

## **MINISTER'S LETTER**



Following the address of the President and Vice-President of the Conference to the General Synod of the Church of England on 11<sup>th</sup> February, you may well have read such headlines as ‘Methodists likely to merge with the Church of England’ (Telegraph) and ‘Methodists declare ‘we’re ready to merge’ with the Church of England’ (Times). You may even have heard the matter discussed on Radio 4’s Today programme. Well, in response to such press coverage, and to spell out exactly what has been said, The Revd David Gamble (President of the Conference), Dr Richard M Vautrey (Vice-President of the Conference) and The Revd Dr Martyn D Atkins (General Secretary) have written a Pastoral Letter to the Methodist People.

Since I have been asked to make this letter available to you, and given both its length and importance, I do so below and in place of my usual letter. Please read it carefully. If, having read it, you would like to raise any questions with me please feel free to do so.

With every blessing

*Paul*

### **A Pastoral Letter to the Methodist People from the President and Vice-President of the Conference and the General Secretary**

And are we yet alive? Our answer, despite some recent press speculation to the contrary, is a resounding “Yes!”. We have seen the evidence in various ways through our complementary roles. As President and Vice-President we have represented the care, oversight, authority and support of the Conference as we have visited local churches and situations in different parts of the connexion. We have seen the Methodist people being faithful and the Spirit at work in them

and through them. We mentioned some examples in our address to the General Synod. As General Secretary, Martyn (Atkins) is responsible for leading the development of the mission of the Methodist Church. He too has seen evidence of energy being released amongst us.

We are all convinced that God is not finished with the people called Methodist yet. We began as a discipleship movement within the wider church, a society of people seeking holiness and engaging in worship and mission. In Wesley's time and through succeeding generations we have continually adapted to circumstances to fulfil that calling as effectively as possible. It is still Our Calling today. And mission has never been more needed than it is now. We live in a world ravaged by war and poverty, and torn apart by questions of how we care for the natural environment and the morality of financial systems. We live in a world where people need to hear the word of God in a language they can understand, where they need to see the love of God through people like us and experience it as good news for themselves. We live in a world where not enough people are being attracted and formed into disciples of Jesus Christ, responding to the promptings of the Spirit.

Responding to situations like this, allowing God to transform us so that we can be most effective in doing so, supporting each other in that through our interconnections, is what Methodism has always been about. We best honour those who have gone before us by doing the equivalent in our time and our circumstances of what they did in theirs. It is our DNA as a people to be a group of disciples who are committed to glorifying God in worship, to holiness and to being obedient and active in mission. We are therefore delighted to see an increasing interest in and commitment to discipleship amongst us.

We believe that God has a role for us in this mission, and we are increasingly embracing it. We have about 265,000 'card-carrying' members, and that number has been decreasing because of the age-profile of our members. But more churches are making more members each year; a quarter of our churches are growing; the numbers worshipping with us on Sundays and, increasingly, mid-week is rising; fresh expressions are starting to flourish; we have regular contact with

over 800,000 people; and we are part of a growing world-wide Methodist communion of over 70 million. There is a growing self-confidence amongst us accompanied by an appropriate humility about ourselves, and a releasing of energy for mission.

But we are not the whole of the church, and we cannot do it all by ourselves. So we have voted consistently over the years for unity schemes that are designed to increase the whole church's effectiveness in mission. This is not a death wish, but a desire to be obedient and a willingness to be transformed. We can countenance ceasing to exist as a separate Church because we know that we will still be the Methodist people within a wider Church.

As our major statement on the nature and mission of the Church Called to Love and Praise put it in 1999 "the British Methodist Church may cease to exist as a separate Church entity during the twenty-first century, if continuing progress towards Christian unity is made". Methodism will still contribute some of the riches of its own distinctive history and mission to any future church. We know from that history that we can be the Methodist people either in our own separate church or in some wider expression of the universal church. Helping to create a wider expression of the universal church and becoming part of it will require not just us but other churches to be prepared to move forward together and to leave some things behind in the process for the sake of the Kingdom. So it is not a question of Methodists being submerged or absorbed in the Church of England or any of our other partners. It is not a matter of Methodists returning to the Anglican fold, but of seeing whether together we are prepared to become a 'new fold'.

This is not just true of our relationship with the Church of England. We have also signed a Covenant with other churches in Wales, and recently a partnership with other churches in Scotland. We have many local partnerships with other churches, the United Reformed Church in particular. And we are all part of wider denominational groupings. For example, the world-wide Methodist communion is over 70 million strong and the world wide Anglican communion about 78 million.

Both are faced with questions of how they cohere in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and how they deal with situations where there are competing and even contradictory convictions within them. In addressing these we have a lot to share with each other.

