



Ordination as Deacon of Sr. Jane Dixon at Salem

On 16 April we were honoured to host
the Ordination as Deacon of Sr Jane Dixon

After much preparation, mainly trying to get as many seats in church as possible, and as much seating for the refreshments, we were almost ready by 2pm when the congregation of almost 200 started to arrive. There were people from every district of the Province, also Br. Kristian Hermann, a student minister from Germany, who had been staying with Br and Sr Dixon. The ministers went into the car park to process into church because there were so many of the congregation standing at the back of the church.

The service was superb, the singing wonderful from the large congregation, and from the Moravian Singers' rendition

of 'A Gaelic Blessing' by John Rutter.

The sermon by Br Hopcroft gave us the story of Sr Jane's introduction and journey through the Moravian Church, leading to her putting herself forward for the Ministry. He also encouraged others to consider doing the same.

Sr. Jane looked very calm considering the hectic build-up she had had, answered Bishop Kreusel's questions clearly, and looked radiant by the end of the service. The congregations at Royton and Salem feel blessed to have Sr Jane as our Minister, she is such a lovely person.

The church and hall looked lovely, with all the flower arrangements and the new cushions on the seats, provided by the

family of Sr Annie Campbell. The refreshments supplied by a previous member of the church were enjoyed by all, and certainly plentiful, many people taking some home. We really appreciated the help from the Royton ladies in serving the refreshments. Everyone enjoyed catching up with old friends from around the congregations, and it was probably only the weather that started people moving, as the fine morning had turned to snow by late afternoon. It was a day that the congregation will never forget.

Sr Jane was soon to use her ordained status as she had the baptism of another of our organist Joan Frost's great-grandchildren, Nile Jordan Holland, the next day.

Anne Broadbent



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A Word from the Editor

I learnt as this edition was going to lay-out that the current editorship of the Messenger is being discontinued and that it will become a Church House in-house publication after Synod. These are some immediate thoughts after three years, and a chance to thank all who have contributed, all who have encouraged me to keep editing, and all who enjoyed writing for and reading the content.

The work has been hard at times, to select, edit, balance the content, standardise text, add pictures, and of course proof-read, as well as hopefully acting with tact. It would not have been possible without the material sent by readers, mainly but not all of them Moravian, and by those who agreed to requests for articles. I have a huge debt of gratitude in view of the patient layout work of Dave Bull, and the printing and distribution of Graham Walkden, both of whom are excellent colleagues. Issues specially noted by readers include the articles on poverty and how we can respond; stewardship of our resources, including the charitable basis for our finances (the Bates Trust alone brings in over £410 000 each year and pensions are a major cost); and stewardship of our individual capabilities and the roles entrusted to us. The

contributions on science and Creation led to sincere and courteous debate in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 13. Those who recall these articles may relate especially to David Coleman's reflection on his wife's death, which appears in this issue.

We can become inward-looking, and I pray that this will not unduly affect our understanding of how we are called to respond to the Gospel. The fact that there have been some younger contributors has been a true blessing. It has been helpful when those who have travelled abroad have sent in their reflections; and there have been some insightful theological contributions.

The Messenger is the official journal of the Province but from the start has had a tradition of independence, which helps to balance our understanding of the church and its life.

One of the most encouraging matters for an editor is that readership of the Messenger increased during these last three years, even while the numbers of Moravians decreased. So, the contents must be enjoyed, in print, and of course online, by more people. So, thank you to all, as we continue to seek to understand more fully what the Gospel asks of us.

Rosemary Power

Brother Ebenezer Gangmei of the Moravian Church in New Delhi writes on his ordination by Bishop Joachim Kreusel in Moravian Church, Binnakandi, Assam. 12 March 2016



We thank you for praying and helping us acknowledge the importance of being a part of a human family, a part of family in Christ as a congregation, and part of the Moravian Church.

Our Ministry in Delhi officially started in last week of September in 2013 when I left with a word of prayer from the Assam

congregation. The British Mission Board accepted my application for the ministry of Moravian Church in 2010 and I thank all of the members thinking about me as I seek to continue to minister for His Glory. I had started preparing for Delhi in June 2013, while I was continuing to learn about the Moravian ministry under Pastor Nagendra Pradhan and other Congregation Members of Nepal. Brother Hopcroft suggested that I should think about going to New Delhi to start the Ministry of the Moravian Church. It was a big challenge especially for a person like me who had never been to a 'big' city like Delhi.

Born and brought up in remote village in Binnakandi I left my home to join the Moravian Institute in North India at the age of 10. After completing high school and my Bachelor's degree I was appointed to the teaching staff of the Institute. In 1998 I entered Theological College, preparing for the Ministry without knowing how and where I should minister. After spending a year in

Voting in the referendum

If you want impartial information from a Christian perspective, it is available from the joint Public Issues Team, to which the Moravian Church is a subscriber. It is called 'Think, Pray, Vote: Think, Pray, Vote: EU Referendum resources for churches.'

A series of briefing notes have been produced by the Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and United Reformed Church with the support of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office. It covers different topics and includes background information, issues for debate, and questions, and can be used for conversations with groups or for personal reflection.

It suggests:

The referendum question might be phrased as: 'To what extent does the European Union enhance or hinder our ability to love our neighbour and, in doing so, our ability to love God?'

See their website: <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/eu-referendum/>

Note from editor I found this an excellent resource, which sets out the issues very clearly and the different arguments for each.



Katmandu as a student pastor I was asked to visit Delhi. I am married to a beautiful lady, Luthanlu Kamei, who is from the same congregation at Binnakandi.

