

# The Message

June 2007

The quarterly magazine of the Bolton Methodist Mission

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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*



## ARE YOU AS GREEN AS GOD?

The Albert Halls, Victoria Square,  
Bolton BL1 1YZ

Thursday 14 June, 7.30 pm

How green *is* the Bible? Does it really have a role in helping us address climate change?

### Have your say!

Join this fascinating and enlightening debate with two acclaimed and authoritative voices on the hottest subject of the 21st century:

- Mark Dowd, presenter of Channel 4's *God is Green*
- Michael Northcott, expert witness and author of *The Moral Climate*

**Booking is essential for this one-off event! So invite a friend or colleague, and reserve your tickets *now* on 01793 418222.**

[www.theriddleoflife.org](http://www.theriddleoflife.org)

## Channel 4, Faith and Boxing 'Challenging Perception'

Ministry here at Victoria Hall can lead you into some very interesting directions. I feel that the links into the wider community often lead to places you least expect.

This was particularly true when I received a phone call from Channel 4 a few months ago about the possibility of commissioning a programme that had a very interesting twist.

Channel 4 had been in discussion with Amir Khan, our up-and-coming world class boxer and his family about producing a series of programmes. The programmes would involve taking six young men from around the country, all whom had been involved in violent crime, and bringing them here to Bolton to spend some time searching for a new start in life. Amir and his amazing backroom team, including those from Bolton Wanderers, would spend a month with them, getting them fit and

See also page 19

teaching them the art of the discipline of boxing, thus in some way controlling their violent behaviour.

In conversation with Amir, Channel 4 discovered another important aspect of his life, his faith and how as a young Muslim lad his faith had helped him and shaped him. This led Channel 4 to explore this



further and to a decision that faith could be important to explore through the programme.

As Chaplain to Bolton Wanderers I had spent some time with Amir and he and his team recommended me as a mentor for these young lads along with a Muslim youth worker, Atif, from Birmingham.

It was obvious that Channel 4 wanted to take the faith element of the programme seriously and to explore with these lads any experience they had of faith, their views now and how they might be changed. This was a great opportunity to make my faith really count and to explore what aspects of faith could really help and make a difference.

The mentoring was demanding and challenging, but at its heart were the basic principles of our faith, to listen, to love, to forgive, and to give these lads a chance that they had never had before. This was faith in action rather than words, and forced me to really reflect upon my own Christian journey and ministry.

It was wonderful working together with Atif, who taught me so much about his faith and helped to defuse and correct so many corrupt perceptions there are about the Islamic faith. To see these two faiths working together I think will send out a very positive message and help the wider viewers to re-think some of the misperceptions that are so prevalent in the media today.

So what of the lads? Well you will have to wait to see the programmes to get the full story, but it was wonderful to see the seeds of change in their lives. They all moved dramatically in their thinking and attitudes. The fear is what happens when they get back to 'reality' for them in their home contexts, but systems and support have been put in place to help them through this process. I have been in touch with them since the making of the programmes and will be so for the months ahead.

Listening to the lads stories you discover how easy one aspect of crime or addiction can lead on to another. You can feel the desperate search for a new and different way and yet what a massive and uphill task that really is for each one of them. I made a promise to pray for them each day and interestingly they made a promise to pray for me. Being with them and sharing with them and the stories of their lives was a very humbling experience.

Channel 4, faith and boxing, you just never know where God will take you next.

*God Bless you. Phil Mason, Superintendent Minister  
(Three programmes are due to be screened on Channel 4 near the  
end of October)*

Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope.

Nothing true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith.

Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love.

No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as from our own standpoint; therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971, American theologian).

## Sayings of Jesus of Nazareth No.13

'I am with you always.' Matthew Ch28 v 20.

**NCH Rivington & Morecambe Bay Walks**  
10.30am 4th August 2007, Rivington. Meet at the Gift/Refreshment Shop. Call Alysha Lawlor on 01925 715385.

2.15pm 22nd September 2007, Arnside. Call Catherine Butterworth on 01925 715385

Or, for either walk, fill form at:

[www.nch.org.uk/getinvolved](http://www.nch.org.uk/getinvolved)



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### Dictionary corner

**Ascension** *noun* the ascent of Christ into heaven on the fortieth day after the Resurrection (see March 2007 definitions), hence **Ascension Day**, the Thursday forty days after Easter.

**Transfiguration** *noun* Christ's appearance in radiant glory to three of his disciples (Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2-3), and hence the festival commemorating this on 6th August.

**Sanctification** *noun* freedom from sin or legitimization by religious sanction. Often used by John Wesley as in his phrase 'Sanctification by faith'. He preached that sanctification to occur by faith as opposed to coming through works.

