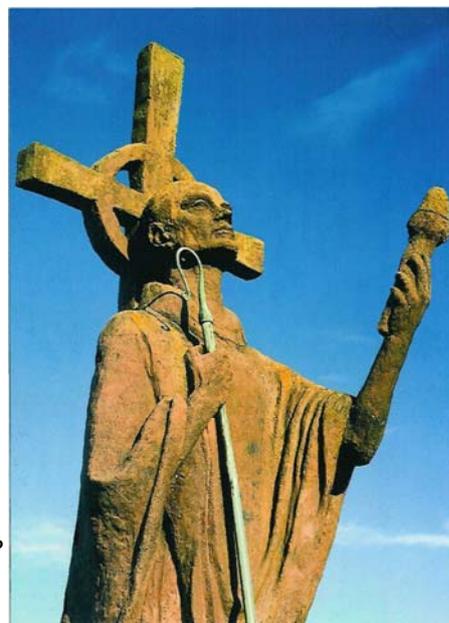


The Message

March 2007

The quarterly magazine of the Bolton Methodist Mission

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St Aiden, from Ireland and for some time based on Iona, was invited to evangelise Northern Britain by King Oswald in the 7th Century. He founded the monastery on Holy Island.



THE VICTORIA HALL
BOLTON METHODIST MISSION

Seeking to serve ... God, people, the community, the town in partnership with others

Member of Christians Together in Bolton Town Centre

A Changing Team for Changing Times

Over the past few months we have been looking very carefully at the shape of the Ministerial Team and what changes we need to make to it to assist us in our mission over the coming years.

The Methodist Church as a whole has been under a significant review, looking carefully at its own priorities and how these can be fulfilled in this fast changing culture. Each Church and Circuit has also been asked to conduct a similar review, and to look carefully at the deployment of ministry in the light of such a review.

It is out of these discussions that the combined Church Council and Circuit Meeting agreed a new shape for the team for 2008 onwards, when there will be a number of moves within the existing team, as outlined below.

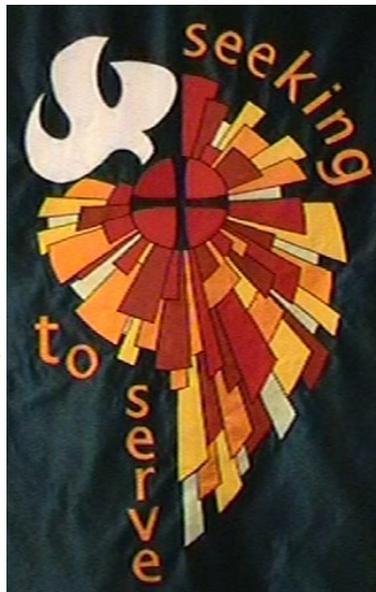
In August 2007 the Rev'd Dr Brian Tomkins will become a Supernumerary Minister, stepping down from some of his current responsibilities, though continuing in a very active way.

Dilys Tomkins will also complete her time as a Lay Worker focusing on pastoral care, but again will be continuing in other roles, including work as part of the Town Centre Chaplaincy Team and as a Pastoral Visitor in the Mission.

Deacon Janet Smith will have completed five years with us in August 2008, and, following the discipline of the Diaconate Order, will seek to move to a new appointment.

So what of the new shaped team, and why the change?

To complement the role of the Superintendent Minister, there are



five other potential members of staff, each with a different emphasis to the wide ranging work of our Mission.

The first is in the area of "Fresh Expressions" of Church. A part-time Minister is to be appointed to focus upon evangelism and look at alternative models of worship outside the normal Sunday slot. This will build on the activities we have put on in recent years, including the Narnia day, the World Cup screening and the development of the Café Church initiative. The other half of this person's time will be to carry out the same kind of work across the rest of the District, using Victoria Hall as a base. This is a very exciting development and will allow a person to focus their time in this important and growing area of work.

The second new post is for a part-time Lay Worker, working 20 hours per week and focusing on the pastoral work of the church. They will work closely with the Superintendent, along with the active Supernumeraries, and Pastoral Visitors to continue the build up the pastoral care offered across the church membership and the wider community.

The third post is that of Youth Worker, with a new emphasis on the development of work with local schools, drawing children into activities in the Mission and beyond, as well as reaching young people within the town centre.

The fourth post is a development of the work of Pastor Hubert Kayonda working with the French speaking congregation. The aim is to integrate Hubert more into the team, so that we can all learn from each other, and for Hubert to become involved in Methodist Connexional initiatives as part of the development of new church congregations in existing Methodist Churches.

Finally, we have created a flexible post that might be filled by a gap year student, an 'apprentice Minister' or a Minister on a sabbatical, who might come either to work with one of the team on an existing

project, or to develop a new initiative.