At present the Delhi fellowship numbers about 35, and on average about 15 attend Sunday Service. Since the fellowship started, about 100 people have passed through. We come together once a week for Bible Study and also for home fellowship. We make good use of birthdays and anniversaries as opportunities for worship. From the beginning, we had two families who had had to move from their home town, as they were transferred by officials. We expect that in Delhi we will often see



European Youth Workers Conference

at Herrnhut 11-15 April attended by Phill Battelle, Elisabeth Hollindrake and Joy Raynor

Monday 11 April saw myself, Joy Raynor and Phill Battelle meet at Manchester Airport for the start of a journey to Herrnhut. Herrnhut is the home of our beloved Moravian church and was the venue for the 2016 European Youth Leaders conference. We were to spend the next four days with Youth Leaders from Germany, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, South Africa and Albania. It was a real blessing to share The Watch Words in five languages every morning. One of the tasks of the conference is to share the highs and lows of Moravian Youth work in the European Province. We heard about the importance of camps in Albania; and the different demands in the Netherlands in the large congregation in Amsterdam and the smaller, more traditional congregations in Zeist and other smaller towns. Joy Raynor shared the success that some of our congregations are having with "Messy Church" and a good discussion followed.



There theme for our conference to focus on and take back to our congregations was 'Life Journeys' and how we can help young people come to terms when there

is a break in that journey, for example a bereavement, divorce, or migration. With migration in mind we had a very interesting visit to an Interfaith Charity in Dresden which works with the migrants helping them to learn German and fill in the legal forms. We also focused on our Faith journey. Some people grow away from the church but it is hoped that if the seeds are planted when young and are strong enough, then they will return at a later date, often when they have children of their own.

It was exciting to have a visit to Prague, where the Moravian Church began its journey. We went to Bethlehem Chapel where Jan Hus preached and also saw his statue in the main city square. Joy and I even climbed the Town Hall tower to a birds-eye view!

We packed so much into a few days and I was exhausted but also very grateful to have had this opportunity to explore Youth Work in our church.

Elisabeth Hollindrake

movement of this kind. As the congregation gather, our next spiritual challenge is to reach the unreached in Delhi.

We pray that God will use each one of us in the Delhi Congregation, in the work place and in the community we lived in. Please pray that God will anoint us with



the Holy Spirit to speak about Jesus boldly. Almost everyone in the congregation lives at a distance from each other, in the east, west, north and south of Delhi.

Preparing for the ordination was a blessed time to be with my parents and my parent Congregation. As I sat down to plan and refresh my preparation, I came to know how much more I need to learn in ministry. My time with Bishop Joachim Kreusel and Br Thsespal was exciting. I thank Bishop Kreusel for accepting the proposal of Br David Howarth to come to India for my Ordination. We thank the Lord for good health and good weather during the visit.

The ordination service was wonderful and

YOUTH ZONE



Ockbrook School Wins Derbyshire Young Enterprise Final

A team of 14 entrepreneurial Year 12 students at Ockbrook School is celebrating its success at winning the Derbyshire county finals of Young Enterprise, hosted at the Roundhouse in Derby last night

Ockbrook School's team, called Dinomite, beat off stiff competition from five schools from across Derbyshire to win both the Best Company Award and Award for Innovation. Dinomite's product range is based on fun, hand illustrated, dinosaur-themed merchandise, including tea-tex mugs, soft toys, stickers, gift tags and cards.

Dinomite now go forward to represent Derbyshire at the Young Enterprise East Midlands Regional Finals, which will be held at Loughborough University in June.

Young Enterprise is a national interschools competition that encourages, fosters and harnesses the entrepreneurial spirit of young people. Teams set up their own micro businesses and are judged on all aspects of a company's performance, from sales and marketing to finance.

Tom Brooksby
Headmaster



an opportunity for the Congregation member in Assam to witness the fruits of Church in their ministry to the people around us and in Delhi.

Ebenezer Gangmei
Pastor, Moravian Church, Delhi



The Congregation, in the 1880s.



Our Garden Party, held every year in June.



The beer festival.



Heritage Open Day



A view of the Settlement, in the 1840s.



Spotlight on Ockbrook

Ockbrook Moravian Settlement is now a quiet oasis, in a sleepy corner of South Derbyshire, but, its early years were clouded by local mistrust and suspicion.

In 1739, an Ockbrook farmer, Isaac Frearson, heard a Moravian preacher, Jacob Rogers, speaking in Nottingham. Impressed by his words, he invited Rogers to Ockbrook to meet a 'society' of local worshippers who had begun to hold gatherings on a hill, which formed part of his property, to the north of the village,

The Moravian Church was invited to come and take care of the group and Frearson sold them land, on the hill. The congregation was formally settled, on 24 September 1750, by Bishop Peter Boehler and on 03 July 1751, the foundation stone was laid for the building of the present church. Some local people were deeply unhappy, with the idea of the new place of worship, and under cover of darkness, pulled down several layers of bricks and caused considerable damage.

Nevertheless, the congregation continued to grow, The Brethren's House was built in 1757 and the Single Sister's House, two years later. After a couple of earlier, informal attempts, a girls' school was founded in 1799, followed by a boys' school in 1813.

There was also housing for families, a shop, and a lively inn and brew-house. Br

Richard Stratford, the landlord in the early nineteenth century, sold communion wine to the minister, but also received stern warnings about opening his premises, during service times! A regular visitor, Mrs Elizabeth Bates provided the money for an extension. Having previously financed another hostelry at Gracehill, Mrs Bates dryly observed: 'I am in danger of being celebrated, for inns. She did, however, also build a fine and spacious house, which she bequeathed to the congregation for use as a Manse.

In 1781 Br Jacob Planta, a Swedish surgeon and apothecary, living on the Settlement, successfully inoculated two girls and two single sisters following an outbreak of smallpox, and the congregation remained free of the disease, thereafter.