## NCH Sunday 8 July 2007

Who is my neighbour? Luke 10: 25–37

'If I hadn't had help from NCH, I'd have probably had the kids taken off me and ended up with nothing. That's the way it was going. I don't want my kids brought up the same way I was, in a children's home.'

Anti-social behaviour Unit Co-ordinator working in partnership with NCH's intensive family support programme

'The families involved are really struggling. By working with each family member and giving them the confidence and skills they need to work through their problems, families can turn their lives around and anti-social behaviour can be stopped. This benefits the children, the family and the whole community.'

An NCH intensive family support project worker

A parent at one of our intensive family support projects

'NCH works with families to look at the underlying causes of [anti-social] behaviour, so we can get to the bottom of why it is happening. Working with NCH gives us more options. Instead of punitive measures, now we can help prevent problems and break the cycle of anti-social behaviour. NCH gets neighbours involved and they are kept informed. People feel like they are part of the solution. The whole community benefits.'

NCH pioneered intensive family support for families at risk of eviction and now runs 14 projects, working with families in their own homes or in special accommodation. Research published last year shows that the NCH approach can turn around anti-social behaviour in eight out of 10 cases, keeping families together and saving hundreds of thousands of pounds.

More information about our work in this area can be found in our worship resources for NCH Sunday available from the Supporter Care Department on 08457 626579 or at [www.nch.org.uk/methodist](http://www.nch.org.uk/methodist)



NCH is the children's charity of the Methodist Church  
Registered charity no. 1097940/company no. 4764232

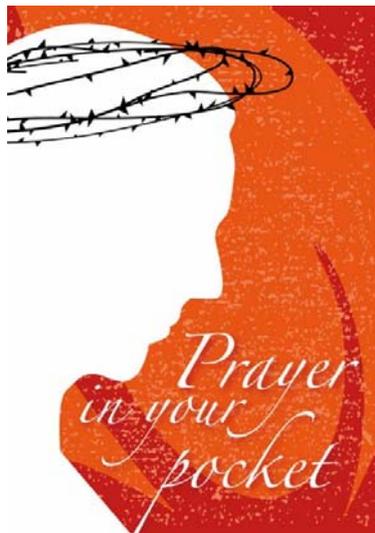
the children's charity

Over 5,000 people have taken a journey through the "lost in wonder" ([www.lostinwonder.org.uk](http://www.lostinwonder.org.uk)) online prayer labyrinth since it was launched by The Methodist Church in October last year. Lost in Wonder offers a place for meditative prayer for anyone at their computer, and the response from visitors has been overwhelmingly positive.

**After publication of the Government's White Paper on 7th March 2007 titled 'The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent', the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church continued to urge the Government not to replace the Trident Nuclear Weapons System. The Churches made a joint submission arguing that the White Paper provides no serious analysis of the security risks associated with renewal.**

The on-line church, St Pixels ([www.stpixels.com](http://www.stpixels.com)) launched a new church environment and hosted a ground-breaking service for BBC Radio 4's Sunday worship on 15th April 2007. Inside the church, visitors talk to each other, enter different 'rooms', take part in worship and listen to a sermon illustrated by pictures. St Pixel's has about 1,500 registered worshippers and more than 600 people enter the website each week.

**The main topic of the March meeting of the Methodist Council was the reconfiguring of the Connexional Team in order to better serve the circuits and districts and to release resources to churches for innovative new mission.**



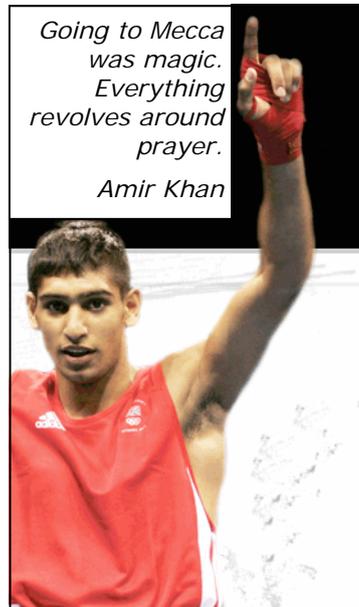
72% of Britons pray at some point, even though only 46% believe in God! But many people struggle with prayer. A new publication from the Methodist Church is encouraging people to pray in all circumstances. Prayer in Your Pocket is a beautifully illustrated 16-page booklet featuring prayers from all over the world. It is a follow-up to the very successful Peace in Your Pocket, 75,000 copies of which were distributed through health clubs, bars and play centres over Christmas and New Year.

## My mate Amir

A friend of faith, this is how Bishop David Gillett, Bishop of Bolton and Rev'd Phil Mason think of Amir Khan, the world class boxer from Bolton. Phil Mason has just finished filming a documentary involving Amir and five young men from Greater Manchester, exploring how issues of faith affect discipline and faith in daily life.