In many ways, the existing team fulfils a great deal of the above work, but this new shape, identifying these new posts and roles, gives a greater focus and emphasis on the priorities of our work.

There is a long way to go until 2008, but because of the Methodist stationing and invitation system, we have had to think creatively and at an early stage. Within the team now, we are developing many aspects of the work as outlined above and laying what we hope will be significant foundations for the future.

If you have any questions about these changes, or want to know more details, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Looking back at our history, the founders of the Mission were clearly creating a very different kind of staff team to take the work of the Mission forward and address the needs of the society in their day in new and exciting ways. To be true to that tradition of forward thinking, we must do the same and change the shape of our team to meet the needs of changing times.

Yours in Christ. Philip R. Mason, Superintendent Minister



Dictionary corner

Lent *noun* the period preceding Easter (in the Western Church from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday), which is devoted to fasting, abstinence, and penitence in commemoration of Christ's fasting in the wilderness.

Easter *noun* the festival of the Christian Church celebrating the resurrection of Christ, held on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the northern spring equinox. Germanic in origin and relating to East, perhaps from Eastre, the name of a goddess associated with Spring.

Resurrection *noun* Christ's rising from the dead and so also the rising from the dead at the Last Judgement

The wide variety of ministries at Victoria Hall

It is wonderful that within the life of the church so many different and various ministries are recognised and appreciated, for we each play our unique part in being the Body of Christ on earth.

Ministries come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and I am sure we are all able to testify to being helped or supported by someone, whether lay or ordained, along the years, who has been in the right place at the right time; they have said or done something that has meant so much. So in many ways we are all 'ministers', in that we have all been used by God in a special way for someone at some stage. Think about it for a minute! How has God used you to 'be there' for someone?

The church needs different people at different times for different purposes, and so I welcome the discussion led by our Superintendent Minister, Phil Mason in this edition of *The Message*. Phil outlines in his article the changes to the ministerial team at Victoria Hall from September 2008 that have been agreed by the Circuit Meeting, which I whole-heartedly support and endorse. The new structure is poised to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future as the whole church adapts to the needs of our culture in Bolton and beyond.

One of the features of this change in the ministerial team is that pastoral care will be offered primarily by a Pastoral Lay Worker, and supported by the Superintendent, who has pastoral oversight. The Superintendent always has had pastoral oversight, and under the current structure pastoral care is shared primarily by the Deacon, the Superintendent, and the Lay Worker. We are also hugely grateful to our Pastoral Visitors for the wonderful pastoral care that is offered by our faithful lay team, and the way they alert the clergy to any problems they notice.

Throughout Methodism whenever circuits are evaluating the shape

Continued overleaf 5

and content of their ministerial team, the system for stationing ministers (presbyters) and deacons in their circuit appointments is broadly the same, however, the system diverges when it comes to considering invitations for further service. For deacons, the individual circuit has to decide if it wants a deacon again in their team, and if so they approach the Methodist Diaconal Order, then the respective deacon. In this specific case, conversations between the Diaconal Order and our District Chair were held at an early stage of the whole review of the ministry team. The Order recognises the change in structure without a deacon as part of the new team.

It is usual for deacons to move after serving their appointment length



Pray for all those who minister to others, whether in word or deed, in however small or large a way. Support them and guide them, so that others may know of the love of God.

without extension for it represents a specific piece of work, and it is part of the Rule of Life and Discipline of the Order that this happens. Obedience to this rule is a major part of being a deacon, so change is expected. Some people embrace change better than others, and while this does not mean that change is not significant or less challenging, it does mean that moving on is part of the fabric of being a deacon and having a servant heart.

Bolton Methodist Mission is in a good place to embrace the 21st century, with all its exciting developments, on both physical and spiritual levels. Let us pray that God will continually ask us and equip us to be ready to move wherever He wants us to go, for it is part and parcel of being a Christian.

Janet Smith

'When all you have is hammers, everything looks like a nail.'
Archbishop Rowan Williams quoting Abraham Maslow and reflecting on the United States' militaristic perception of world politics, particularly in relation to Iraq.

How can Christians share their faith with those of other religions? This question and others are addressed in *May I Call You Friend?*; a new resource designed to help Christians to consider the issues involved in sharing their faith with those of other religions. Available at www.mph.org.uk or 01733 325002.

Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) has released a Bible Study Pack for Lent and beyond, entitled 'What does the Bible say about poverty?'. "No other issue is talked about more throughout the Bible than attitudes to poverty and wealth. We know that we have a responsibility to act alongside those in need, but often have only a vague idea of how strongly our faith calls us to do so," said Amanda Norman, MRDF's Supporter Relations Director.