Ockbrook in the eighteenth century must have been a strange, divided village, with the original parish church, farms and cottages strung along the valley of the Ock Brook, and the new, red-brick settlement on the hill.

The local population remained uneasy. With Moravians joining the congregation from as far away as the West Indies, there were issues that echo the modern immigration debate. The villagers' biggest concern was an early equivalent of, 'newcomers coming in and claiming benefits'. The locals were apprehensive, that they might be obliged to foot the bill, for their unwanted new residents, from the parish coffers.

Eventually, there was a defrosting of relationships.

The Anglican and Moravian clergy formed friendships. The villagers began to realise that the congregation was hard-working and industrious, with skills in shoe-making, weaving, stocking-making, cabinet-making, embroidery and muslin work. They even produced needlework for royalty. An entry in the records laments a loss in trade following the death of the heir to the throne, Princess Charlotte, in 1817.

Far from being a burden on the village, they attracted business to it. A string of stocking-makers' cottages sprang up adjacent to the Settlement, in an extension to the village, sometimes known as 'The Town'.

The provincial offices of the English Moravian Church were based in Ockbrook, for 50 years, in the mid-nineteenth century, before relocating to London.

The Inn ceased the sale of alcohol, following a Provincial Council edict in 1847, with the building being remodelled to create a Lecture Hall, which has had many uses, over the years, including a Sunday School, a WW2 Home Guard Office, a library and a venue for meetings and theatrical performances. During the First World War, it became a hospital for convalescent servicemen. It must have been a restful interlude for the injured soldiers and sailors, although, on the evening of 31 January 1916, the peace

was shattered by a nearby Zeppelin raid, on Stanton Iron Works, which shook the buildings of the Settlement, and unnerved the residents, greatly. The war also impacted on the school. With so many masters joining the services, the boys relocated to Fulneck. Only in recent years has the Ockbrook establishment become fully co-educational.

Although modern development reaches to the edge of the Settlement, Ockbrook still retains an appearance of being two villages, but now there is now an excellent spirit of co-operation amongst the local churches, with regular united services. Although our congregation is of a reasonable size, we are aware that it is ageing, and we must attract younger people, to breathe fresh life into the church. To this end, we attempt to tailor our activities, to suit all-age groups, and are always looking into fresh ways of bringing new people into our beautiful church and settlement.

In recent months, we have staged a 'Beer, Jazz & Chilli Festival', presented concerts featuring our local 'Settlement Singers', and raised the musical content of many services. One result of an increasing involvement with the school has been a succession of wonderful musical solos, in church, by some very talented pupils. Our annual Garden Party and Christmas Fayre, plus our Heritage Open Days, bring in many visitors. We may have a long and fascinating history, but our eyes are fixed, just as firmly, on the future!

Jayne Brewster-Beard

Another lawyer writes

Love your neighbour in law

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

(Galatians 5:14 King James Version)

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? (Luke 10:25-29 KJV)

The question 'who is my neighbour?' was answered by another lawyer, in an assembly of lawyers, in the highest court in the United Kingdom. An early consumer-protection case, the court's decision is still of importance in both Britain and the Commonwealth. It continues to give an answer to the question, although less extensive than one might expect in Christian ethics.

The court's responded as follows:

The rule that you are to love your neighbour becomes in law, you must not injure your neighbour; and the lawyer's question, Who is my neighbour? receives a restricted reply. You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure your neighbour. Who, then, in law is my neighbour? The answer seems to be - persons who are so closely and directly affected by my act that I ought reasonably to have them in contemplation as being so affected when I am directing my mind to the acts or omissions which are called in question.

The highest court also quoted the decision of a lower court, and made it part of its own judgment:

a duty to take due care arises when the person or property of one was in such proximity to the person or property of another that, if due care was not taken, damage might be done by the one to the other. I think that this sufficiently states the truth if proximity be not confined to mere physical proximity, but be used, as I think it was intended, to extend to such close and direct relations that the act complained of directly affects a person whom the person alleged to be bound to take care would know would be directly affected by his careless act. (Donoghue vs. Stevenson [1932] Appeal Cases 562 at 580f.

Thus we have some practical guidance about which people and whose property we ought to have in mind when trying to fulfil Matthew 19:18, Matthew 22: 39, Mark 12:31, Mark 12:33, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14 and James 2:8, and Didache 1.2. The Didache was a church manual and moral guidebook, a sort of code of Christian law or ethics, which may predate the Gospel of Matthew. Its relevant verse teaches: 'love your neighbour as yourself, and do not do to another what you would not want done to you.'

The principle is ancient indeed, at least as old as the Law of Moses: 'Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.' (Leviticus 19:18 KJV)

David W T Brattston

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Reflections on Dying

Rev Zam Walker, who wrote for the *Messenger* (October 2013, 116) died in April. Her husband, Rev. David Coleman, who has also written for the *Messenger* (May 2014, 53, May 2015, 52-3), kept her friends informed by social media after Zam was no longer able to do so herself. In this way, she died in a very public way for our society. David wrote the following [which has been slightly abridged] during the vigil at her bedside with their teenage children.

My family is having an awful time, but also conscious of something wonderful. We are sad and drained and distraught, but not lost. We don't have a timetable, but we know we haven't got long, however long that might be. My wife, my colleague in ministry and partner in everything, the mother of my beautiful children, is gravely ill.

We will not boast; and we have more ahead of us yet. We will feel broken and alone. But not just that.

When Zam first had cancer (fourteen years ago), I realised we were, as I put it then, surfing on a wave of other people's prayer. For now, we're perhaps on something of a life-raft.