At its synod on Saturday 5th May 2007, the Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District heard how the new Muslim presence in Britain and Western Europe is arguably the most significant religious development since the reformation.

And it is incumbent on us all to find common purpose with those of other faith. Bishop David pointed to our shared religious humanism, that is to say, we are made to serve God. It is when we serve God that we find our fullest freedom and deepest joy, and moreover, we have a lot to offer society which nothing else but faith can bring. Christians have a strong sense of stewardship, and this is matched in the Muslim faith and we can do enormous good by working together for society. Bishop David suggests interfaith encounter helps sharpen appreciation of one's own faith. We need to listen to God and we can do this partly by listening to one another.



Bishop David, who is the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative for relating to the Muslim community, used many statistics from a recent Gallup survey of Muslims (3% of the population) and the general public (72% of whom declared themselves to be Christian in the 2001 census) to point to interesting differences. 85% of the

general population think that such moral issues as sex outside of marriage is all right, while only 10% of Muslims think so. More Muslims than the general public trust democracy through the national government and elections, and the judiciary and the police. Islam is concerned to bring about peace and harmony. So far as traditional Christian moral teaching is concerned, our strongest allies in an increasingly secular world, with an increasingly religiously illiterate media, are Muslims.

 *Pray for your neighbour. Surround them with love. Love comes from God. Thank God for love.*

Conversation and co-operation between the faiths is needed to remind society that faith is normal and that it firmly belongs in the fabric of society. In contrast with the 5 billion people of the

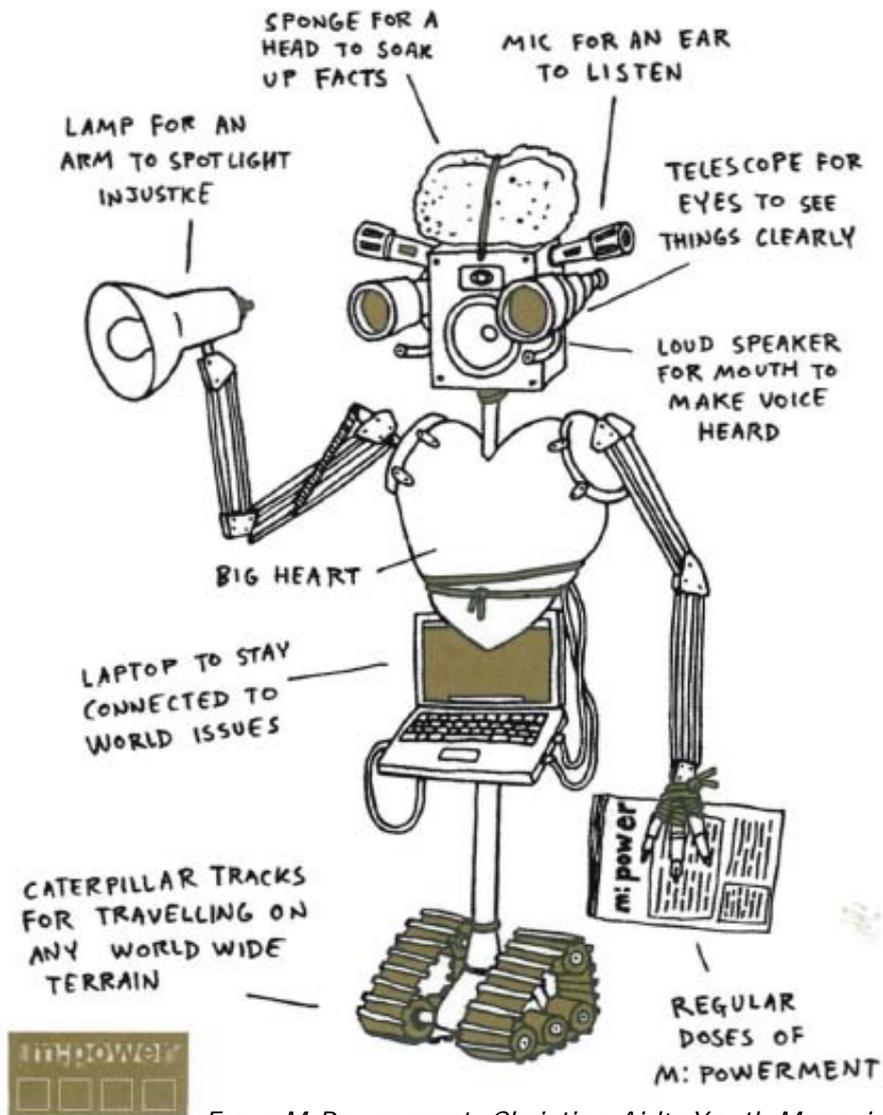
world's 6 billion population who take religion seriously, religion in the United Kingdom is in decline, accompanied by a democratic secularism. In such a climate, symbols of religion, whether the nikab (face veil), the hijab (head and body covering), or the Cross as a necklace may become contentious, as is evidenced by recent issues in schools and for British Airways' employees.