What role does the Church have in bringing multicultural Britain together? This and other questions were discussed at a conference, 'Ethnicity, Cohesion and the Church', highlighting the experiences and challenges of Methodists from all over the world who live and worship in the UK. Phil Mason and Hubert Kayonda represented Bolton Methodist Mission.

In 2006, the young people of Methodism challenged the Church to dedicate a month to prayer for improved relationships between people of different faiths.

"Shared Lives" is a short film that combines stories from projects that work for justice and to combat deprivation and poverty with stunning images captured by some World Church Office staff on visits to their partner churches. The film can be viewed online at www.methodist.org.uk.

Giving to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission grew by nearly £700,000 in the last Connexional Year, reaching £5.7 million. The increase followed a call for more giving to the fund made by Revd Stephen Poxon, Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, at the 2005 Methodist Conference.

32 per cent of children have been bullied, almost one in ten children are bullied at least once a fortnight and 10 is the peak age for being bullied. These figures from children's charity NCH, and other worrying facts about the difficulties children cope with have led a ground-breaking coalition of churches and charities working with children to run a series of events called Building Strong Towers. The events aim to help children through difficult times with issues such as bullying, family problems or life at school.

The dark secret

Behind the Victoria Hall lurks a dark secret – slavery. The American Civil War of 1862-1865 was fought because the southern states of the USA wished to preserve slavery whilst the northern states wanted to abolish it throughout the USA. To prevent the southern states from exporting cotton, which was produced by slaves on plantations and was the southern states' principal source of income, the northern states blockaded the southern ports and so no American cotton reached the mills of Bolton.

British cotton workers, most of whom were in the Manchester area, including Bolton, were without work and suffered great hardship. The government offered loans to local councils to enable them to employ the cotton workers to do manual work to improve towns, and one of the jobs they did in Bolton was to pave with stone the bed of the River Croal in the town centre. This can be seen behind the Victoria Hall and provides evidence of the effect that slavery had on Bolton.

The workers accepted the hardship that they suffered in helping towards the abolition of slavery. Their support so pleased the President of the northern states, Abraham Lincoln, that he wrote of them 'I know and deeply deplore the sufferings which the working



One of eight stone carvings depicting stages in the processing of cotton, from Tootal Broadhurst and Lee's Sunnyside Mills, on St. Helen's Road Bolton. Sculpted in the late 1880s by J Bonehill and Co., under the direction of G T Woodhouse, Architects, of Bolton. This carving depicts Negroes picking cotton in fields and may now be seen in on the Market Place in Bridge Street.

people ... are called to endure in this crisis ... subjected to a severe trial ... an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been

surpassed in any age or in any country.'

It was from essentially Christian motives that the workers, and the

How can I make you realize the misery of the poor? How can I make you realize that your wealth comes from their weeping?

Basil, 4th Century Bishop of

mill-owners too, although it was against their material interests, supported the northern states. The main source of Bolton's wealth in the nineteenth century was cotton, some from Egypt and India but much of it from the USA. In spite of, or perhaps because of, Bolton's connection with slavery, people from the town had campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade (the 200th anniversary of which we commemorate this year) and of slavery itself. Even so, much evidence of the wealth which cotton brought to the town can be seen in Bolton today – in prestige buildings such as the town hall, churches and non-conformist chapels, in the surviving mills, and in the streets of terraced houses. Did you know that some of the buildings still display carvings of Negroes, some of them picking cotton bolls in the cotton fields? Even if they did not themselves own slaves, some of Bolton's wealthiest men – and prominent churchgoers – made their money out of the products of slavery. Standards were different then, their views were not our views.

The 'Set All Free' campaign (www.setallfree.net) is not only a commemoration of the abolition in 1807 of the slave trade in the British Empire, but an encouragement to us to re-examine our standards and views on the slavery which still exists in the world, Britain included, and to take action against it.

Mick Cresswell

On the weekend of 24th/25th March 2007, as part of the commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade, there will be guided walks around Bolton town centre searching out places connected with slavery and the slave trade and the abolitionists. Come and join a walk and find some of Bolton's dark secrets.

The slave trade abolitionists

While the history of the abolition of slavery is sometimes contested, it is traditionally held that moral rather than economic arguments won in the end. The physical resistance of Africans should also not be forgotten, and included setting light to plantations and fleeing to establish free communities. There were many slave uprisings, including nine in the British colony of Jamaica.