A year or two after that highly aggressive primary cancer (which Zam first noticed whilst she was still feeding Millie), I was involved in a controversy as a 'Sussex Vicar' who 'invites Dr Death to church'. I had been on the wrong end of the phone when an Australian euthanasia activist wanted to hire a room in church, and I had given permission. The press claimed a 'split in the church', but that particular church backed us to the hilt, the event took place, and many thanked us for what they had learned in a civilised discussion. That prompted me from my studies, and all the material the URC had then amassed, which, like most churches, came out officially, if marginally against 'assisted dying'. Definitely not suicide, which has been part of the unfortunate title of bills in the Scottish parliament struggling to do something about the clumsiness of our existing laws.

Not suicide, in despair.
Not murder, with malice.
Dying, in hope.

We then were called to serve in the Scottish Synod of the URC, where the Church and Society Committee, of which I was subsequently Convenor, had moved on from the denomination's General Assembly position to one of qualified support for more conscious assistance with inevitable dying, which, it is argued, is already quietly happening.

From the earliest times, the church has sought to prepare us for, and offer 'a good death', meaning one where pain is minimised or controlled, surrounded by the prayers and love of those we ourselves love and respect. For the Columban monks [of Iona], the prayers of community that helped their friends on the way, and were part of the easing of pain and distress for all involved. I marvel to think of the size of the medical legion who have been helping Zam, and of the cloud of living witnesses who are helping us now.

Good dying is assisted dying.

Much-maligned prayer is the remaining unambiguously legal assistance.

I mentioned 'the cloud of living witnesses who are helping us now.' If you are one of them, and have read this far, I ask you one further nobility: to lend your beautiful concern for us, for a moment also to a nameless, friendless one in God's hands tonight, just as the Columban monks, becoming aware not only of their power to help their friends, but also those who had none, shared that grace, abounding.

Perhaps inspired by the gift of a friend to Zam of some precious nard from Magdala, I have discovered that I still have a fragment of the sermon I was invited to deliver at the Brighton Chapel Royal on Maundy Thursday that year. I hope it is still of use.

As a pastor, I have received from the Reformed Tradition, what I pass on to you tonight.

It is an important principle, which, when first I heard it, was quite distressing. It comes via Richard Baxter, who in the seventeenth century, wrote 'The Reformed Pastor' about the jobs I am called on to do - including the now almost impossible one of the 'discipline of the congregation'. Then there is this: to prepare people for death. And by prepare, do we mean abandon you to it? I hope not. But live each day with the reckless joy as if it were your last.

Prepare for death.

It's the sort of thing you are not allowed to say, or even to think today. But a euthanasia campaigner hired a room. So in the last few days, I have been wrestling with a willfully uncomprehending collection of media folk, who are desperately threatened by the idea that a church might be a place of free speech, or that we might welcome people we disagree with.

So this has been something I have found the need to return to, and especially on Maundy Thursday.

Prepare for death. It is what Jesus did. And thanked those who assisted him.

Not to get morbid or depressed. In a way quite the opposite. We prepare for death in order to be set free to live. In order to realise that today is the day to live. Not to worry about tomorrow, which has worries enough of its own.

Reverend Robert William Dale, the greatest Congregationalist preacher of the nineteenth century, was utterly immersed in radical politics. Which in those days meant the Liberal Party. His Anglican neighbour one day said: 'Robert, when are you going to do something for the good of your soul?'

His answer was: 'I have given my soul to God to look after: he can make a much better job of that than I can.' Dale was prepared for death.

To say it again: it is part of the calling and the special care that can be offered within a Christian community, that by our involvement, together - especially together - we are prepared for death.

And can therefore live better. With a taste for life, but like the first Passover, eat it in haste, with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand.

In the Passion stories, we have a picture of Jesus preparing, being prepared and preparing others for the end of Jesus of Nazareth.

Because now is the time. Because now he knows who he is, and what he can do for his friends as well as, perhaps, what he can't do. In love, he offers them... not an escape, not an evasion, not a deception, but a preparation.

Conscious of the end ahead, Jesus both seizes the initiative, arranging and preparing the final Passover supper with his friends that continues in our Eucharist today.

He both seizes the initiative and permits, even encourages care for himself, from the woman who comes to anoint him with costly perfumes. In fellowship, in receiving as well as giving, he loved them to the end. And asks us to love one another in this generous and very human way.

So beware the theologies that teach that the only appropriate love for Christians is one which foregoes or denies any of the good things, or the encouragements that may come our way.

On Monday, a young reporter from the BBC pressed me, saying: 'Surely you are the church: you ought to be saying life is sacred.' 'Of course it is, I said, but so is death.

We don't do death well as a society.

If we don't talk about death, we strangle God's gift to us in those who know it is close.

So often it has been inspiring for me to see how those who know their time is short have found new spiritual courage to care for those they are about to leave behind.

We must make sure that this special calling is not stolen from those who find themselves in that position. We must make sure that we listen to the good news of the dying.

It is a true instance of Christ-likeness when the consciousness of death promotes spiritual liveliness. Getting round to it. Or getting round to enough, and leaving the rest to God. Receive this gift, or we end up picking up the pieces.

Throughout the long history of the church, we have been able to hold on to a vision of a good death, which, for instance, for St Francis, was a kindly healing sister.

The recent, somewhat shallow, popularity of Celtic Spirituality managed to overlook the fact that this was a major preoccupation of the Celtic church: that the end of life should be approached not alone, but supported, accompanied, with the solidarity and active intervention of the prayers of our friends, then to be greeted at the threshold of New Life by those we have loved who have gone ahead of us.

