From the Sanctuary

I am often dismissive of the book of Leviticus, because the details of it seem to have little relevance for us today as Christians. It is a book in the Bible which features little in the lectionary readings, so we don’t have many sermons that are based on that book in our Sunday services. It contains mainly a series of regulations for worship and religious ceremonies from ancient Israel, and it regulates ways of living and worshipping God so that people could maintain their relationship with God. Perhaps the most famous words to come from Leviticus are ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself’ - words that are often attributed to Jesus, and yet by uttering them, Jesus was merely quoting the early scriptures that evolved out of the formation of the establishment of Israel as a coherent community, based on a belief of what was God’s will - and therefore God’s law.

For those Christians who believe that the Bible should be taken literally, there are many challenges in living out the details in Leviticus, because if taken literally, ordinances should be rather bloody affairs with the killing of many animals involved. According to Leviticus, sin offerings are to be made every time we sin, and there is much about animal sacrifice and the killing of many animals involved. Therefore, it is often a difficulty that the details of Leviticus seem to have little relevance spiritually for ‘now’, if it is taken literally. But, such an understanding of the content of Leviticus, is often so easily cast aside. So - how can we draw ‘wisdom’ from Leviticus?

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If you are a youth member, a youth leader, or simply interested in what is going on in youth work globally within the Moravian Church you encourage you to get online and take a look and what you could offer. Maybe you’re not that confident online or unsure where to go? Why not speak to one of your youth members and discover this together or even as a church!

Like youth work, our online presence is constantly growing and developing. We are here to serve and so want to know what you think or if you need any more information. Of course if you have something you wish to share we would love to hear about it - maybe it’s an event that you ran? Perhaps a successful fundraiser? That trip your youth group took or simply what you learnt at Sunday School this past week? Get online and let us and the rest of the world hear your good news!

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Br Phill Battelle
UYC Committee

The New Unity Youth’s Website

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The Bible is the most amazing nature book - its pages are full of illustrations and parables drawn from nature and it includes accounts of birds and their activity. Sometimes different translations give different names for the birds. One family holiday on Lundy we were privileged to see a very unexpected close up and the Bible reading for the following Sunday included Joel 1:7; ‘Even in the heavens it knows its times; and the terrified, swallow, and crane observe the time of their coming; but my people do not know the ordinance of the Lord.’ This is the common translation but in the version I was using at the time (Revised English Bible) winnyc was used instead of crane. It sent shivers down my spine and an awareness of the riches of God’s creation and of Holy Scriptures.

So, for February perhaps we can challenge our very human centred reading of Scripture and instead, search for all of the references to the rest of the created order. That might help us see the world as God sees it and value it as his good creation. Rather than just ‘giving nature a home’ we might be able to share our common home with nature.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team
Obituary: Br Kabui (1942-2020)

Br Kabui’s more familiar name was Kabu. Official records state that he was born in October 1942. His grandparents migrated from Bengal towards the end of the Second World War to escape from ethnic strife and to improve their economic prospects. The family later settled in what is now called Nagaland, after the 1963-1972 division of the state of Assam into five smaller states. The family, along with a number of other Rongmei Naga tribal families, founded a Rongmei Congregation in Binnakandi Ghat, Cachar District, on the banks of the Barak River, and watched over from subsistence on jungle products to rice farming. In the 1960s Br Kabui joined the Asam agitation and had to go underground as a revolutionary. Whilst underground, Br Kabui travelled far and wide across Assam, came across Christians, eventually committed himself to Christ and gave up his revolutionary ways.

However, he was persecuted by his own people, including his father and relatives, for giving up his traditional faith. Br Kabu had to go underground again, and this time he found it more difficult to escape from his enemies, but he found strength in Jesus Christ, his Saviour and Lord whom he had met via his newly married wife secretly brought him his meals. During the months of hiding, Br Kabui witnessed to his former school and tribal families, founded a Rongmei Congregation in Binnakandi Ghat, Cachar District, on the banks of the Barak River, and watched over from subsistence on jungle products to rice farming. In the 1960s Br Kabui joined the Asam agitation and had to go underground as a revolutionary. Whilst underground, Br Kabui travelled far and wide across Assam, came across Christians, eventually committed himself to Christ and gave up his revolutionary ways.