Importantly, and finally, however, there is a Christian obligation to Islam to present Christ for the sole sufficient reason that he needs to be presented as the divine person he is. Quoting Kenneth Cragg, "Your God is always absent until you see him dying on the cross".

Gladys Dunn was new in town and decided to visit the church nearest to her a new apartment. She appreciated the lovely sanctuary and the music by the choir, but the sermon went on and on and wasn't very interesting. Glancing round she saw some of the congregation nodding off. Finally, it was over and she turned to the still sleepy - looking man next to her, extended her hand and said, "I am Gladys Dunn." He replied, "You and me both!"

*Provided by Carole Tomlinson*

# HOW TO MAKE A GLOBALLY AWARE YOUNG PERSON



*From M:Powerment, Christian Aid's Youth Magazine.*



Thank God for young people with vision, energy and commitment. Pray that they will teach us a thing or two.

1. The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."
2. Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
3. Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.
4. Miss Betty Smith sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
5. The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: "Break Forth Into Joy."
6. A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
7. At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.
8. Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to disadvantage children.
9. Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
10. The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
11. Faith Tea at 5:00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.
12. This evening at 7 pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
13. Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 pm. Please use the back door.
14. The drama group will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
15. Weight Watchers will meet at 7 pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
16. The Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours". **(See pages 14-18 for details of our special appeal)**

Despite wincing from the proof reader and sub-editor, and in a moment of weakness, I bring you a list of howlers apparently common in many church magazines. How lucky you are.

*John Parkin*

## Careful, our mere existence has an impact

By our mere existence we have an impact in the world: with our thoughts, our attitudes and our responses to situations. If we were more conscious of this fact, would we still do what we do, or leave undone what we always had intended to do?

Famous people have changed the course of history forever by their actions: Hitler, Mandela, Mother Teresa... The list is endless, but their actions have shaped the world! We are told a butterfly can flap its wings in Toronto and cause a tornado in Singapore. If an action, that obscure and minuscule, has such a world changing effect, imagine what your thoughts and actions do every day.

School children and golfers in the UK last year raised money for the Pinetown Methodist Church charity, Phakamisa, to provide a classroom for seventy pre-school children who had never experienced the luxury of a secure building. The same children later in the year had to take refuge in the classroom when heavy storms destroyed their mud homes. We rarely know the consequences of our seemingly trivial actions, but they DO change the world.

Someone celebrated her 60th birthday and asked friends to make donations to Phakamisa instead of giving her presents. Enough money was collected to employ Lindiwe to teach parenting skills to the Phakamisa caregivers (some over 80 years in age!) who support orphans. With this guided, supportive help the children should become responsible, moral citizens and so contribute to life rather than destroy it.

Instead of a lavish year end dinner party, a company ordered beaded ornaments from us as Christmas gifts for their customers. As a direct result, sixteen beaders were able to pay their children's school fees for 2007. What impact will these educated children have on society, the economy, and the world? As a giver or a recipient, you change the world.



Thank God for the work in Pinetown, and pray it may continue to serve the needy.



Nomusa had fifty children under six years of age, in her 'school'. She fed them each day and then they sat quietly, for this was what Nomusa thought a good teacher did. She has since enrolled with Phakamisa's Educare Teacher Training programme. After a recent visit to her school, our monitor reported that the children are involved in many activities and there is a happy buzz and learning is happening. Half of all we learn occurs in our first five years, so a good pre-school education is essential. Those who contribute to the "10 Rand per child per month" account are changing the world of 10,000 children each year, and, by implication, the world in which we live.

Happiness's sister committed suicide by setting herself alight when she learnt she was HIV+. Happiness adopted her two traumatised children, along with her brother's three orphans and her own two children. Although she battles to meet their physical needs on her meagre salary, she gives them love and a life! Happiness also has HIV AIDS and contracted shingles in her eye. At that time, the local Rotarian ophthalmic surgeon offered his time and expertise to our project and the medical treatment has resulted in normal vision being restored. The medical assistance had a measurable effect, but, my friend's caring gesture had a far greater impact on Happiness's life, and so on the life of the seven children for whom she cares, and so also for the people with whom they come in contact, and so on. The ripple effect is immeasurable.