This week, the pastor of an evangelical church wrote to me this week, reminding me that it is for God and God alone to set the time of our life's ending. How, I wonder, can this be, when unless I fall off my bike in front of a bus in North Street, my death is likely to involve active intervention and decisions by many others. In fact, if we discount God's action in doctors, in our next of kin, then death becomes all the more lonely, all the more frightening a prospect. God, it seems, seeks partnership before obedience; involvement before passivity. Both in life and in death. And now, through the death he prepared us for, Jesus gives us the gift of his real and continuing presence.

So let us not be afraid, let us not be ashamed, to proclaim his death until he comes.

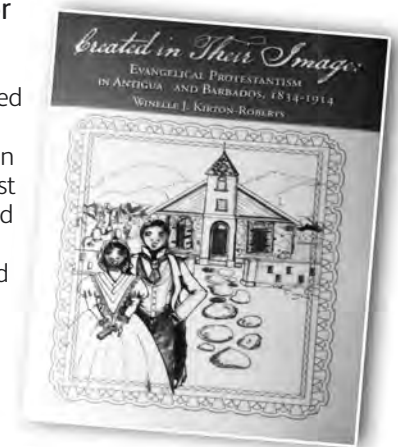
Created in Their Image

Evangelical Protestantism in Antigua and Barbados from 1834 - 1914.

By Revd Dr Winelle Kirton-Roberts.

ISBN 978-1-5049-0100-0

Published by Author House



This book is recommended for anyone who is interested in West Indian church history. It is a must for Church historians and it draws on information from various archives and church diaries of the Moravian Church, the Methodist Church and others. The book looks at the Moravian and Methodist missions that brought the Gospel to the enslaved Africans in the Caribbean. Comparisons are made between the Moravian approach and the Methodist approach. The disciplined aspect of Church life at that time is also presented. Chapter 3 focuses attention on the role of women and their impact on the Church. The book also considers black sexuality.

'While missionaries were concerned with instilling Christian values of truth-telling, godly entertainment, and peaceable living with neighbours, there was unquestionably an obsession with sexual purity.' (Page 164)

The book is written by Revd Dr Winnelle Kirton-Roberts from St Thomas, It is available on line. Alternatively, there are a few remaining hard copies for sale at a cost of £18.50 from Br Quildan. *Edwin Quildan (who is the author).*



Dear Sr Editor

I read with great interest and enjoyment the article by Br Craig Atwood 'Moravian Peace Witness' in the May edition of the Messenger. I feel however that the regiment who fought on the Confederate side in the US Civil War may well have been more motivated by the rights of individual states rather than those of the slave owners. Lincoln in his inaugural address of the 04 May 1861 stated that he would not interfere with the institution of slavery in the Southern States. Many people in England felt that justice lay with those who claimed the right to secede, as both sides accepted slavery. The defining book in the propaganda war - 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' - actually sold better in Great Britain than in the Northern States of the Union. It was not until September 1862 that Lincoln proclaimed that the slaves in the seceding states would be legally freed but not until the start of 1863. Only a month before this proclamation Lincoln had declared that his paramount object was to save the Union and not either to save or destroy slavery. It was a very complex issue and given the prevailing state of the Union armies at the time perhaps we should allow the Moravians of North Carolina a reappraisal of their motives for joining the fighting.

Br Henry Wilson - Ballinderry.

God help us!

Christian clichés and when not to use them

I was reading an online review by Jonathan Merritt of a book by an American pastor Adam Hamilton, called *Half Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn't Say*.

(See <http://jonathanmerritt.religionnews.com/2016/03/21/3-untrue-christian-cliches/#sthash.ftzIrebh.dpuf>)

It covers 'religious clichés you've probably used (but shouldn't)', and looks at sayings which are used without thinking because we have heard them said. But they serve not to help but diminish the suffering of others, and protect ourselves rather than supporting others. At much the same time I heard an interview on the BBC Women's Hour with a woman who had long-term depression and spoke of similar phrases she often heard. 'It's not as bad as all that!', 'Cheer up!', 'Pull yourself together', 'There are people worse off than you', and 'Think positive!' are hard on the soul for people experiencing the effects of depression.

Here are some to avoid, according to Hamilton and Merritt.

1. 'When God closes a door, God opens a window.' This can be found on trinkets and is a popular example of sentimental spirituality. When spoken to someone just handed a terminal diagnosis, or having lost their job, or dependent on foodbanks, it is destructive. Sometimes the door closes and the windows are nailed shut. The Scriptures make no such comment. The Letter of James speaks very differently: 'If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them: "I wish you well: keep yourself warm and eat plenty" without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? (James 2:15-16). If that is the case with alleviating physical hardship, it is even more important to avoid it when someone has had an emotional blow.

2. 'Everything happens for a reason.' Hamilton writes, 'We seek to console, and others seek to console us, by saying that God has a particular purpose for bringing about (or at least allowing) situations in which people suffer.' It is salt in an open wound to someone suffering. He points out that the reasoning for the cliché often goes back to Romans 8:28: 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.' But Paul does not say that everything happens for a reason. He says that God will take even the most reasonless suffering and use it to accomplish some kind of good in the lives of those who love God.

3. 'God won't give you more than you can handle.' Pastoral experience reveals many stories about people who had more than they could handle. The first four words by themselves

illustrate just how damaging this idea is. Hamilton says, 'When we say those words, we are implying that whatever lousy things are happening in your life, God gave them to you.'

The scriptural reasoning is often derived from 1 Corinthians 10:13: 'God is faithful: he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.' The context for this verse is temptation, not trials or tragedies. Hamilton says: 'It's not that God won't give you more than you can handle, but that God will help you handle all that you've been given.'

