesus bore the scars of his crucifixion but this does not stop God from taking us out of past pain into a glorious freedom of peace; that is, if we allow him to do so. Let go and let God. Learn from Scripture and apply it to your situation today and remember all the times in the past when God has brought you through difficulties. Jesus said '***I will never leave you or forsake you***' and I for one know this to be true. Through all the changing scenes of life in trouble and in joy, a great hymn which I have known throughout my life, was to me in earlier years, a hymn in which I could sing of a hope to trust in God. This has now become a reality in which I can affirm through life experience that I can and do trust wholeheartedly in God. ***I will never leave you or forsake you.*** Even and especially when life demands more than we can ever imagine having the strength to manage. Thanks be to God.

Mary Ratcliffe

**O make but trial of His love, experience will decide**

**How blest are they, and only they who in His truth confide.**

**Fear Him ye saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear.**

**Make you His service your delight, your wants shall be His care.**

Nahum Tate (1652-1715)

## **Church helps to tackle Sri Lankan food crisis**

***As fighting rages between Sri Lankan Government troops and the Tamil Tiger rebels, the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka is helping to feed the victims of a country ripped apart by more than two decades of civil war.***

The violent conflict, which is taking place primarily in Vanni in the northeast of the country, has caused substantial food shortages in areas where the population has been displaced. In addition, crop failure, recent floods and the government's refusal to allow in food aid means that thousands of people are going hungry.

With the assistance of local volunteers, the Sri Lankan Church has set up a feeding centre in Pattalipuram in the Tsunami-affected east of the country with cash it has raised in conjunction with the Methodist Church in the UK. It is giving a much needed helping hand to refugees like 21-year-old mum, Maheshwary Kumaravel and her two-year-old baby daughter, Rathy, who was born in a refugee camp. She and her husband, who scrapes a precarious living collecting firewood in an area which is still land-mined, are among 50 families whom the centre will support, says Methodist Church Mission Partner, David Furnival. "They hope to ensure that babies like Rathy will survive the first year of resettlement. Each community is starting from scratch yet again, drawing on strength beyond uncertainty and hope," David says.

It is estimated that around 250,000 people have been affected by the ongoing fighting, which is over the Tamil Tigers' demands for a separate state for the Tamil People. Many of those affected have had to flee their homes because of the continuing hostilities, which, in their 25-year history, have claimed over 70,000 lives.

***Revd. Ebenezer Joseph, President of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka says: "We continue to give assistance, comfort, courage and hope. Sometimes a feeling of total helplessness sets in. It is the presence of the risen Saviour that keeps us going with the assurance that tomorrow can and must be different***

## Charles Darwin

The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth has brought with it much publicised comment on Creation, the existence of God, and Faith. It is argued that matters incapable of logical explanation and intellectual proof cannot exist. My instinctive reaction to that approach is to ask 'Can you prove by logical argument that a painting, a landscape or a piece of music, is beautiful?' But, you may say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Pursuing the point, I recall a conversation in an early 'Star Trek' episode between Captain Kirk and Mr Spock. 'Trekkies' will know that Mr Spock, with the big ears, was half Vulcan, and, therefore, genetically programmed to take a logical, intellectual approach to all matters. In the conversation I recall, he had been holding forth in that vein; Captain Kirk responded by saying something like 'Spock, humans are not only creatures of logic, we are also creatures of emotion and experience. We base our decisions and beliefs on experience, emotion and reason.'

Going back to the word 'proof' or 'prove', which is a powerful one, the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, in defining 'prove' includes the phrase 'to try the genuineness of, to test'. We put our faith to the test in the way we live. To conclude with another proverb – 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating'.

*This was sent to us by Chris Hunt, for a long time a visitor to Scilly and a member of Sherwell United Church in Plymouth. This article first appeared in the magazine of that church. We thank Chris very much.*

## Time for a smile

*From a church notice-board*

The Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water'; the sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus'.

Remember in prayer those who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.

## Summer Solstice

The word comes from two Latin words – ‘sol’ and ‘sistere’ meaning ‘sun’ and ‘to stand still’. This is because when the sun reaches its highest point it seems to stand still. The summer solstice is the time when we have the longest day and shortest night and occurs on June 20th or 21st in the Northern hemisphere and in December in the Southern hemisphere.