Your scathing look or your smile; your slap or your hug; your deaf or listening ear; your criticizing or encouraging word changes the world every moment of every day. How do you plan to change the world today?

*Glenda Howieson, Pinetown Methodist Church, South Africa*

## The Mission today

- Support for a range of important social action projects
- Strong links supporting the town and the community
- Excellent practice and an example to others
- Opportunities for further development
- A strategy for evangelism and growth



## The way we make a difference

- Practical and spiritual help for those in need
- Giving people chances and opportunities
- Working at the margins of society
- Opening up the gospel message to the community
- Activities in advance of evangelism
- Providing a prophetic voice



## What do we need? Further financial support.

- See page 17 for details of the launch of a special appeal.
- Cut out pages 15 and 16 to gift aid your contributions and to set up a standing order from your bank into the Mission bank





## Standing Order Mandate

Name of	The Manager
Bank or building society	
and full postal address	
Postcode	
Please pay:	Royal Bank of Scotland
	46-48 Deansgate
	Bolton BL1 1BH
To the credit of:	Bolton Mission Victoria Hall
Account Number:	11813694
Sort code:	16-00-06
Date of first payment:	
Amount of first payment:	£            :
Amount in words:	
Amount of subsequent payments:	£            :
Amount in words:	
Due date:	
Frequency (weekly/monthly/yearly):	
Number of subsequent payments:	
<small>(write in "until further notice" if payments are to continue until you instruct otherwise)</small>	
Please debit my account as follows	
Account name to be debited:	
Account Number to be debited:	
Sort code:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Now please return this form to:  
Ray Darby / Janet Smith  
c/o The Victoria Hall,  
Knowsley Street  
Bolton, BL1 2AS

Mark the envelope 'Private and Confidential'

## THE METHODIST CHURCH GIFT AID DECLARATION

This Declaration will enable your church to recover income tax and should only be completed if you are a taxpayer. You are able to cancel this authority if your circumstances change.

**Declaration:-**

*I confirm that I am a taxpayer and authorise the Methodist Church to recover Income Tax at the Standard Rate on all my recorded gifts to its funds from 6 April 2000 until this authority is cancelled in writing.*

Surname (in capitals) ..... Christian Names .....

Title (please circle) Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Rev .....  
Address .....  
Postcode .....

For completion by the Church Gift Aid Secretary:-

Church Fund submitting this Declaration to the Tax Recovery Section of the Methodist Church:-

Fund Code ..... / ..... / ..... Fund Title .....

Note to Church Gift Aid Secretary:-

This Declaration should be forwarded to: The Methodist Church, P O Box 20, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7AQ for registration.

The above Declaration is to cancel Deed(s) of Covenant numbered ..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / .....  
..... / ..... / ..... / ..... / .....

REF - LTD



# A special appeal for money

## Regular giving

- As a congregation we presently give about **£36,000** per year to the work of Mission at the Victoria Hall.
- This represents about **£600** per week, excluding Gift Aid tax back.
- We need **£1,000** per week for Mission work.
- Some people sign a Gift Aid form which makes every **£1.00** they give worth **£1.28** to the Mission.
- We would love to make the "some people" into "many people".

### Things to do:

1. Think, pray and check your personal finances.
2. Consider giving more through the envelopes each week.
3. Even better, complete the standing order form on page 15 and return it confidentially to Ray Darby or Janet Smith.
4. Sign the Gift Aid form on page 16, if you pay tax and return it confidentially to Ray Darby or Janet Smith.

## Special Appeal

- A special appeal to raise **£42,000** was launched at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 20th May 2007.
- The money is needed for essential repairs and upgrades to keep us safe from fire and warm.
- Unfortunately, this work is required before the forthcoming development takes place.

### Things to do:

1. Think, pray and check your personal finances.
2. Look out for the special opportunities to give through the Gift Day and anniversary appeals.
3. Let Ray Darby know of grant or corporate funding opportunities you may be aware of.

Please return forms on pages 15 and 16 to:  
**Ray Darby / Janet Smith**  
c/o The Victoria Hall  
Knowsley Street  
Bolton, BL1 2AS  
Mark the envelope 'Private and Confidential'

## **An explanation of the appeal**

The Bolton Methodist Mission has been serving the town for at least 105 years. In the last eight or nine years it has gained a wonderful and widespread reputation across the whole of Methodism and beyond as a strong and vibrant organisation serving the community and developing its Mission. The links with the town and community throughout the various projects, the proposed re-development, and the strategy for growth of our Christian presence are all seen as models of best practice by the wider church.

