



FROM THE DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Derek Balsdon

Serving God through MET is a wonderful privilege. Being full-time with MET provides more time working from home, as well as greater opportunities for travelling to different parts of the Connexion. In October Hilary and I enjoyed going back to the Forest of Dean. On the Sunday morning Hilary played the organ and I preached at Drybook; despite its name, the living water of God's Spirit flowed and over 25% of the congregation came forward to receive anointing with oil and prayer to be filled afresh. It was good to reconnect with folk from my first Circuit appointment 25 years ago.

The Yorkshire North and East District held 'Flourish', a free District weekend at the Scarborough Spa in October, and invited me to go along with the MET resources stand. Over 1000 people of all ages attended a great weekend of fellowship, teaching and worship. When we were there for ECG most of the attendees already knew about MET, but that wasn't the case at this District Weekend. This provided many opportunities to share with people about our work, and to give out lots of MET Connexion's and Remaining Faithful resources. REVIVE, The MET Prayer Conference, was held at Willersley Castle. Paul and Tracey Critchley facilitated our drawing closer to God as we worshipped, and Kevin Jones' teaching helped us in our 'Walking with Jesus'. His teaching is in a new MET book 'Pursuing God: Seeking Intimacy with the Father.' As I did an initial proof-reading of the book, I felt challenged

and encouraged to pursue God even more. This year I will be sharing on the theme 'Walking in Forgiveness', and I hope to see some of you there.

A significant amount of my time is focused on marriage and relationships. During the autumn I received lots of emails and phone calls from people who are very concerned about Methodism, and questioning their future within our denomination. I have sought to offer pastoral care to each troubled person. You are welcome to contact me by email or phone to share your concerns, and feel free to pass my details on to others who may appreciate someone to confidentially share with. We are forming a database of concerned people, and we hope to plot on a map where each person lives, and then we may be able to facilitate those within a local area being able to offer support to one another, or even to form a 'class meeting' for fellowship. I have helped to compile and distribute the resources for the Regional Gatherings, and have been able to attend two relatively near to where we live. These have provided a great opportunity for concerned people to share together, to hear more about what MET is doing, to worship God and to pray. In the early part of 2020, we would like to have more Regional Gatherings across the Connexion, so please contact me if you are interested in hosting one.

In early November I went to the Harrow and Hillingdon Circuit to speak at a

Marriage and Relationships meeting; the other speaker was Rev Mark Rowland from Dignity and Worth. Your prayers for me that evening were answered, God certainly helped me share biblically based concerns about 'God in love unites us' and to respond to questions afterwards. There was a good level of respect and grace, even though there were major differences of opinion. One of the attendees spoke passionately about Methodism being an inclusive church; I followed this by saying that it might not be inclusive of people like me who do not support same-sex marriage or cohabiting!

One disappointment was cancelling Digging For Treasure due to insufficient bookings, the feedback suggested the location wasn't convenient for many people, but all is not lost. The teaching that the contributors were planning to share on the day is being put into another MET book entitled 'The Message of Ruth Today', and will soon be published. With Ruth being the Bible Month for 2020, this should be a beneficial resource for preachers, small groups and personal study.

For a few years MET has been looking to have a stronger relationship with 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, so I volunteered for 2019. I was on the stewarding team, and was able to get a glimpse of several different 3 Generate events. This years' theme was 'Where is God in my story?' My hope and prayer is that it has helped young people in their journey of Christian faith.

Whotway, the new youth resource, is a key means through which MET is seeking to help young people grow in their faith and discipleship. There are further details elsewhere in this magazine. A number of churches have been using this video-based course with their youth groups. Kevin Lee, the Children's and Youth Worker, at Market Drayton Methodist Church writes:

"I have used many of the WHOTWAY video clips with our secondary aged junior church group over the last few months. They have really engaged with the relevant topics and the way that the clips are presented (with the filmed students asking questions about the topics being discussed) has absolutely led to our young people voicing questions of their own. The group prompts placed within the video clips have led to great discussions and we look forward to the next series being uploaded! Many thanks!"

Some churches are using it for adult fellowship groups; the videos make great discussion starters. If you have 'own arrangement' Sunday services, the videos could be used instead of a sermon. Whotway series 1 was launched in April 2019 and series 2 in the Autumn of 2019. To watch and download visit whotway.com

Thank you so much for all the support that you give to Hilary and I, and to MET, especially financially and prayerfully. The help that we are able to offer to one another is a great blessing, especially within this challenging season of church life. As I conclude, the words of Proverbs 3:5-6 have come to mind, about trusting fully in the Lord, acknowledging Him, and His directing our paths. Wonderful words to put into practice day by day.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
Derek Balsdon



FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2020



10th October, 2020

WORD 2020 SPEAKER REV TIM WOOLLEY

THE KING'S CROSS CHURCH, DONCASTER

17th October, 2020

DIGGING FOR TREASURE: WORD AND SPIRIT TOGETHER

METHODIST CENTRAL HALL WESTMINSTER

30th October – 1st November, 2020

**REVIVE, THE MET PRAYER WEEKEND:
SPEAKER REV DEREK BALS DON**

WILLERSLEY CASTLE

FULL DETAILS AND BOOKING FORMS
AVAILABLE ON THE MET WEBSITE:
METHODISTEVANGELICALS.ORG.UK

DEVELOPMENT WORKER FUTURE APPOINTMENTS

Please pray for Derek Balsdon, our Development Worker, as he ministers around the Connexion. Please consider how your church or circuit could be encouraged by his ministry.

March

7th | Launceston Circuit, Local Preachers Study Day

8th | Launceston Central

Fri 13th - Sun 15th | Firefest @ Knutsford Methodist Church

April

14th - 19th | ECG Scarborough

May

15th - 16th | MET Executive @ Cliff College

22nd - 25th | Cliff College Festival

28th - 29th | Liverpool 200: Renewing the Wesleyan Vision

June

13th | St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Eastleigh, Study Day

14th | Eastleigh

25th - 2nd July | Methodist Conference: Telford