When we addressed the General Synod it was only the second time that the President of the Conference had done so; the first since the Covenant between the Methodist Church and the Church of England was signed in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen in 2003; and, importantly, the first time the Vice-President and the president had been invited to address the Synod together. What we were saying to the General Synod was that Methodists have always been committed to unity in order to create greater effectiveness in worship and mission. We said that thinking like this comes naturally from our spirituality. We approach our Covenant with the Church of England in the light of the Covenant Service in our Worship Book which we pray each year. We were gently but urgently asking the General Synod whether the Church of England was prepared to make the same commitment and allow itself to be transformed for the sake of the gospel. And what we say to the Church of England we say to our other partners.

So what happens if other churches are not prepared to be changed in order to become more effective in mission with us? Rather than being groups of Methodist people in a new and wider church, we shall continue as a Methodist people in a separate Methodist Church faithfully trusting in God's continuing leading of us. We could do that, and we currently do. But even as a separate church we shall have to continue with our commitment to co-operate with others in mission wherever possible and to whatever extent it is possible.

Whether co-operating with others or allowing a wider expression of the universal church to come into existence will require a lot of working together in mission locally. Doing that will throw up some obstacles that will have to be removed and some issues that will have to be resolved if mission is not to be hampered. Some of those include matters of interchangeability of ministries, common decision-making structures, the role of women in the church, and how oversight is

embodied. Much work has been done on these and some people will have to be asked to keep working at them on our behalf. When we signed the Covenant we committed ourselves to working to remove any obstacles to visible communion so far as our relationship with the Church of England is concerned. Any solutions will have to be agreed by all of us in due course and by due procedure. But in the interim we must all keep striving to engage as effectively as possible in worship and mission.

We have found the Methodist people in good heart, and an increasing sense of the energy of God's love being released amongst us. We are a people of one book, the Bible. We allow the gospel to both comfort and challenge us. We let the love of God both confirm and transform us in the body of Christ through the Spirit.

We are yet alive. We shall be alive in the future in whatever form God wills. God has not finished with us yet!

*The Revd David Gamble  
President of the Conference*

*Dr Richard M Vautrey  
Vice-President of the Conference*

*The Revd Dr Martyn D Atkins  
General Secretary*

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The above letter is in response to the General Synod Address given on February 11th 2010. If you wish to view the full address please speak with Paul Timmis or go to the Martin Way Methodist Church website at [www.martinway.org.uk](http://www.martinway.org.uk) where a copy of the address can be found in the publications page. Alternatively if you email me at [roife@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roife@hotmail.co.uk) and I can send an electronic copy to you.

*Andrew Fox (Editor)*

## **SO YOU THINK THE WEATHER WAS BAD IN THE SOUTH?!!**



St Andrew's Day (30th November) turned in with a blizzard and heavy snow, living here in the beautiful Grampians we pay the high price when the snow arrives. We get trapped and are 360 meters above sea level, no way to work, shops

etc. We were lucky as on 1st December we got a few Christmas Cards in the post that was delivered by tractor. The next delivery was not until 7th January.

Near the end of January a gritter had made it up the hill but on the way down the other side it slid into a ditch and blocked the road for three days. We still have 3ft of snow either side of the road and it started snowing again, only 6inches each night. Sounds awful but the silence except for the birdsong and the sharp wind in the pine trees with everything covered in snow is magical.

Due to the weather our business of landscape gardening and chimney sweep cannot be done. Our business looks very close to folding as no work for two months, plus our debts are stacking up, only God knows the future. So I leave it in His hands and accept that he knows best.

One of our neighbours, a doctor and his nurse wife arrived home to a cold house so lit a large roaring fire and managed to set the chimney on fire, dialled 999. The fire engine arrived and slid into the ditch, followed by a police car which went broadside into the





same ditch. Chimney still ablaze! The doctor treated the fireman and police for shock and bruises and as the ambulance did not turn out a local farmer with a tractor transported the police and fire crews back to the town 7 miles away in the trailer he uses to carry animals. The fire burnt itself out!

Life is very different here from London but I would not change it. Time stands still here everyone has time to chat. Summer nights seldom get dark and Winter nights are clear with millions of stars. In the nights we hear owls, foxes and badgers, day-times we have birds, red squirrels, buzzards and a peregrine falcon. When I go to the bin with rubbish I always stop to look and listen to the wonders of God's creation. With wild flowers and trees also, 'My God how great thou art' really describes this area. I have an outhouse and front door that are never locked even if I go out all day. It is a five mile walk from the local village up one hill.

The weather dominates everything here, the snow brought a lot of barn roofs down and a farmer was buried for half an hour but workers found his green overalls and pulled him out with only shock and small cut on his hand. The other side of the valley one day the farm had six dutch barns, the next morning the house stood alone. We were worried as our own barn and outhouse started to crack some of the old crossbeams and was sagging badly, but we put heaters in the them and the snow slid slowly off. Come better weather we will have to do repairs.