This takes a tremendous amount of organisation and management. To help accomplish the tasks, manage the financial well-being and the fabric of the building, the Mission Resources Group meets every couple of months with a full agenda dealing with such subjects as insurance, future staffing, budgets and planning. The group comprises the two Circuit Stewards, Christine Heppolette and John Parkin, the Church Council Secretary, Geoff Fairhurst, the Mission Treasurer, Ray Darby, Brian Tomkins, and with myself as secretary and with Phil Mason in the chair.

It is just great to report that our income from the rental of the shops which we own on Knowsley St., the letting of the Main Hall and the other parts of the premises is at an all time high. The team of staff in the office: Rebecca Kearns, Sheila Darby, Stephen Lee and the caretaking staff are doing a really magnificent job.

All this comes at a cost, particularly in the wear and tear of the premises. Even though our revenue from these external resources is very high, we will have to spend significant amounts of money to keep the premises serviceable, the rooms heated properly and up to scratch as far as fire and other important legal requirements are concerned. In spite of all this success a real weakness in our financial well being is our congregational giving. If we are not to go into our thinner and thinner reserves, we have to do something about this urgently and very specifically we need more people:

- giving larger sums more regularly;
- gift aiding any donation however large or small; and
- giving to the special appeal.

*David Tomlinson, Secretary to the Mission Resources Committee*

**18    !Special Appeal Launched, more on pages 14-17!**

The Bible Society is supporting a massive “riddle of life” marketing campaign taking place in Greater Manchester in May and June 2007. It uses mock newspaper headlines based on famous biblical stories, with a key word or phrase blanked out, in the style of the popular television quiz show ‘Have I got news for you’. The riddles will be displayed on advertising hoardings and other mass media outlets, with the answers to be revealed in a



second wave of advertising. Hundreds of churches across the region will be putting on events, and individual Christians are being asked to use the adverts as conversation starters.

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
Family Fun Day	August Saturday tbc	Victoria Square Bolton

## **A new route for us all**

Preaching to over six hundred Methodists from across the Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District, Rev'd Dr Martyn Atkins suggested that if Charles Wesley were preaching to us today he would say that Jesus would have a new route marked out for us all. In-car satellite navigation tells a driver that it has worked out a 'new route' when a wrong turn has been taken. Dr Atkins, Principal of Cliff College and President Designate of the Methodist Conference, used this analogy simply and directly to suggest that in whichever direction we are travelling, however difficult the very common struggling, wrestling and drawing slowly closer that may go on in our spiritual lives, we should be thankful so long as the real direction we are travelling in is towards God.

Dr Atkins' sermon was preached at the tercentenary celebration of the birth of Charles Wesley at the Victoria Hall, Bolton Methodist Mission on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007, after his recent return from a pilgrimage to Santiago da Compostella. He pointed out that Charles Wesley took a long time to find his route to real and deep faith. He was a quiet, reserved man, who suffered extensive mood swings and was wracked by uncertainty and doubt, and suffered numerous bouts of ill health. He withdrew and did not communicate for long periods of time and certainly lived in the shadow of his elder brother, John. Charles Wesley, however, came to the realisation that, in spite of it all, he could find himself at peace with God: "I went to bed sensible of my own weakness but confident of Christ's protection", he wrote



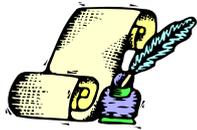
in his journal. Charles Wesley's journal also tells of his feelings of failure and frustration, perhaps most markedly in his accounting of his less than successful missionary efforts in Georgia. But despite these feelings, Charles has also left us with a legacy of some of the most wonderful poetry to describe the sheer mind blowing miracle that the Son of God, the Lord of Eternity should die for our sins. Dr Atkins reminded the congregation that Charles' response to being brought into a relationship with the Son of God filled him with a proper sense of deep gratitude.



*Martyn  
Atkins*

The Bishop of Bolton, David Gillett, testified to the influence of Charles Wesley's hymns on his own life and faith. Reminding us that Charles was an Anglican Priest, Bishop David suggests that his hymns tell us about what God accomplishes in our lives, not just at the point of conversion, but throughout them. Brought up in a Wesleyan Sunday School, Bishop David remembers some of Wesley's hymns as the liveliest of his teenage years, which properly convey the wonder of the gospel. In particular Wesley's line "To spread through all the earth abroad the honours of thy name" challenged Bishop David to a sense that God was calling him to ministry, a ministry which has taken him, amongst other places, to Northern Ireland. In particular he values the many references in Charles Wesley's hymns to the Old Testament, which help us reach a fuller depth of understanding of the nature of God.

The Good News Singers from Eccleston, near Chorley, led the worship with the song "Don't you know", from Sing Good News, and the music before and after the service, and for the hymn singing, was led by the Victoria Hall Praise Band under the musical direction of Jeremy Plummer. Dr Atkins finished his sermon by challenging us to consider whether we remain converted through all the events of our life: marriage, the coming of children and ill health. Charles Wesley, he suggested, would remind us that not all of God's grace would have been exhausted from the last time we needed it.