During the early 1960s Br Kabu not only provided spiritual direction from the Rongmei Moravian Congregation, Br Kabu started a fishery, which did not survive due to floods. He also undertook a variety of jobs, on which he worked very hard and for many years, but which has not produced much income. However, training is still in the hands of the congregation members. His more enduring project has been the Moravian English School in Binnakandi, financed largely by Moravian Institute in Rajpur. Those Rongmei people who have continued their education and training in Moravian Institute, Rajpur, have been equipped for life in the liberalised, globalised economy of the 21st century.

The most important legacy that Br Kabui leaves behind is the transformed lives of his people, in the congregations in Assam in Binnakandi, Haflong and Laitingkhal, and the many lives he has touched outside the Moravian Church. His spiritual leadership was recognised during the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Moravian Institute in Rajpur in October 1988, when the world-wide Church especially welcomed Br Kabui into the Moravian Church’s ministry, and recognised Binnakandi and outstations as Moravian entities in India. In 1997 Br Kabui was consecrated pastor, and was one of the important leaders in the church. He was a good speaker, and had a good sense of humour. Many people turn to him for advice, for his counsel was based on long years of varied experience and earthly good sense.

In his later years, Br Kabui was gratified to see his pupils, relatives and congregation members build on the foundations he had laid - in church, school and the wider community, some of whom had played leadership in the church. His generous heart, hand and house were always open to whoever needed help. Many people came to him for advice, for his counsel was based on long years of varied experience and earthly good sense.

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Being Human

Before examining the United Reformed Church (URC) booklet, One Plus One, any further in detail, in our thinking about human relationships, sexuality and marriage, we will begin by asking what it means to be a human being. The Bible tells us we are made in the image and likeness of God, and this has implications for how we find fulfilment in our lives. Let’s look at some characteristics of God’s nature and ask what is implied for us in God’s image and likeness. God is love. God is Trinity. God is just. God is creative, and God is one.

God is love, so it follows that in giving and receiving love that we grow to become more fully ourselves. God is just, so our relationships are rooted in being part of a community with our love focused not on ourselves, nor our possessions, but on God and on other people. God is just, so our love must always reach respect for the other, just as it does for God. Being just means sharing what we have so that no one goes without, especially keeping an eye out for the needs of the most vulnerable. God is creative, so our relationships should spur one another to dare and to achieve far more than we ever thought we could on our own, and to go on learning, growing and developing. This creativity will be expressed in our families and our homes, in our work and in other social activities. God’s one, so unity is the highest possible of human relationships. This doesn’t mean all trying to be exactly the same, but recognising that difference and diversity are the constituents of unity.

Understandings of marriage and relationships have changed over time. There was a time when men had all the power and a woman’s job was to do what was told by her man, which was mainly cooking, cleaning and producing sons to inherit their power. Because wives were considered to be a man’s property, it was not considered unusual means of control to beat them. We will include an overview of the historical perspective in a future article.

For a long time, same-sex orientation was understood to be either a lifestyle choice which was sinful and could be repented of, or else a sickness which could be cured. Heterosexuals who considered themselves to be normal looked for social and psychological reasons to explain how someone had been ‘turned’ homosexual. Gradually over the last century, especially since 1967 when homosexuality was criminalised, there has been an increasing understanding or belief that sexual identity is given, an intrinsic part of our fundamental make-up and cannot necessarily be changed.

Before we turn to the issues in the URC document, One Plus One, a little background might be helpful. Serious conversations within the URC began in the early 1990s, facilitated by the church’s Church and Society department. There were documents published both for and against the recognition of the value and dignity of same-sex relationships within the church. The General Assembly of 1996 called for formal conversations and set up working groups to produce reports. The outcome of this process of exploration was almost a split in the church because strong and emotively held views were brought to the surface and many people on both sides of the argument felt vulnerable and threatened. The upshot was that the 2000 Assembly declared a moratorium of seven years in which it agreed that no policy decisions would be made, but people with strong views were urged to listen respectfully to those with whom they disagreed. In 2007, General Assembly recognised that there was a great diversity of perspectives, of interpretation of scripture and reflection on personal experience, and that the church might never come to a consensus viewpoint. That Assembly adopted what it called a Commitment on Human Sexuality which was basically a commitment to keep together, to keep orientated on God and to keep talking to each other. It recognised that the church would continue with a diversity of viewpoints, ways of interpreting the scriptures and of doctrinal, missional and ethical priorities, and that prayerfulness, respect and generosity were going to be the main ingredients for continuing conversations.