It has had spiritual significance for thousands of years because humans have been aware of the great power of the sun. It was always a joyful time because it marked the longest day and the crops to come. Many people such as Celts and Slavs celebrated with dancing and bonfires to increase the sun's energy. The Chinese honoured Li, the goddess of light.



Others like the Druids, built monuments such as Stonehenge which were designed to line up with the sun. They still gather to celebrate the Solstice at Stonehenge to this day.

Because of the spiritual significance of the day Christians placed the feast of St John the Baptist near the solstice (on June 24<sup>th</sup>) and incorporated the pagan bonfires into the celebration of that day.

The Christian alternative - to honour the Creator rather than the created is illustrated in *The Canticle for Brother Sun* by St Francis of Assisi

Praised be You, My Lord, in all Your creatures,  
Especially Sir Brother Sun,  
Who makes the day and enlightens us through You.  
He is lovely and radiant and grand;  
And he heralds You, his Most High Lord.

Anne

## Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA)



MHA provides a range of services for older people nationwide to suit their individual and differing needs. They offer:

70 Care Homes providing a mix of

residential, nursing and specialist dementia care to 3000 people

50 Housing Schemes with varying levels of support including 24-hour care, available for rent, part-ownership and full purchase

50 Community Services projects, including our Live at Home Schemes which provide befriending, activities and social support for 8000 people living in their own homes, and a number of Day Care Resource centres for people with dementia

They place a special emphasis on the spiritual, as well as physical well-being of each person for whom they provide care and all their homes and housing have a chaplain to provide pastoral support. MHA is at the forefront of quality dementia services, building new services and delivering care and support specially designed for individuals with dementia.

These services are delivered by 5000 dedicated staff and 5000 committed volunteers.

*'MHA is a professional organization responding to older people's needs. However, I especially appreciate the fact that at the heart of all its work are the Christian principles, to serve others, to treat everyone as you would hope to be treated yourself with dignity, respect and love'*  
Pam Rhodes, MHA Patron

Methodist Homes Sunday is on June 14<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for the work of this organization.



## How Methodists bought less

### **Thousands bought less in Lent, according to organisers of a challenging Methodist campaign.**

During Lent 2008, the Methodist Church encouraged people to ditch the “shop ‘til you drop” attitude in favour of more simple living. [The Buy Less: Live More campaign](#) was intended to challenge people to curb their spending and shrink their carbon footprint.

The campaign was accompanied by an “alternative” credit card designed to be placed in a wallet in front of other credit and debit cards to remind people to think twice before they spent. Each day, participants were also offered two challenges or ideas for buying less and living more, with links to online prayers and a daily Bible study.

The campaign received an overwhelmingly positive response, with 10,000 cards sent out and over 1,000 people signing up to the mailing list and online discussion group.

Participants were challenged to think before buying unnecessary gadgets online. “And the supermarket!” responded one participant. “I used to buy fabric softener, scented ironing water, air fresheners - lots of stuff I didn't need but that used plenty of energy to produce and distribute and package. Stopped buying it all now. Cheaper and greener! And my house and clothes still don't stink.”

An older writer observed that many of the campaign's ideas had been “so ingrained in me through wartime childhood and rationing that I haven't had to give much up! But it's put me in touch with ways of consuming and living that some younger people do have to be challenged about in today's exciting world.”

Not everyone was happy with the campaign, feeling that it could damage retail outlets that have done much to improve their sales practices in recent years. “The Church and partner organisations can claim a great success,” she wrote, “with Sainsbury's selling ONLY Fair-trade bananas, and lots more Fair-trade stuff... and M&S are now selling Fair-trade T-shirts.

“Surely a better campaign would have been to ask Methodists to ‘Think more - Live more’.”

In fact, a lot of thinking did go on, too – much of it on the faith-based discussion forum ***The Interface***, which hosted a lively debate about the issues. Concerns were aired about middle class Christians agonising over things that many can’t afford to give up, and also the wider impact of living in a credit and debt society.

The debates ran wide and the ideas will live long. As one user commented, the campaign was about more than just spending less money. “What an interesting and thought provoking way to walk through Lent. The online prayers are excellent and I’ve copied several down to use again. Getting in touch with long lost friends and changing habits to be more environmentally aware are great longer term changes to make.”