## Editorial

We view 'the whole earth' and everything that has 'the breath of life in it' as a gift from God. Noah and the rainbow covenant suggests control by God through nature. Luke reports Jesus as saying 'Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man', with a hint that unbridled hedonism will lead once again to catastrophe.

The Bible contains many reflections on the position of humanity within the created universe. In the confrontation with Job from the eye of a storm, God asks rather pointedly 'Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?' (38:5). Science has taken us some way to understanding the physical world, However our models of the future contain uncertainty and risk and the limits to growth remain unclear. More urgent questions are being raised continually as we monitor our effect on God's gift.

What is our response? Responsible stewardship, or unfettered consumption?

**'The only incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.'**  
**Albert Einstein (1879-1955, awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1921.**

**'We don't stop laughing because we get old, we get old because we've stopped laughing.'**  
**Anonymous.**

**The right response to bad religion is better religion, not secularism. Jim Wallis (?)**

**We need to be the change we want to see in the world. Gandhi.**



## Concerts listing

9th Jun	Bolton Choral Union
11-15th Jun	Bolton Schools Music Festival
28th Jun	Bolton School Concert



Gracious and liberating God  
Lift us beyond the burdens of pain and guilt  
Build our memories into life-giving resolutions  
Give us the vision of a new creation  
Strengthen us to act for justice and human  
dignity  
And set all free. Amen

Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District  
**Ordinands' Testimony Services**  
**Friday 22 June 7.30pm**  
Trinity Methodist Church,  
Hilton Street, Bolton, BL2 6AS  
Prior to the Ordination of  
**Rev Dr Janie S Noble** (Bolton Circuit)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Thursday 28 June 7.30pm**  
Shevington Methodist Church,  
Gathurst Lane, Shevington, WN6 8EA  
Prior to the ordination of  
**Rev E Helen Brown** (Wigan Circuit)  
Preacher at both services: **Rev David King**

## Faith at Work

I wonder if this is going to ring a bell with you! How many times have you wondered, like me, if you are being a 'good Christian' or being an effective witness to what we say we believe? Will we ever see 'a result'?

At times like this when I'm questioning lots of things in today's world and whether one person can make a difference anyway, I try to remember the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who said something like this "of course we can't do big things, but we can do small things with love." What a hopeful position and way of thinking! There's hope for even me, then!

It seems that there's a whole lot of activity going on in God's name by the people of Victoria Hall that the rest of us have no idea about. I'm thinking of actual activity, like being a Christian Aid collector, or on the other hand, being housebound but holding this work in prayer. It's not a competition to score points in worthiness, because none of God's work would be possible without the sustaining prayers of countless unknown people who support so many different people, actions and places.



To help people to pray for each other, some churches have devised a booklet of their people and things they'd like to share with others. Such a booklet helps them to know more about what concerns are dear to individuals, and to know what work they are involved in on either a voluntary or paid basis. One example I have seen recently has been produced by Bakewell Methodist Church, in Derbyshire. Let's find out our own concerns at Victoria Hall, both within the church and the mission projects, and I'm sure we'll feel even more included within our own community by producing our own booklet.

I invite you to voluntarily write your concerns, voluntary work and paid work on a list we will be launching at Gift Day on 17<sup>th</sup> June. There may be some who do not want to disclose details about themselves, and this is clearly fine. It's meant to be a happy exercise! (I will be compiling the list, just in case the editor of this magazine is getting the vapours about the prospect of another task to do) (*Phew! Thank you. Ed.*)

Let's see what 'a result' we can get here. I'm sure we'll be amazed, touched and blessed at the outcome. Let's do it, let's get praying for each other in a more informed way, and let's stop stressing that we don't know what goes on – we will do soon!!