4. 'Love the sinner, hate the sin.' As Hamilton points out, Jesus never said this. The clearest use of this phrase derives from Mahatma Gandhi in his 1929 autobiography. But this actually says: 'Hate the sin and not the sinner is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practised, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world.' Hamilton suggests that Jesus knew that if he commanded his disciples to 'love the sinner,' they would begin looking at other people more as sinners than neighbours, thinking: "I will start looking for all the things that are wrong with you. And perhaps, without intending it, I will be thinking about our relationship like this: "You are a sinner, but I graciously choose to love you anyway."

Merritt, suggests: 'Instead of loving others because you perceive them to be sinners, perhaps you should focus on loving them despite the fact that you are. If we all learn do this, perhaps the most damaging clichés will be replaced by more gracious, life-giving - and biblical - words.'

5. A personal bugbear of mine is: 'You'll be stronger for this!' Again we don't know if this will be the case, and are saying it for our own benefit, not the hearer's. Like the others, it may be well-intended, but is a put-down, by which we distance ourselves from the pain of the other person when they may be seeking loving support.

A testing point is: would we want this said to ourselves when faced with a disastrous situation? If spoken at the wrong moment or to the wrong person, it may explain why many people feel cut off from church life.

6. And then there is of course the ubiquitous 'having to make hard decisions' which usually involves an enjoyment of power. Decisions that are hard on other people should never be enjoyed, and probably should not be made.

Of course there are times and places to challenge people, but you have to be the right person, and with the skills - and the love that focusses on the other person - to do it constructively.

Meanwhile, these are a few things we shouldn't say in church. But there are no doubt many more. Suggestions welcome!

Margaret Evans



◀ The Bethlehem Chapel, Prague, where Jan Hus was Rector.

Visit to Prague and Herrnhut

In April a party of 19 from four congregations in the Western District plus Leominster, visited Prague and Herrnhut.

Six am on 2nd April saw the bulk of the party assembled at Heathrow and already beginning to get to know each other (one or two were to join later, owing to other commitments). A good 90-minute flight saw us in our coach looking around at the new cityscape, complete with trams ancient and modern, and soon at our hotel close to the centre.

Our leaders Br Paul and Sr Patsy Holdsworth soon had us out into the city, visiting the Thein Church in Old Town Square, once frequented by the Utraquists, and the Jan Hus monument in the square, then on past the astronomical clock to the Bethlehem Chapel, of which Hus was Rector. Although no longer in regular use as a chapel, this has become a centre of pilgrimage and we were given an excellent talk by one of their guides, following which we sang the Hosanna Anthem and looked round the church and exhibition. Then down to the Charles Bridge, which although sturdy must have been near to collapse under the weight of tourists on this Bank Holiday weekend.

Sunday saw us leaving at 8.20 to take two metro trains and one long tram journey to the Brethren's (Moravian) congregation, which now meets in the chapel of a Sue Ryder home. The service in Czech was not easy to follow, and their practice of standing for prayers and sitting for hymns seemed strange. Patsy led an exchange of greetings and we had a slot to sing the Hosanna Anthem as our contribution. Despite the language difference the fellowship was strong, and we had a chance to chat with those that could manage English afterwards in the restaurant.

We then took an even longer tram ride embarking at Wenceslas Square, while enjoying some luscious fresh strawberries bought by one of our younger members.

A short metro journey then took us under the River Vitava to Malostranska for a tram ride up to the top of the Hradcany Castle complex. Here we found a magnificent view over the city, before wending our way down through the crowded castle. This is similar to the Russian concept of a Kremlin, a high fortified city-centre area containing the royal palace, civic buildings and cathedral. It really was too crowded to see things properly. Nobody got lost, although we were troubled from time to time

during the day by temporarily separated brethren.

On Monday we left at 8am for the two-hour coach journey north, passing the Skoda factory, through Liberec and over the border into Poland and again into Germany, to arrive at Herrnhut, so achieving a lifetime's ambition. There we were met by Sr Erdmute Frank, Pastor to Guests, who took us round the museum where we were shown the system of choosing the daily texts by lot, and the chapel, and on to the Vogtshof, the seat of the Unity Board where we were shown a collection of every textbook published which was not in the archives. From there we went to the archives, where their work was described and we could examine a fascinating display of maps and drawings of some of the English settlements and churches, and correspondence including letters by John Cennick and John Wesley. We also visited the humidity and temperature-controlled repository where we were shown the original earliest textbooks (Lösungen) in German and English.

After this we went to the chapel for a short time of worship, including another rendering of the Hosanna, before going to the Advent Star factory where we had an excellent lunch and watched the girls making the stars, and, yes they really are hand-made. We then went to the burial ground 'Gottesacker' and the Hutberg. From the top of the watchtower on the Hutberg there is a good aerial view of Herrnhut, and it is possible to see from that corner of Germany into the Czech Republic to the south and to Poland in the east. We were shown Zinzendorf's grave, also that of Christian Gregor (which of course prompted yet another rendering of his best-known work!).

Then a quick drive took us down to Berthelsdorf to visit Zinzendorf's 'Castle' (more like a French manoir) with its square range of stables and farm buildings. Then back to Prague, with our excellent driver Vladimir.

Tuesday was a free day and members split into smaller groups to do their own thing, many opting for boat trips on the river, in the glorious hot sunshine. Then back to the hotel for the coach to the airport and a good flight home, after a fantastic few days of true Moravian fellowship.

Many thanks to Paul and Patsy for their hard work, patience and unflappable good humour throughout, and to Sandy and Paul Mundy for organising the travel and accommodation, all of which was flawless, as was the weather.

Ted Wilson



Our party with the congregation in Prague

Shallowford Fellowship Weekend 01 April 2016

Going to Shallowford is always a pleasant experience. Lovely house and grounds, comfortable rooms, good food and good company. No exception this time!