Quaker's had argued that slavery was against the will of God from as early as 1671. But it was the leadership of Thomas Clarkson, Olaudah Equiano and William Wilberforce and other leading Christian figures (see box) that promoted the most vociferous

The grand plea is, "They are authorized by law." But can law, human law, change the nature of things? Can it turn darkness into light, or evil into good? By no means. Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still. There must still remain an essential difference between justice and injustice, cruelty and mercy. So that I still ask, Who can reconcile this treatment of the Negroes, first and last, with either mercy or justice? **John Wesley's Thoughts on Slavery 1774**

abolitionist arguments. Thomas Clarkson suggested that the struggle was one of 'right thinking over error and the forces of light over darkness'. John Wesley experienced slavery on his trip to the USA and it came to dominate much of his thinking, writing and preaching.

An abolition committee, established in 1787, used petitions, leafleting campaigns, public speaking events and merchandise (including products by Josiah Wedgwood) and boycotts of slave produced goods. While the Quakers' organisation and money helped create a national campaign, affluent London Christians (who all lived near Clapham Common and were known as the Clapham Sect) became concerned for the welfare of the many African's who were nearly destitute and abandoned.

Leading abolitionists
 Granville Sharp
 Olaudah Equiano
 Ottobah Cugoana
 Thomas Clarkson
 John Newton
 William Wilberforce
 Hannah More
 William Knibb
 Ignatius Sancho
 Elizabeth Heyrick
 Samuel Adjai
 Crowther
 John Wesley
 Toussaint L'Overture
 Sam Sharpe

Interestingly, proponents of slavery had also tried to use the Bible to support their stance ("Slaves, be obedient to masters"). Abolitionists and slaves on the other hand used the Exodus story of the liberation of the Hebrew people as an argument for freedom. Jim Wallis in his book *God's Politics* suggests that you cannot call something a revival unless it changes society. There are no doubts that our forebears changed society in the early nineteenth century. There are clearly many challenges for us as a society today including economic slavery, people trafficking and environmental degradation to name but three.

John Parkin

John Wesley's encouraging death bed letter to one of his converts William Wilberforce. He died reading a copy of "The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano", a slave, freed to become a bondsman, and abolitionist.

Balam, February 24, 1791

Dear Sir,

.....Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be fore you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.....

Your affectionate servant, John Wesley



John Wesley on his deathbed writing to William Wilberforce

Slavery now

From 5am daily, groups of young men and women from Poland, the Baltic states and beyond, huddle on street corners in Boston, Spalding, and other Lincolnshire towns, waiting for a white van or minibus. They will be transported to a local vegetable and fruit farm or packing plant on the surrounding fens. There they will work for 12 hours a day for wages well below the minimum rate. They will sleep in grossly overcrowded and inadequate houses leased by gang-masters who will take extortionate rent payments direct from their wage packets. It is a modern day version of slavery.

There are many other forms of modern day slavery described in the box on the next page. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in 1999 'I didn't know about all these forms of slavery that existed. I think it's largely because we aren't expecting it. It is hidden. Generally people would not believe that it is possible under modern conditions. They would say 'No, I think you are making it all up', because it's just too incredible'.

The global coalition to educate and advocate against human trafficking, 'Stop the Traffik', says that each year up to 800,000 women, men and children are trafficked across international borders. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, human trafficking is the third largest source of income for international crime rings.

20,000 people a year die of pesticide poisoning as a result of the cotton industry, and a further 3 million suffer related illnesses. But there is some good news: Fairtrade cotton offers a positive alternative. Shailesh Patel, a Fairtrade cotton producer from India, who visited Bolton last year, says 'Fairtrade has strict environmental standards. All the Fairtrade cotton producers follow an Integrated Crop Management system which means they use very few chemicals. This is much better for their health.' This is only one example of the way Fairtrade improves conditions for

Bonded labour affects millions of people around the world. People become bonded labourers by taking or being tricked into taking a loan for as little as the cost of medicine for a sick child. To repay the debt, many are forced to work long hours, seven days a week, up to 365 days a year. They receive basic food and shelter as 'payment' for their work, but may never pay off the loan, which can be passed down for generations.

Early and forced marriage affects women and girls who are married without choice and are coerced into lives of servitude often accompanied by physical violence.

Forced labour affects people who are illegally recruited by individuals, governments or political parties and forced to work - usually under threat of violence or other penalties.

Slavery by descent is where people are either born into a slave class or are from a 'group' that society views as suited to being used as slave labour.

Trafficking involves the transport and/or trade of people - women, children and men - from one area to another for the purpose of forcing them into slavery conditions.

Child labour in its worst forms affects an estimated 126 million children around the world in work that is harmful to their health and welfare.

many workers. In 1788 William Cowper wrote:

*I own I am shocked by the purchase of slaves,
and fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
what I hear of their hardships, their tortures and groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.
I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?*

200 years later let us not keep mum. Let us do all we can to raise our voices in objection to present-day forms of slavery. And if you buy rum – buy one of the versions which carries the FAIRTRADE Mark! Visit www.antislavery.org for further information.