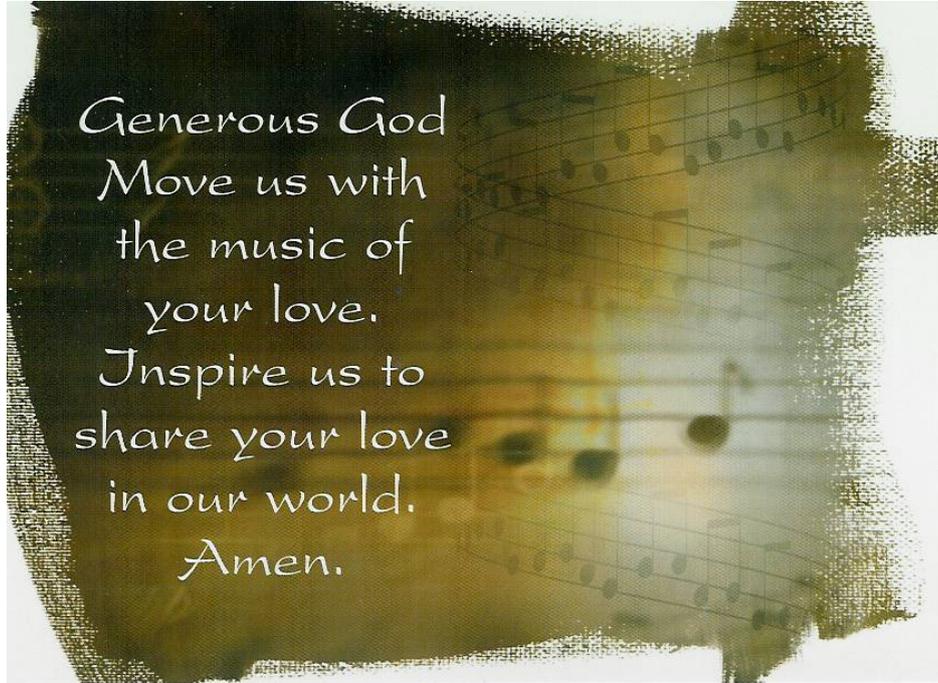
*Much love, Janet Smith*

*Richard Dawkins, biologist and atheist, rules out any possibility of an Ultimate Reality within the processes of Darwinian evolution. Arthur Peacocke, biologist and priest, came to a very different conclusion:*

"When we are listening to a musical work, say, a Beethoven piano sonata, there are times when we are so deeply absorbed in it that for the moment we are thinking Beethoven's musical thoughts with him. Yet if anyone were to ask at that moment 'Where is Beethoven now?', we could only reply that Beethoven-as-composer was to be found only in the music itself. Beethoven-as-composer is/was other than the music but his communication with us is entirely subsumed in and represented by the music itself – he is immanent in it and we need not look elsewhere to meet him in that creative role.

The processes revealed by the sciences are in themselves God acting as Creator, and God is not to be found as some kind of additional influence or factor added on to the processes of the world God is creating."

*Arthur Peacocke, MBE (1925-2006, 'Paths from Science Towards God: The End of all our Exploring'. Oxford: Oneworld, 2001).*



**Puzzle Half Page**

Determine what numbers need to go in the blank cells for each row, column and diagonal to sum to 60.

	4	
8		16

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



## Family news

We record the funeral of Wilf Almond which took place on Friday 20th April 2007.

Congratulations to David and Leanne Foster on the birth of a daughter, Madison, on 3rd March 2007.

Congratulations to Fideline and Hubert Kayonda on the birth of their daughter Benedict on 20th March 2007, sister to Espérant (11), Elgracia (8), Esther (7) and Elysée (5).



*Emily Priest*

We welcomed by baptism Samantha Priest and her baby daughter Emily on Easter Sunday.

*Our Karen's just had her baby,  
a bouncing baby boy.  
He was born at twelve thirty on Monday  
and weighed in at ten pounds four.*



*Benedict Kayonda*

*Mother and baby are fine;  
no complications as such;  
the nurses are doing a fantastic job,  
but always seem in a rush.*

*I haven't heard him cry yet,  
but I'm sure he'll be one of the best,  
especially when he's hungry  
and it's time to suckle up to the breast.*



*Jacob Steven Peter Nisbet*

*I really don't know how Steve's coping,  
being the father of a strapping young boy,  
but you only have to look at his face  
and you can see he's overwhelmed with  
joy.*

*Nanna is busy knitting  
Grandpa just looks on  
What a lucky baby  
To be in a family full of Christian love.*

*John Cambray, grandfather to Jacob Nisbet, born 30th April*

## Diary Dates and Events

1st Jun	"Waggon Train"
2nd Jun	Exploring ministry at Bolton Rd Church, Bury
17th Jun	Gift Day
8th Jun	Diaconal Ordination Service
4th Aug	RNLI Coffee morning
13th-17th Aug	Kid's Club

*See Page 22 for  
concerts listing*



*Over six hundred voices were raised in praise of God on Sunday 13th May 2007 to celebrate the life of Charles Wesley on the tercentenary of his birth. The Good News Singers and the Victoria Hall Praise Band lead music.*

### 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		
Victoria Hall office: 01204 522 569 (9:00 am to 3:15 pm)		
E-mail: <a href="mailto:victoria.hall1@virgin.net">victoria.hall1@virgin.net</a>		
<a href="http://www.boltonmethodistmission.co.uk">www.boltonmethodistmission.co.uk</a> (full colour version of The Message available)		

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