The first part of the One Plus One booklet refers extensively to this Commitment and concludes with three points. Firstly, in order to maintain its integrity, the church must look honestly at itself and face up to the extent of its internal diversity. Secondly the church’s life is built on our relationships in Christ and with one another. It is vital to meet one another within the life of the fellowship with compassion and commitment to explore and dialogue together. Thirdly the unity of the church is a gospel priority and the divine gift, to be responded to in human terms through the struggle of living together.

The second part of the booklet gives seven personal reflections on viewpoints which illustrate the importance of this Commitment.
Slavery and the Transatlantic Trading of Enslaved Africans

Introduction

In August 2018, the University Road Moravian Church in Belfast held a service to commemorate Emancipation. As far as can be verified, this was the first time that a service of the kind was being held in the UK. A similar service was held again this year. Currently, the International Caribbean Support Organisation of Northern Ireland is making the 400th year from the commencement of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This was a Dutch Innovation, in which Britain came to be leader. Our aim is to raise awareness of the connections and legacies of Transatlantic Slave Trade to Northern Ireland.

I am not aware of any other initiative within the Moravian Church that seeks to build with or address slavery and the slave trade, nor to come to terms with the church’s own involvement in slavery. We still live in the nostalgia of having brought the gospel to the people of African descent in the Caribbean. On the question of the keeping people as slaves there is silence, but on the question of working with the enslaved there is frequent talk. The myth that the missionaries sold themselves into slavery is a nice story but the evidence for this is very slim. The re-telling of the unbalanced good story only results a loss of opportunity to have a serious reflection and to learn from the errors of that injustice. This is how we see the state level.

In 2015 the United Nations passed a resolution proclaiming, ‘the International Decade for People of African Descent, commencing on 1 January 2015 and ending on 31 December 2024’, with the theme of ‘Promoting the understanding of the African descent community, its culture and development’. Later that same year in the UK parliament, Baroness Young of Hornsey asked about the plans of the government to deal with the issue of people of African descent. The response by Baroness Anelay of St Johns was that, ‘The British Government has no specific policies to mark the UN International Decade for People of African Descent’. The response then went on to list things, to which the government was committed, that made it unnecessary to make any specific plans to observe the decade. This response of the British government is a missed opportunity to address a perceived bias against people of African descent, and is probably typical of the ways in which the UK has over the years dealt with people of African descent: unjust, patronising and disrespectful. The way with which the government treated the people of African descent in the UK have been brushed aside, minimised or overlooked is mind-boggling. This paper will look at instances to justify this assertion. The paper will focus on issues related to abolition and compensation as the corner stones on which the UK attitude of ‘useful only in servitude’ has been constructed.

Abolition and the Job Done - Let’s Move on?

The act to make trading of enslaved Africans illegal was passed in 1807. It should of course be remembered that this was not by consensus and there was significant opposition to it. It might have taken 20 years from the time it was first raised. The tide of public opinion against slavery itself took much longer and abolition efforts and strategies lasted nearly a century. There were two important considerations for the success of the movement for abolition. The first was 22 June 1772 when the Court of Appeal judge, Lord Mansfield ruled that English law forbade the forced relocation of Africans from England to the colonies. Force relocation, often for resale, was the practice used by English planters when relationship with the people they held as slaves broke down. The case on which Mansfield ruled was one in which an enslaved man, James Somerset, objected to being forcibly returned to Jamaica. The judge ruled that under English Law it could not be allowed, whatever the inconvenience might be. The decision had far reaching consequences and implications, not least in England where enslaved people took upon themselves to walk away from enslavement. This and tradition’s insistence that if it were not allowed in Britain then it, slavery, should be outlawed throughout the whole British realm.