Jim Hollyman, Co-ordinator, Fairtrade in Bolton.

Sleeping Beauty

Just the tonic for cold, dark and dreary winter evenings...

My family, many friends and I thoroughly enjoyed our January visits to the Victoria Hall Lower Theatre to see the Amateur Dramatic Society production of 'Sleeping Beauty'.

All the elements you would expect to see in a pantomime were included ("it's behind you".... "Oh no, you're not! Oh yes, I am!"....), as well as many other chances for audience participation: we learned just how to get on down and dance like a real, raving clubber ('feed the birds and the chickens, floss your ears, drive the car and pull an angry face while carrying the heavy shopping...go on...try it...it really does work!) and we joined in the Bowrania National Anthem (very tunefully!). Added to this was high quality solo and group singing of well-known and easy-to-clap-and-sing-along-to songs, super-slick dancing, amazing acting and constant laughs throughout, to make this show an unmissable treat.

It really was great to see so many of our church family involved in this production....directed, as always, by Raymond Darby; starring Caroline and Hannah Darby as the outstanding Prince Handsome and Princess Beauty; choreographed superbly by Dawn and Courtney Hargreaves; Matthew Chadbond, who was magically brought to life as Princess Beauty's panda, Cuddles; and Bethany Mason and Charlotte Darby who danced brilliantly in the chorus. Adam Heppolette, Simon Darby and Meredith Glennon worked together on the lighting and the sound. Kathleen Pilling made the fabulous costumes for the cast, Kathryn Bryan was the prompt, and a number of our church ladies served the pasties, pop and tea during the interval, which went down well every night.

As well, other regular members of the ADS took their parts brilliantly: Dave Thompson as the hilarious Nurse Pinch-me; Emma Mellor, Linda Massey and Gillian Clare as the three good fairies



Main characters from Sleeping Beauty

(called Wispa, Smartie and Bounty... chocolate bars which filled the grandfather clock on stage for the children to share in the audience sing-song just before the Finale); Brendan Higgins as the very short-sighted Squint; Anne Heaton as the magnificently scary and evil bad fairy, Olga Pong (she wore 'Oil of Ugly' because... "I'm worth it!"); John Shawcross as her green son Gormless; Martyn and Sue Skipper as King Rumbletum and Queen Gigglesbelly; and everyone's favourite, king of adlib and one-liners, Neil Elston as Beauty's best friend, Oddjob.



Together, they all worked, acted, danced and sang to ensure that this truly was a hilarious, professional and memorable show that really did brighten the January

Concerts and play listing	
3rd Mar	Bolton Symphony Orchestra
10th Mar	Bolton Choral Union
31st Mar	Wingates Brass Band
14th Apr	29th Festival of Male Voice Praise (Albert Hall)
3rd—5th May	Drama Group Play
12th May	Foden & Bolton Youth Brass Band
19th May	Bolton Catholics Concert

evenings of those who saw it. Each of the sevenb performances were very well attended by Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, Rainbows, church and many other large groups, as well as many Victoria Hall members and friends and family of those involved.

Fantastically WELL DONE, all of you – I'm looking forward to 2008's production already!

Ruth Chadbond



Christian Aid Week 13-19 May

“Help poor communities grow a future” is the message of Christian Aid Week this year and the emphasis is not just on giving but enabling.

This year Christian Aid celebrates 50 years of making a difference. The national House to House collection raised more than £10 million last year, in Bolton the total exceeded £25,000, and here at the Victoria Hall our contribution to the total was over £2000.

As the week approaches can you please give your thoughts to helping with the H to H collection. Every year we are greatly encouraged by the numbers who come forward to help, and every year we could use more help “to make a difference”.

In addition to the H to H collection we have also sent a further £163.73 to CA resulting from the completion of Advent Calendars (£71), donations and collections (Goat Money) raised by Light Years.

Shortly after Christian Aid Week, we have a “bucket collection” at the Tesco Horwich Store. If you can help on either Wednesday 30th May or Thursday 31st May we would be delighted to hear from you. Last year’s “bucket collection” raised £1130.80 and those who helped found this a very heart warming experience and a wonderful example of churches working together.

Our thanks to all who by their practical help or generous giving, have enabled CA “to make a difference”. May you be able to continue your help this year!

Peter Gardner



You know your Bible study is in trouble when . . .
The hostess greets you at the door in curlers.

The best response to fundamentalism is to take faith more seriously than fundamentalism usually does.

Jim Wallis, God's Politics.

The greatest thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving.

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749-1832), German philosopher, scientist, writer).



Auction

Saturday 24th March

Viewing on Friday 23rd March 10am-4pm

and

Saturday 24th March 9am to 10.30

Organisers: Philip and Mary Glanvill, Peter Mills, Robert and Susan Marshall and Bryan Ashberry.