It is quite amazing how people here all muck in to help others at time of need.

*Love Rachel*

The above article is from extracts taken from a letter received by Mary and Derek Heaton from a friend who left Mitcham Baptist Church, now living in the Scottish Grampian Mountains.

Images of the snow in the Grampians are thanks to the BBC website.

## MORE THAN A PHONE

Did you know that your mobile phone can actually be a life saver or an emergency tool for survival. The following information has been broadcast on CTV by Crime stoppers but very few people are aware of it.



### **Emergency Number**

The Emergency Number worldwide for mobiles is 112. If you find yourself out of the coverage of your mobile network and there is an emergency, dial 112 and the mobile will search any existing network to establish the emergency number for you, and interestingly this number 112 can be dialled even if the keypad is locked.

### **Hidden Battery Power**

If you ever find your mobile battery is very low there is a Hidden Battery Power. To activate, press the keys \* 3 3 7 0 # Your mobile will start with this reserve and the instrument will show a 50% increase in the battery. The reserve will get charged next time you recharge the phone.

### **Disable a Stolen Mobile**

To check your phone's serial number, key in the following \* # 0 6 # A 15 digit code will appear on the screen. This number is unique to your handset. Write it down and keep it safe. If your phone gets stolen, you can phone your service provider and give them this code. They will be able to block your handset so even if the thief changes the SIM card, the phone will be totally useless. You probably won't get your phone back, but at least whoever stole it cannot use it or sell it either. If everybody did this, there would be no point in stealing mobile phones.

### **Unlocking your car by Mobile**

If your car has remote keyless entry and you have left your keys at



home, the following my help. Call someone at home on their mobile phone. Hold your phone about a foot from the car door and have the person at home press the unlock button, holding it near the mobile phone at their end. Your car will unlock, distance no object - you can be hundred's of miles away but as long as you can contact someone who has the other remote for your car you can unlock the doors.

### **I.C.E.**

The idea of ICE (in case of emergency) is catching on quickly. The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when he went to the scenes of an accident patients always had a mobile phone, but no-one knew which number to call. He thought it would be a good idea if there were an internationally recognised name for this purpose. Hence the ICE campaign.

All you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should be called in an emergency under the name ICE. For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2, ICE3 etc. Then in an emergency situation, emergency service personnel or hospital staff will be able to contact the right person quickly by simply dialling that number.

### **ATM Security**

Not a phone hint but could be useful all the same.

If you should ever be forced by a robber to withdraw money from an ATM machine, you can notify the police by entering your PIN number in reverse. The ATM system recognises that your PIN number is backwards from the ATM card you placed in the machine. The machine will still give you the money you requested, but unknown to the robber, the police will be immediately be directed to the location.

*Rosemary Keen*

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### **World Mission Boxes Reminder**

Will those who have World Mission Boxes please give them to Pauline Riley for emptying by Sunday 7th March. Thank you.



## **FAIRTRADE RECIPES**

### **Banana & Chocolate Chip Muffins**

Makes 7-8 large muffins.



#### **Ingredients**

100g plain flour

40g cornmeal

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

40g melted butter

1 egg, beaten

90g unrefined (golden) Fairtrade sugar

2 ripe Fairtrade bananas, well mashed

80ml buttermilk

50g Fairtrade milk chocolate, chopped into small chunks

#### **Method**

Preheat oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.

Sieve flour, cornmeal, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda together into a large bowl. Stir in sugar.

In a separate bowl, mix together the butter, egg, bananas and buttermilk.

Add wet ingredients to dry and mix gently (do not over-mix). Fold in the chocolate chips.

Fill a muffin tin (ideally lined with muffin cases) to just under the rim.

Bake for about 30 minutes until golden-brown and firm to the touch.

Allow to cool in the tin.

Enjoy!

## **101% - Proof that the Love of God gives you more**

Now, take a look at this... 101% >

From a strictly mathematical viewpoint:

What Equals 101%

What does it mean to give MORE than 100%?

Ever wonder about those people who say they are giving more than 100%?

We have all been in situations where someone wants you to

- GIVE OVER 100%.

How about ACHIEVING 101%? What equals 100% in life?

Here's a little mathematical formula that might help answer these questions:

If: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Is represented as: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21  
22 23 24 25 26.

...

If: H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K -  $8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98\%$

And: K-N-Q-W-L-E-D-G-E -  $11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = 96\%$

But: A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E -  $1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = 100\%$

THEN, look how far the love of God will take you:

L-O-V-E-O-F-G-O-D -  $12+15+22+5+15+6+7+15+4 = 101\%$

Therefore, one can conclude with mathematical certainty that: While Hard Work and Knowledge will get you close, and Attitude will get you there, it's the Love of God that will put you over the top!

# WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



***Friday 5th March 2010***

**‘LET EVERYTHING THAT HAS BREATH PRAISE GOD’**

**11.00am** Sacred Heart Church, Edge Hill, Wimbledon SW19 4LU  
**Speaker: Louisa Nkehkuo**

**8.00pm** Holy Trinity Church, 234 Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1SB  
**Guided Meditation**

On Friday 5th March over 3 million people world wide will be praying and worshipping together during an annual day of prayer, using a service prepared by Christian women in Cameroon.



The Republic of Cameroon is said to be ‘Africa in miniature’. It is a country of great cultural diversity with more than 240 ethnic groups and languages. The constitution promotes equality between men and women but traditional rights and attitudes discriminate against women in many areas of life. However giant steps have been taken towards assuring women’s rights and women are involved in the struggle for peace, justice and integrity.

Cameroon faces many challenges as its people seek to move forward into a modern age without losing their distinctive characteristics. But at all times, in all circumstances, Cameroonians are able to praise God with joy and exuberance and the service reflects this.

**Epsom & Ewell and Sutton  
Supporters Group**  
Local Contact : 020 8644 2078

Registered Charity No 1047916

Shootingstar.org.uk  
020 8481 8180



# The Shooting Star Children's Hospice

TABLE TOP SALE

AT

MARTIN WAY METHODIST CHURCH  
(CORNER BUCKLEIGH AVENUE)

IN AID OF THE SHOOTING STAR CHILDRENS HOSPICE

ON

SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

TABLES £15.00

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FROM 10.00AM –2.00PM

LUNCHES FROM 11.30AM- 1.30PM

TEA & COFFEE SERVED

TO BOOK YOUR TABLE PLEASE RING

020 8540 3429

TO AVOID DISSAPOINTMENT BOOK YOUR TABLE EARLY!

**CHURCH  
DIARY**



Tue	2	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	3	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Helen Stanley</i> – Schools during the War
Thur	4	8.00pm	Church Council Meeting
Fri	5		Woman’s World Day of Prayer
Sun	7	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	9	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	12	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	14	10.30am	Morning Service led by Brenda Cannon
Tue	16	10-12noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.30pm	Men’s Supper Club - <i>Jenny Deeprose</i> - Cheese with samples
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	17	7.45 pm	Midways Group - Surrey Air Ambulance
Sat	20	10am-1pm	Big Brunch
		10.30am	Circuit Review at Worcester Park
Sun	21	10.30am	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	23	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	26	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sat 27th		10am-2pm	TABLE TOP SALE in aid of The Shooting Star Children's Hospice - Tables £15.00 - book on 020 8540 3429 Lunches from 11.30 to 1.30pm

Sun 28	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Mon 29	8.00pm	Easter Meditation
Tue 30	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
	8.00 pm	Easter Meditation
Weds 31	7.45 pm	Holy Week – Easter Meeting
	8.00 pm	Easter Meditation

*Please refer to the Website ([www.martinway.org.uk](http://www.martinway.org.uk))  
or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information*

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We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday  
in March a very

*Happy Birthday*



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## **HAITI EARTHQUAKE APPEAL**

Collections over a three week period;-	
Recieved total donations in cash of:	£525.00
Parts Gift Aided give a tax return of:	£ 95.00
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>£620.00</b>

Sent to World Vision on 18th January	£500.00
Sent to World Vision on 18th January	£120.00
<b>Total Given</b>	<b>£620.00</b>

*John Butland*



## HOPEFUL STEPS IN HAITI



Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) is continuing to respond to the devastation caused by Haiti's worst earthquake in 200 years. Three weeks after the disaster, donations are assisting survivors with emergency shelter, sanitation facilities and medical care.

The earthquake left tens of thousands of people dead, and destroyed much of the infrastructure of a country which was already the poorest in the Western hemisphere. Over one million people are now homeless in what the UN is calling 'the worst disaster it has ever faced'.

MRDF immediately sent £20,000 in response to the earthquake, and launched an appeal for funds. Over £270,000 has so far been donated by individuals and churches across the UK. Funds from the appeal are being channelled through the Methodist Church in Haiti and Action by Churches Together (ACT) International.

Donations are helping to provide food, blankets, tents and latrines to many survivors, as well as a water purification system in the Belair neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince. This is giving 10,000 homeless Haitians access to crystal clear drinking water – the first clean water they have had since the earthquake struck, and a crucial step in the fight against cholera and other diseases.

*MRDF supports more than 43 local, community-based organisations in 21 of the poorest countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, helping individuals and communities to transform their lives and become more self-sufficient.*

For more information about MRDF visit their website [www.mrdf.org.uk](http://www.mrdf.org.uk)

Items for the **April Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox,  
(email: [roife@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roife@hotmail.co.uk)) by **Sunday 21st March** at the latest