

# FROM THE DEVELOPMENT WORKER

*The Revd Derek Balsdon*

As I write this, I am looking forward to getting out and about more in my role as Development Worker for MET. This includes going to the Tadcaster Circuit for a Bible teaching day entitled: Images of the Holy Spirit: How can we experience more of God's Spirit? By the time you read this, I will hopefully have seen some of you at ECG, where MET will have provided a prayer ministry team and a stand in the market place. I will also be at Cliff Festival with a resources stand, leading a seminar and at the MET AGM. It will be good to have these opportunities to meet people and share fellowship together.

In March I was pleased to share with John Hogarth in another online Bible Teaching Day, Shining for Christ: Learning from Philippians. Videos of the four main teaching sessions are now available through our website and on our YouTube channel, go to [methodistevangelicals.org.uk/videos](http://methodistevangelicals.org.uk/videos). These online teaching days continue to be well received, especially by those who live in some of the extremities of our islands. Videos from previous teaching days, including Digging for Treasure, are also accessible through that link.

The weekly prayer meetings on Zoom continue on Sunday evenings, and we have spent quite a bit of time praying concerning Ukraine and its suffering people. We have been able to direct our feelings of helplessness to the Lord in prayer. The weekly Bible studies on Zoom continue on Mondays and Wednesdays, and we are gradually working our way through Acts. Just before writing this, we studied Acts 19, where Paul asked the believers in Ephesus, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' This led to a discussion about how much God's Spirit is welcomed within

our Methodist churches. Towards the end of the session, I led the groups in a prayer exercise, during which we asked God's Spirit to breathe more life into us, and several participants sensed the presence of God's Spirit upon them.

Stir the Fire was an exciting venture during the first 2 weeks of March. The Revd Bill Phares, a Methodist Minister from Alabama, along with his wife Laura, came to the UK on a prayer assignment. When he visited Pill, at the mouth of the river Avon, several local Christians had already gathered. Some of them shared prophetic words that they had received about revival coming to Pill. Bill spoke about responding to God's call to come and pray at various Methodist sites across the UK, and made some prophetic declarations, most of which I filmed on my phone, which can be viewed at [methodistevangelicals.org.uk/stir-the-fire-video](http://methodistevangelicals.org.uk/stir-the-fire-video). I was privileged to spend a couple of days travelling with Bill and Laura, and I went with them to one of the key sites local to where I live, Mow Cop, the birthplace of Primitive Methodism. Bill and Laura travelled 1800 miles around the UK, and visited London, Bristol, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Epworth, along with various other sites across England.

Over the past year we have been building links with leaders of some of the other Wesleyan denominations that exist within the UK. Zoom has enabled us to have some initial meetings, and in January we spent a day together in Bristol. As we have shared fellowship together, we have learnt more about the past, the present and the future vision for each of the denominations. I have also had an opportunity to preach at an Independent Methodist Church in Oldham, which was a positive experience.

Each week I continue to receive emails and phone calls from both lay and ordained Methodists who are struggling within the denomination, so in the light of this I have been hosting a monthly ministers sharing and praying gathering on Zoom. Most of the participants are ordained ministers, and a couple of lay workers who have pastoral care of churches have also joined in. The meeting provides an opportunity for ministers to share some of the things they are struggling with in circuit life, to seek wisdom from one another, and then in Zoom breakout rooms, to receive specific prayer from one another. If you would like details of these meetings, please get in touch with me.

I often receive communications from people who have resigned from the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB), some of whom who have already found new spiritual homes, and others who are unsure of their future. I am aware of 16 new congregations that have been formed over the past two and a half years from people who have left the MCB. Roughly half are almost whole congregations that have left the denomination and have set up a new church together, and the others are where a few people have left several different congregations and have joined together. In all these communications I encourage people to look to the Lord for His guidance for the present and the future, and as Mary said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you' (John 2:4). One of the things many people are struggling with is having a clear idea of what the Lord is calling them to do. Yet we must keep doing what it says in Hebrews 12:2 'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...' I am needing to put this into practice, because over recent months I have sensed the Lord wanting me to take a different direction in life and ministry. So, I will be finishing as the Development Worker at the end of August 2022, and I am earnestly seeking the Lord's guidance for the future. It has been a privilege to serve the Lord through MET since October 2018. I greatly appreciate all the great support and wonderful fellowship I have received from MET and especially from the Executive, and also all the assistance that Hilary has given to me as I have served MET.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

**Derek**