Exodus 8:1

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me."

1 When Israel was in Egypt's Land,
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.

Chorus
Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's Land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh,
Let my people go.

2 Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,
Let my people go,
If not, I'll smite your first-born dead,
Let my people go. Chorus

3 No more shall they in bondage toil,
Let my people go,
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,
Let my people go. Chorus

4 The Lord told Moses what to do,
Let my people go,
To lead the Hebrew children through,
Let my people go. Chorus

5 O come along Moses, you'll not get lost,
Let my people go,
Stretch out your rod and come across,
Let my people go. Chorus

6 As Israel stood by the waterside,
Let my people go,
At God's command it did divide,
Let my people go. Chorus

7 When they reached the other shore,
Let my people go,
They sang a song of triumph o'er,
Let my people go. Chorus

8 Pharaoh said he'd go across,
Let my people go,
But Pharaoh and his host were lost,
Let my people go. Chorus

9 Jordan shall stand up like a wall,
Let my people go,
And the walls of Jericho shall fall,
Let my people go. Chorus

10 Your foes shall not before you stand,
Let my people go,
And you'll possess fair Canaan's land,
Let my people go. Chorus

11 O let us all from bondage flee,
Let my people go,
And let us all in Christ be free,
Let my people go. Chorus

12 We need not always weep and mourn,
Let my people go,
And wear these slavery chains forlorn,
Let my people go. Chorus

Anti-slavery spiritual, made most famous arguably by Paul Robeson, known as "The voice of God"

Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District

300 years since the birth of Charles Wesley, whose hymns enrich the worship of millions of Christians

**CELEBRATION OF
LIVING FAITH**

At

Victoria Hall, Bolton Mission
(Knowsley Street, Bolton)

Sunday 13 May at 6.30pm

Guest Preacher: Rev Dr Martyn Atkins

Principal of Cliff College, Derbyshire,
& President Designate of the Methodist Conference
and

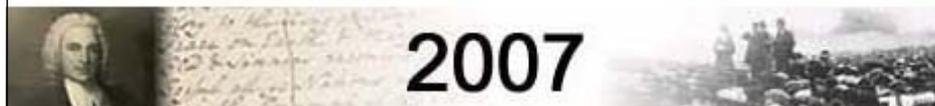
The Rt Rev David Gillett, Bishop of Bolton

With

The Victoria Hall Praise Band

And

The Good News Singers (Ecclestone)



SUPERHERO

Superhero day Saturday 28th April 2007

'They only lack the light to show them the way. For this reason, and in their capacity to do good, I have sent them you—my only son.' You might well ask who said this, and it was Superman's father in the film *Superman I* (1978). Superman contained one of the strongest Christian themes in popular cinema until recently, when *Superman Returns* was

- Cityscape in the entrance hall
- Street style drama
- Short films
- Quizzes
- Top trumps card game
- Swing-o-meter competitions
- Bat cave
- Dressing up
- Wonderwoman area
- Superheroes rooms
- Walkthrough exhibition
- Sensory exhibition
- Trails

produced in 2006. Once again there are many parallels between the character Superman and the person Jesus Christ.

Following on from the success of the Narnia day in 2006, we are once again opening our doors to Bolton for a themed day on Saturday 28th April 2007. Don't miss out!

Do not be afraid of what you believe...

Be afraid of not believing.

Do not be afraid of what you hope...

Be afraid of not hoping.

Do not be afraid of what you love...

Be afraid of not loving.

Marjorie Sykes (1905-1995), author, Quaker and teacher.

???Unexpected???

Events in Bolton

A massive media event is happening in Greater Manchester in May and June 2007: The **Bible Society's 'Unexpected' campaign**. This will mean that people in Greater Manchester will see billboards, posters, buses and taxi's covered with the creative media campaign. There will be over 110 million chances to see the campaign. The Bible Society says it will be 'invading' the space outside the church through advertising and festival events to the point where the people of Greater Manchester will not be able to miss it.



The essence of the Summer Bible Society campaign is that the word of God carries for us many rather unexpected messages.

Easter Event	Weds 18th April	Victoria Square
Superhero day	Sat 28th April	Victoria Hall
Radio interviews	May—June	Tower FM107.4
Creation weekend	8th—10th June	St Peter's Parish Centre, Halliwell
Witness Day	Sun 10th June	Asda Car Park
David & Goliath Event	Sat 16th June	Bury Rd Shopping Centre
Horwich Carnival	23rd-24th June	Horwich Town Centre
Arts and Crafts Weekend	June	Prestwich & Whitefield Methodist Church
'Home' Rhema Theatre Company	Wed 27th June	Theatre Church



Editorial

This edition of the Message is themed by the 'Set All Free' bicentenary commemoration of the Act in 1807 to abolish the slave trade.