*I found this in Momentum online and thought that it was a campaign that could well be run all the year, not just in Lent.*

Anne

### **Birthday greetings**

We wish a Happy Birthday this month to Rose Didlick, Tianna Rose, Janis and Tony Nightingale, Kenneth Cocking, Tricia Thomas, Ann Elgawad, June and Philip Lethbridge, Steve Manning, Gillian Trenear, Sam Grossett, Christopher Savill and Gladys Perkins. We hope you all have a lovely day. If we have missed anyone out we apologise and send our greetings to you too. Please let Gwen know if we do not yet have your birthday date.



## Action for Children

This Methodist-supported charity recently changed its name from National Children's Home, or NCH for short, as we have always known it. Together with other similar organisations and with the 'Find me a family' series on Channel 4, we have a campaign to find permanent homes for children and young people stuck in long-term care. Sadly, there are many thousands who will never experience a good family life.



Back in 1960 the Clarksons became 'family' for a little girl called Sharon, then sixteen months old. My recent birthday celebrations with the family have left me reminiscing! When our children Colin and Norma were five and three years old I broached with Peter the need to think about our next addition to the nest. – He virtually exploded – 'I don't want any more – I hate babies!' Having expected to mother two or three more I was completely devastated.

Yet who knows what the Lord God has in mind for us? My sorrow was gone when neighbours adopted a little boy past babyhood to complete their family. An answer for us? Peter – 'Well, all right if you'd like to do it!' Not so easy – the adoption societies targeted couples with no children – and we could have more of our own! A dozen rejections left me ready to give up but then came a response from NCH offering us a child either coloured or disabled. Peter would not consider the former – only white faces were to be seen then in Hampshire and he rightly felt it would be unfair to the child and to Colin and Norma. However, we could go for the other option – again – 'If you'd like to do it'.

A visit from the NCH Child Care Officer gave us the go-ahead with the news that Sharon awaited collection. Her disability was small, with deformed fingers – the likely result of thalidomide given in the pregnancy. We were not allowed to complete the adoption until she was four years old, to confirm the extent of the harm. My hope of a larger family was soon forgotten as we went to Great Ormond Street Hospital for operations every year to improve the use and looks of Sharon's fingers and then in 1967 we moved to a smallholding on the edge of the New Forest with lots to do!

The National Children's Home and the charity's new name, Action for Children has inevitably received my full support over the years and I have been the St Mary's Methodist Representative since coming to Scilly nearly twenty years ago. The congregation and the local community have been very supportive of all our efforts, for which many thanks.

Gwen Clarkson



"It's not as picturesque as the old steeple  
but it's saving a fortune in electricity bills!"

### **Think it over**

Today we have higher buildings and wider roads, but shorter temperaments and narrower points of view.

We spend more but enjoy less.

We have bigger houses but smaller families.

We have more compromises but less time.

We have more knowledge but less judgement.

We have more medicines but less health.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

We talk much, we love only a little and we hate too much.

We reached the moon and came back but we find it troublesome to cross our own street and meet our neighbours.

We have conquered outer space, but not our inner space.

We have higher incomes but fewer morals.

These are times with more liberty but less joy.

We have much more food but less nutrition.

These are the days in which it takes two salaries for each home, but divorces increase.

These are times of finer houses but more broken homes.

### *That's why I propose that, as from today:-*

You do not keep anything for a special occasion because every day that you live is a special occasion.

Search for knowledge, read more, sit at your back door and admire the view without paying attention to your needs.

Spend more time with your family and friends, eat your favourite foods, visit the places you love.

Life is a chain of moments of enjoyment, not only about survival.

Use your crystal glasses, do not save your best perfume, but use them every time you feel you want to.

Remove from your vocabulary phrases like 'one of these days' and 'some day'

Let's write that letter we thought of writing 'one of these days'.

Let's tell our families and friends how much we love them.

Do not delay anything that adds laughter and joy to your life.

Every day, every hour and every minute is special.

And you don't know if it will be your last.

If you are too busy to take time to understand this message and pass it on to someone you love, and tell yourself you will pass it on 'one of these days'

Just think 'one of these days' you may not be here to pass it on.

Submitted by Phoebe Mercer to the magazine of Trinity Methodist Church, Royton , courtesy of B. Cruickshank, Radio North Angus.

## **Thanksgiving**

For these I pray . . .  
For ears to hear the birds' morning song,  
For courage when all things go wrong,  
For legs to walk for my delight,  
For strength to take me through the night.  
For eyes to see the light of day,  
For compassion for others on life's way.  
For arms to hold me when I'm cold,  
For grace and comfort if I live to be old.  
If all these things You give to me  
Low on my knees I'll thankful be,  
But in return can only say –  
Thank you Lord for my life today. Amen

Thanks to Royton Methodist Church for allowing us to use this.