The second significant moment was the case related to the Zong Slave ship. The owners of the Bristol registered Zong, were seeking compensation for Africans they claimed that they lost at sea, in an effort to preserve the fate of the whole ship. In fact, the ship captain and crew had callously thrown 133 enslaved Africans overboard, in the belief that they would save water supply, which they felt would have run out and risked the lives of everyone. The idea was that if the enslaved, which was for them property, died on board the owners would have to bear the loss. However, if they did drowning, then the loss would be covered by the insurers. The Chief Justice, the same John Lawfield who made landmark decisions during a decade before, heard the case in 1783 ruled against the shipowners. The heartless, depravity of the ship owners was exposed in court as they tried to make the case for compensation. They hung their case on the assertion that the Africans they murdered constituted loss property. The moral outrage arising from the case helped to solidify the cause for abolition, which was at first only concerned with the dangers of the trip, not the fact of enslavement. This attitude led one prominent Belfast businessman, Waddell Cunningham, in 1786 to propose developing a slave shipping business out of Belfast, believing that he could offer a more humane trade. This proposition was made to sympathetic ears who with whom Cunningham sat, with others of abolitionist bent, in the board room of the Belfast Charitable Society. Happily, for Belfast, his proposal didn’t gain sufficient support and was eventually dropped. The abolitionist movement gathered momentum and the 1807 Act to make the trading of enslaved Africans illegal was passed. Twenty-six years later the Act to outlaw the enslavement of Africans was passed.

The achievement of the abolitionists is the story that people in the UK know and, by and large, love to tell. However, consistently presenting only the morally high ground of the abolitionists, served to conceal the other issues associated with abolition, namely the result of the enslaved and the inefficiency and failures of forced labour, which caused the sugar economy to succumb to the pressures of the industrial revolution. Already in 1807 the economic argument was made that favoured ending the system of forced labour. The PM at the time, William Wyndham Grenville, denounced economic objections to the proposal to end slave trading by declaring that the West Indies planters already produced more than they could sell, and continuation would result in their ruin. The story, which the British do not seem to know or choose not to tell, is that in addition to the immorality of forced labour, by the second half of the 18th century downturn in the West Indies sugar industry was already evident. According to Eric Williams, former PM of Trinidad and Tobago, colonial forced labour and the sugar economy was a vicious, inefficient and unprofitable economic system that was being supported by business interests that could not see that the tide was turning. The attack on the vicious West Indian economic system by astute capitalist happened in three phases:

(a) first was the attack on the trade in enslaved Africans, which was outlawed in 1807
(b) second was the attack on the inefficient and inhumane system of forced labour. In this the Africans themselves played a critical role and abolition came in 1833.
(c) third was the abolition of sugar preferences in 1846.

1846 was the same year the Corn Laws that levied high taxes on locally grown corn were abolished. The Anti-Corn Law League was predicated on the same principle to the anti-slavery movement. The abolitionist gave the language in the form of a moral argument that the masses could understand. They were heard more so because the capitalist interests had shifted from the colonial side to the emerging industrial side. The capitalist argument that West Indian sugar industry monopoly was inefficient and unprofitable was not easily heard. On the opposing side of that argument were oligarch imperial interest unable to see the inevitable. However, as we shall see in the next part, those who opposed abolition were handsonly compensated, despite their stubbornness and blindness.

As far as Britain was concerned, then, once slavery itself was abolished the job was done. There was no need to tell another story and the only story of concern was the economic loss of the plantation owners and it is to this we must now turn our attention in considering British response.

How the UK Deals with its Past:

First part of a paper presented at the Moravian Church Conference in the Netherlands, October 31- Nov 2, 2019 by Br Livingstone Thompson, PhD (Provincial Board and Minister of Belfast University Road and Kilwarlin Congregations)

2. Olusoga, 205.
4. A sort of poetic justice, which makes the point about UK mercantile interest upholding West Indian sugar interest was that Plantation House, now the Court of Appeal, was built by one of a merchant sons of merchant Wyndham Grenville, who was acquired by British Land Company, which traces its origins to an offshoot of the National Freedland Society (later Abbey National) formed in 1698 with the two chief architects of the freedmen movement Richard Coates and John Bright who formed the Anti-Corn Law League. That league predicated on the same principle of the anti-slavery movement evidence supported the emerging English industries that could only succeed if the sugar industry monopoly ended. Quaker interest in the rise of English industrialism and Quaker support of anti-slavery movement were two sides of the same coin.
5. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, 138.
My story was not unlike many others. I remember as a young teenager I did have thoughts about becoming a minister and these thoughts although persistent were kept to myself and pushed aside for a time. I knew I wanted to become a member of the Fulneck congregation, but my parents said ‘no’. However, a year later when I was sixteen, I was very glad to be allowed to join the confirmation class and become a congregation member.