It was the response of people converted to Christianity in the revival of the 18th Century, people such as William Wilberforce, who carried forward the campaign over many decades. Their conversion led them to change their perspective from asking what the community could do for them, to asking what they could do for the community.

These pioneers of modern campaigning took seriously St. Paul's edict 'Don't let the world squeeze you into its mould'. They came face to face with powers and conforming forces and acted against their own economic interest.

According to Jesus, they were richly blessed because they 'hungered and thirsted for righteousness'.

John Parkin

Women's Network

In the summer of 1987 Women's Fellowship and Women's Work were combined under the umbrella of 'Network'. Its aims are to:

Encourage:Enable:Equip

Rosemary Wass, who spearheaded the change, said 'The umbrella is not a refuge, it is a 'Service Station' of our Christian life.'

To commemorate the 20th anniversary, a Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District Celebration will be held at Spendmore Lane Methodist Chapel, Coppull, Chorley on Wednesday 21st March 2007.

After the morning meeting, lunch-time will be highlighted by a photocall and the cutting of a cake. The afternoon Service of Celebration will feature window displays and photographs of Circuit and District Events. Themes will include:

- The Journey so far: thanks for the past;
- The Present Journey: joy for today;
- The Way Ahead: our hope for tomorrow.

We will be joined by the Belle Plate Players. The day of happiness and celebration will conclude with a release of balloons and a toast to Network.

Eva Parry



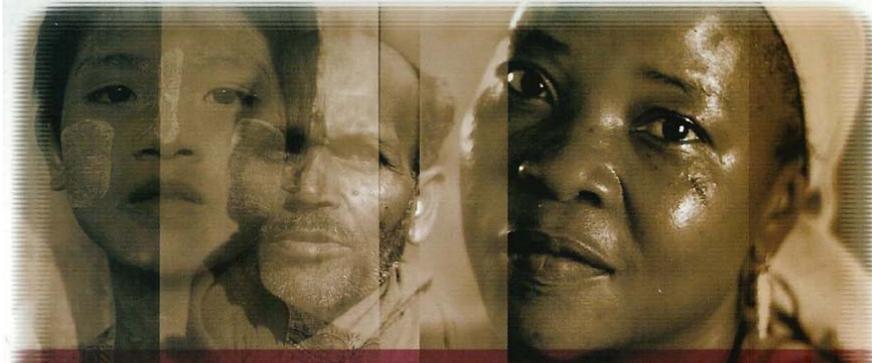
Family news

Congratulations to Marion and Peter Mills on the birth of their first grandchild Harry George to Gareth and Lindsey on 28th November 2006. Also congratulations to Muriel and Gordon Ion who have had a grand-daughter in Australia called Carla.

We record the funeral of Edna Hargreaves at Overdale on 15th February 2007 and also the funeral of Colin Ward, brother to Frank Ward on Friday 16th February 2007. Ethel Grant, Aunt to Trish Glennon and Hugh Grant took place at Victoria Hall on Tuesday 27th February.



Congratulations to Caroline Darby, Sheila and Ray's eldest daughter, on her marriage to Gary Brooks on Friday 23rd February 2007.



*God, rich in diversity,
Help us to celebrate the complex and
wonderful patterns of human relationships.
Amen.*

29th Bolton Festival of Male Voice Praise

“Sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious praise” (Ps66v2)

The Festivals of Male Voice Praise is a world-wide fellowship of Christian choirs dedicated to the spreading of the wonderful gospel message. The movement was founded in 1935 by James McRoberts of Glasgow who had a vision of Christian choirs coming together, to present a united testimony of praise annually to those who rarely, if ever, enter a church building to hear the gospel message.

Choirs throughout the land and subsequently throughout the world responded with enthusiasm. Week by week they practise and carry out their normal form of witness in song and testimony at gospel meetings leading many to a saving knowledge of JESUS and being an encouragement to Christian fellowships to which they are invited.

It has always been an aim of the festival choirs to keep the music relatively simple, in a four part harmony setting, to encourage men of varying degrees of musical knowledge to participate. To this end a number of festival books have been published containing over 400 gospel songs arranged for male voices: “MUSIC WITH A MESSAGE”.

In the early years of the Festival’s movement there was a strong connection with the Bolton Methodist Mission through the Waddicar family and others. Some of our older members will remember Mary Waddicar whose father, I understand, was a keen member of the Bolton Praise Choir in the 1950s.

During the 1950s, three of the annual festivals were held at the Victoria Hall when the local choir was led by brothers Tom and Arthur Rowley. They left the district in 1958 and as so often happens, without strong inspired leadership the Bolton choir all but disappeared.