On Friday evening Sr. Lorraine Shorten led us in "Godly Play". A way of telling familiar Bible stories using symbols and objects as well as words. With a bag of soft sand and small figures she told the familiar story of Abram and Sarai journeying, and their transformation into Abraham and Sarah and we were encouraged to question and comment and become part of the action.

On Saturday morning we were divided into two groups, Marys and Marthas, and baked bread (literally) and learn the basics of archery. There were some sticky fingers and oddly shaped focaccia loaves which we were able to take home and mine at least tasted delicious!

The archery was a new experience for most of us and to my amazement I hit a bull's eye. From the expression on his face the instructor was pretty startled too. Simon and Alison Hudson, the Shallowford wardens, were in charge of us.

Saturday afternoon was free to rest or read or walk and some of us went to the Queen's National Arboretum near Lichfield. It was opened 10 years ago and has grown, with many more both individual and collective memorials, for the Armed Services, Police, Fire and Ambulance services and voluntary organizations, like the RNLI, who are there for us when we are in trouble. A sad reflection on our world with its many conflicts but a wonderful place to wander in and pray for peace.

In the evening we played card and board games together and emerged as a fairly competitive group! Sr Elizabeth Hollindrake organised this and acted as referee when needed.

Sunday morning brought a new experience. A labyrinth has been created at the top of the adjoining field. We entered it with about four yards between each person and proceeded to walk slowly, prayerfully and thoughtfully onwards.

Labyrinths originated in Ancient Greece and had all sorts of uses and meanings but in modern times are symbolic of a journey of prayerful pilgrimage towards enlightenment for those not able to afford to travel to holy sites. The idea is to pray as you walk.

It was a bit muddy and the rubber ferrule came off my stick so that every time a took a step forward it sank in to the ground. I found myself thinking 'This is just like life'. We all need help at times and sometimes our paths take an unexpected twist or turn and we feel we are going off-track or even backwards. There were most definitely a few sermon hooks there for me.

When I reached the centre the idea was to reverse the way you had come but I was exhausted and accepted the offer of a lift back to the house in the dumper trailer!

We gathered in the Chapel for worship led by Sr Jackie Morten, closing with Cup of Covenant. I love this service with its meaning of 'journeying on in faith'.

After lunch we left this lovely place, and I was certainly rested and revitalized. Our thanks to all who made it possible, particularly Sr Elizabeth Hollindrake and Br Paul Greenhaugh. Paul has been involved in organising these weekends for some years and it was fitting that we celebrated an important birthday with him this year!

Libby Mitchell

Congregation News

Fairfield

We have had a busy start to the year. All the usual activities resumed after the Christmas break: we have Sunday School, uniformed groups and youth club, ladies' keep fit, ladies Thursday group, college working party and coffee morning.

The congregation is now leafleting a local street each week in a new attempt to reach the wider community. We ask them to get in touch if they have anything/anyone in particular that they would like us to include in our prayers, we then include those requests together with the whole street in our prayers the following Sunday.

We have for some considerable time been making weekly collections to go to a local foodbank at St Mary's church in Houghton Green. On 14 February friends from that church conducted our monthly Café church. They brought GAP- their puppet group and IMPACT- their drama group; we were treated to a service which was enjoyed immensely by all present. It was a privilege to see so many young people participating in this very inspired act of worship.



On the 13 March Café church was conducted by the Sunday School Elders (the senior department). It was a privilege to see our young people so willing to arrange and lead worship for us- a hopeful sign for our future continuance.

Like other congregations we are continually talking and praying of ways to bring new members to our doors. One attempt is a Messy church to be held on Saturday 19 March.

Margery Sutcliffe

Harold Road

Despite being without a minister for some time we are nevertheless managing quite well.

This is due in no small part to Sr. Elsie George who arranges for ministers, lay preachers and members of our congregation to lead our worship, and not infrequently takes our Sunday services herself at short notice.

The result has been refreshing and varied worship and fellowship. Particularly memorable was a recent service taken by Br. Christian Herrmann, a trainee minister from Germany. He reminded us of Br. Kreusel when he first arrived, with a similar sense of calmness and depth of thought.

Michael O'Sullivan.

Bath (Weston)

This year for the Christingle service Junior church acted out the nativity play and had it filmed. The film was shown on the evening and everyone enjoyed the viewing. The filming was mostly done inside the various rooms in church. The scenes with Mary on the donkey going to Bethlehem, the shepherds and their sheep, the wise men following the star, all took place at Br David and Sr Nicola Weavers' small-holding. Sr Beth Torkington the producer, Sr Shona Burchill and Sr Sally Biggs on the cameras, were all very professional. This was all put together by Arran Hodgson, with sound recordings from the children. The film did have some hilarious moments, with Br Paul as the donkey and the star.



Research Society organised an exhibition in our church. It was opened by television presenter Alex Lovell from Points West. The exhibition marked the 100th anniversary of the first soldiers arriving in convoy for



treatment. Bath War Hospital was built in Weston two years after War broke out and became one of the largest wartime hospitals: by 1918 it had 1,300 beds. Ladies from our church organised refreshments of the time, like bread pudding, rock cake, Victoria sponge cake and Bakewell tarts. Proceeds from the refreshments went into church funds, and were well over £200 as it was very well attended. The Queen's birthday party is next on the agenda as it is being held at our church on 12 June. Then we have the district rally following shortly.

Carole Young

Ballinderry

The MWA held a successful car boot sale and despite the weather being unfavourable raised over £300. Many people from the local community supported the day and despite the soggy conditions a good time was had by all.

The local schoolchildren started our Advent season with their annual concert. A multi-talented group from the school led the congregation in musical praise, and their skill on various musical instruments was greatly appreciated by members, parents and friends. It is on occasions like this when we become the village church, really reaching out to the wider community.