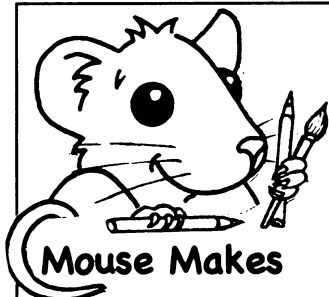
## **What's in a name?**

An old man was invited to a meal by an old friend. He was very impressed by the way his host after all these years of marriage preceded every request to his wife with endearing terms - calling her Honey, My Love, Darling, Sweetheart, Lovey dovey etc. The couple had been married over fifty years and they were still clearly in love. While the wife was in the kitchen the guest leaned over and congratulated his friend: 'I think it's wonderful that after all the years you've been married you still call your wife by those loving pet names'. His friend looked a bit sheepish and said 'I have to tell you the truth, I forgot her real name about ten years ago'.

## Bible Quiz

*This first appeared in the magazine of Trinity Methodist Church, Royton.*  
The answers are on page 16.

1. How many books are there in the Old Testament?  
a) 28   b) 35   c) 39   d) 43.
2. According to Genesis, what did God create on the fourth day?  
a) The land and the seas      b) The sun, moon and stars  
c) Fish and fowl                  d) Beasts of the earth.
3. On which road did the Good Samaritan do his good deed?  
a) Galilee to Nazareth      b) Tyre to Sidon  
c) Egypt to Canaan          d) Jerusalem to Jericho.
4. Which psalm begins: 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want'?  
a) 21st      b) 23rd      c) 25th      d) 27th.
5. When was David anointed King of Israel?  
a) When he was a shepherd boy      b) When he killed Goliath  
c) When he played his harp for Saul   d) When Samuel died.
6. How many sons did Noah have?  
a) two      b) three      c) four      d) six.
7. To which brothers did Jesus say: 'I will make you fishers of men'?  
a) Peter and Andrew      b) Thomas and Matthew  
c) James and John          d) Paul and Barnabas.
8. Who fed on locusts and wild honey in the wilderness?  
a) Moses      b) Joseph      c) John the Baptist      d) Jesus.
9. Who had Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego cast into the furnace?  
a) Nathan      b) Naboth      c) Nehemiah      d) Nebuchadnezzar.
10. What fed the five thousand?  
a) five loaves and five fishes      b) two loaves and five fishes  
c) five loaves and two fishes      d) four loaves and two fishes.



When **Nehemiah** heard that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins he sat down and wept. For days he fasted and prayed before God. Finally the opportunity came for him to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls, but it wasn't going to be easy....

Read Nehemiah's story in the **Old Testament** book of 'Nehemiah', chapters 1 to 7.

Here is Nehemiah's list of all the things that need to be done to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Fill in the missing gaps on the tower to help rebuild the wall.

PRAY	GATE
RUBBLE	BEAM
REPAIR	BOLT
RESTORE	BAR
BUILD	STEP
WORK	TOWER
STONE	HOUSE
TIMBER	POOL
WALLS	FINISH
FLOOR	DEDICATE
ROOF	CELEBRATE
DOOR	

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						RE			R
							O		E
							B		

How many gates were repaired?  
Who rebuilt them?

How long did it take to finish the walls?



## Diary Dates

### June

- 1<sup>st</sup> Day Visit by Cornish Methodists (see details elsewhere in magazine)
- 16<sup>th</sup> St. Mary's Annual Church Meeting (**note new date**)
- 28<sup>th</sup> Circuit Service and Outing to Bryher

### From the Editorial Team

Articles this month have come from Momentum online and [www.parishpump.co.uk](http://www.parishpump.co.uk). We are especially happy to have contributions from local people and from our mainland friends. Please remember that the deadline is the 15th of the month (or earlier if possible – it saves the last minute juggling of pages) and articles can be sent to

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### Answers to the quiz

1. c, 39 books
2. b, The sun moon and stars
3. d, Jerusalem to Jericho
4. b, Psalm 23
5. a, When he was a shepherd boy
6. b, three
7. a, Peter and Andrew
8. c, John the Baptist
9. d, Nebuchadnezzar
10. c, Five loaves and two fishes