However the Lord obviously had other plans when in 1964 three of

the remaining enthusiasts took on the task of reforming the Bolton choir: Graham Merricks, Len Smith and Mike Dewhurst who respectively took on the leadership as conductor, treasurer and secretary.

In 1970 Graham Merricks emigrated to Canada and the choir appointed Derek Matthews, a very talented musician, as their conductor. From that time the Bolton choir continued to grow in strength and fellowship.

Mike Dewhurst took over as conductor in 1979 and along with other dedicated choir members has

ensured that the annual festival has attracted members of festival choirs from as far away as Glasgow, Morecambe, Birmingham and Swansea, thus providing an augmented choir for the annual Bolton Festival of Praise.

This is a gospel event not to be missed!!

An opportunity to invite non-believers and others to hear the 'Good News' "that GOD so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have ever-lasting life"

Reg Parry

Sayings of Jesus of Nazareth No.12

"Come to me all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
Matthew Ch11 V28.

**The 29th Bolton
Festival of Male Voice Praise
Albert Hall (Town Hall)
Saturday 14th April 2007 7.00pm
Speaker: Philip Hacking
Gospel singer: _ Paul Wheater
Piano: Heather Moffat
Warrington Salvation Army Band
Admission FREE**

Puzzle Page

Can you identify the biblical characters from the clues listed below?
All can be found in the grid, written horizontally or vertically and not backwards.

J	A	C	O	B	L	E	M	I	S
I	D	O	L	E	U	J	I	H	A
L	A	B	E	L	L	I	R	O	T
P	M	I	A	S	L	S	I	R	E
R	S	M	G	H	C	T	A	A	S
E	A	B	R	A	H	A	M	P	A
M	L	E	O	Z	O	A	B	E	U
A	E	L	A	Z	O	R	I	N	G
R	T	I	N	A	R	O	C	T	H
Y	U	G	O	R	O	N	O	A	H

1 Cain's father

3 Cain's brother

2 Moses's brother

4 Moses's sister

5 Nebuchadnezzar's son

6 Joseph's father

7 Japheth's father

8 Jesus's mother

9 Isaac's father

10 Jacob's brother





Tom Rowland runner up in the over 14s category.

The 'J Factor' Youth talent event took place on Sunday 11th February 2007 at the Victoria Hall with representation from across the Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District. Auditions took place during the afternoon along with crafts including pottery, glass painting and picture painting. The message is that our talents are God-given and we should use them wisely and to His glory.



J Factor Youth Talent event



Winners and runners up Tom Rowland from Ainsworth Methodist Church; Josh, Eleanor, Tom and Milly Martin from Harvey Street Methodist Church; Daniel, Katie, Amy, Hannah and Alice Brett from Chorley Methodist Church and Joseph Parkin from Victoria Hall.



The Martin family in action



Diary Dates and Events

Thu 1st Mar	12.45 Lent reflection—use and abuse of the Bible
Thu 8th Mar	12.45 Lent reflection—sexuality and cultural harmony
Thu 15th Mar	12.45 Lent reflection—people trafficking & asylum seekers
Tue 20th Mar	Bereavement Forum 2pm—4pm
Thu 22nd Mar	12.45 Lent reflection—Addictions
Sat 24th Mar	Grand Auction
Thu 29th Mar	12.45 Lent reflection—zero tolerance and the sex trade
Wed 4th Apr	Christian Passover meal 7pm Parish Hall
Thu 5th Apr	Maundy Service 7.30pm St Andrew & St George URC
Fri 6th Apr	Good Friday Service Claremont and walk of witness 10.30
Thu 19th Apr	Café Church
Sat 28th Apr	Superheroes day (see page 20)
Sun 13th May	Celebration of living faith (see page 19)
Sun 20th May	Annual General Meeting

See Page 15 for concerts and play listing

Ministry team

Superintendent:	Rev'd. Philip R. Mason	01204 493 271
Deacon:	Janet Smith	01204 841 619
Minister:	Rev'd. Dr. Brian Tomkins	01204 667 296
Supernumerary:	Rev'd. Bryan Ashberry	01204 520 376
Lay worker:	Mrs Dilys Tomkins	01204 667 296
Director of music:	Mr Jeremy Plummer	01204 602 743
Congolese Minister:	Pastor Hubert N Kayonda	01204 465 790
Youth worker:	Tracey Kane	01204 363 429
Local Preachers & Worship Leaders: Geoff & Brenda Cooper, Nikki Bradley, John Cambray, Sylvia Fairhurst, Phil Glanvill, Tricia Harper, Fiona Key		
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www.boltonmethodistmission.co.uk (full colour version of The Message available)		

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