Lessons and carols were well attended and the church was full for our Christingle service. We gratefully noted that many were visiting for the first time to join with us in worship. It teaches us to remember that while small in numbers we really can reach out into the surrounding area. Unfortunately there was no performance from a Sunday school group but the speaker Br. Henry Wilson, using 'Toys Down the Ages' as his theme, spoke of the continuing love of God and the true meaning of Christmas. The toys included Star Wars Lego, lead soldiers, a battered soft toy from World War II, and the remains of a clay camel made around the time of the birth of Christ. Many of the visitors said they looked forward to returning in the future.

In order to expand our work for deprived and homeless people over the festive period we asked the local golf club to help and we thank them for the large quantity of clothing they donated. The local undertaker also kindly gave us a large cash donation which was used to purchase food for the local food bank.

Our friends in Germany, Portugal and Birmingham also helped with goods being used to support Syrian refugees in a cross-community project which covered both Lisburn and Belfast. This effort raised the profile of our church with other people involved, many of whom said they had never heard of us before!

The work of the food bank has been expanded as they are now helping Breakfast Clubs in the city. This is a multi-church endeavour and despite our small size our friends and members provide significant amounts. Despite the apparent economic recovery this work seems to be becoming even more necessary, reflecting the inequalities in our society.

Even though we currently have no minister in the church we have been able to continue and expand our witness thanks to the combined efforts of all the congregation. We must record our thanks to the lay preachers and ministers of other churches of the Irish District who have conducted services for us.

M. Marshall/H. Wilson

Congregational Register

Baptisms

15 Nov **Jude Frank Roper**
17 April **Nile Jordan Holland**

Salem
Salem

Marriages

04 May **Katie Groves-Bond and Aly Clark**

Deaths

08 March **Hazel McKee age 79**
10 March **Br Harold Sykes**
16 April **Annie Mills**
08 May **Betty Pickering, aged 90**

Gracehill
Salem
Royton
Gomersal

Dates to remember

5
June

Environment Sunday
www.arochoa.org.uk

Beginning of
the building of
Herrnhut 1722

17
June

20 26
June June

Refugee Week
www.refugeeweek.org.uk

26
June

International Day in
Support of Victims of
Torture

www.fiacat.org/-international-day-in-support-of-victims-of-torture

From Church House

14 - 15 June

PEC, BMB and Estates Property
meetings - Church House

25 June

Provincial Men's Fellowship -
Ockbrook

THE UNITY PRAYER WATCH 2016

British Province and South Asia

26th June - 9th July

Eastern District

00 01 hrs, 26 June to 24 00 hrs, 27 June
48 hrs

Irish District

00 01 hrs, 28 June to 24 00 hrs, 29 June
48 hrs

Lancashire District

00 01 hrs, 30 June to 24 00 hrs, 01 July
48 hrs

Midland District

00 01 hrs, 02 July to 24 00 hrs, 03 July
48 hrs

Western District

00 01 hrs, 04 July to 24 00 hrs, 05 July
48 hrs

Yorkshire District

00 01 hrs, 06 July to 24 00 hrs, 08 July
72 hrs

South Asia

00 01 hrs, 08 July to 24 00 hrs, 09 July
24 hrs

Prayer Notes

Richard Ingham

Sunday 5th [Trinity 2] Luke 7:11 -17

Prince of Life, who had compassion on the widow of Nain, urging her not to weep; comfort those who mourn the loss of loved ones. By your apostle you have forbidden us to grieve as people without hope, for all who have died in your keeping. Watch with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. We are weakness, but you are our strength. Give us faith to stand calm and undismayed throughout the upheavals of the world, knowing that your kingdom shall come and your will shall be done; to the eternal glory of your name. Bring closer the day when you will wipe away all tears from our eyes and grant that we might know that all things work together for good to those who love you. Amen

Sunday 12th [Trinity 3] Luke 7:36 -8:3

Teacher, give us a humble spirit, that we may never presume upon your mercy, but always live as those who have been forgiven much. Make us tender and compassionate toward those who are overtaken by temptation, considering ourselves, how we have fallen in times past and may yet fall again. Teach us to be merciful, as you are merciful. To forgive others, as you have forgiven us. To know that the standard we use in judging is the standard by which we shall be judged. Give us such humble and thankful hearts that we might be quick to tell you our sins, and all people your mercies. Make us tender and compassionate towards others and reflect in our lives your enduring love which alone can triumph over all the powers of evil. Amen

Sunday 19th [Trinity 4] Luke 8:26 - 39

Son of the Most High God, in whose presence the armies of hell are put to flight: deliver your servants from the power of Satan. Cast out from us every evil and unclean spirit that lurks within the heart, that we might live on earth as those whose true home is in heaven. Deliver us from all evil, that no sin may reign in us, but with free spirits serve you, our only Lord. Open wide the door of our hearts, that we may receive you with all our powers of adoration and love. We offer and present to you ourselves, all that we have and are: our thoughts and desires, our words and deeds, to be a living and continual sacrifice. No longer our own; we would glorify you in our bodies and spirits, which are yours. Knowing its saving power help us boldly to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Amen

Sunday 26th [Trinity 5] Luke 9:51-62

Son of Man, who entered our mortal life to be one with us that we might become the sons and daughters of God. As you set your face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem: deliver us from the faithless mind that shrinks from the harder paths of duty. As you have called us to your service; make us worthy of our calling. Teach us what you would have us do, and make us faithful in doing it. Give us strength to go out with good courage, knowing only that your hand is leading us, and your love supporting us; to the glory of your name, who by triumphing over the power of darkness, prepared our place in the New Jerusalem. Amen

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