As the years passed my parents felt it would be a good thing for me to leave Fulneck School and go to another school’s sixth form. Interviews and inspection visits were arranged and having taken place I knew I was going to speak out against this decision that was being taken. I begged to be allowed to stay on at Fulneck and remember being so relieved when this was agreed. During this time my parents felt something should be done to get me started on a career path and so I attended some extra-mural law lectures

There was a time we also had charge of Christiana (Zam), Bohemia and Moravia when Br Haydn Todd was on furlough. Our daughter, Susan, was born while we were at Mupah, and we were called to move to Carmel with Kilmanock and New Works in Westmorland in 1963. During these years I was serving as Provincial Youth Secretary and taught one day a week at Bethlem Teacher Training College. During our time at Carmel the Jamaica Synod recognised our new congregation of Beesheba and our son Ian was born. We also looked after the congregations of Springfield and New Fulneck when Br Pat Craig was on furlough. They were full and exciting years in that Province.

We returned to work in the British Province in 1970 and had to learn about motorways and the Beatles! We spent six years at Wheeler Street living in Fairfield Square and I supplemented the church stipend by working (part-time) as a social worker in a girls’ remand home before being sent to Westwood in Oldham, to which we added Salem. From 1972 I also served as Provincial Youth Secretary for ten years running the summer schools etc. Then we were called to Fulneck in 1985 which involved some work as a Governor of my old School and also some more teaching. After five years Synod elected me to serve ‘part-time’ on the Provincial Board in conjunction with the work of ministry at Fulneck. It was difficult attempting to do the congregation work and the work of the PEC. In 1996 I was elected to the Board ‘full-time’ with a small London congregation (Harold Road) and served as Chairman of the Provincial Board and Chairman of the British Mission Board with a specific responsibility for India. It has been a great privilege to work together with brothers and sisters of other denominations throughout all the years but particularly in Yorkshire at the West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council and when on the board at national level.

And in case anybody thinks there was no time for fun let me assure you I enjoyed the work of ministry and made time to enjoy my family and friends. My love of gardening and the results are well known, and I always enjoy relaxing to some classical music. Singing with the Moravian Singers has brought much pleasure as has attempting to make music by playing the piano.

We retired to Leeds in 2000 and had two years of retirement before the shock of being elected as a bishop of the Unitas Fratrum. Once more I was regarded as a serving minister although in a somewhat more advisory, senior role. I feel I have been greatly blessed by the rich fellowship and support shared with my fellow bishops in the British and the Continental Provinces and those of the Unity around the world.

It has been a truly wonderful life and I am most grateful to my wife, Beth and our family and all the friends and colleagues who have supported and encouraged me along the way. So I know I can say God’s call was a genuine call and I am truly thankful that I acted upon it. I have so much for which to be thankful.

And just for the record, remembering what my father said we would never have, as it happened the church gave us a Saddle Allowance of £90 to make sure we could ride around on a horse or mule when living in Jamaica for ten years, but we were glad that we could afford to have a car. As for travelling abroad the church has sent me to places as far apart as Alaska and Tanzania, to Leh in the Himalayas and Ruppur and Binnakandi (Assam) of India and Kathmandu in Nepal ten times as well as Jamaica, Trinidad, Curacao and St Thomas etc. and to every European country including the Czech Republic many times.

A Genuine Call

Ellen Dalgaard Jensen

COME AND TAKE ME HOME MUM is a fascinating read. It goes straight to the heart. Are these stories true? Yes they are. Is it true that the poorest and most overlooked children can suddenly blossom into the happiest, healthiest and most talented of children? Can 7-year-old children teach adults how to read and write? Is it true that ants eat hens and young rabbits? It is actually. But remember, we’re in Africa, more specifically in Tanzania.

The book is ideal for reading aloud to young children and for children who can read themselves. The content of the book is unique. There is nothing like it elsewhere. All the children in the book, or their parents, suffer from leprosy. Look at the beautiful photos. They tell their own story. All the photos were taken by the narrator - Auntie E. The book is full of humour and drama.

Happy reading

Former sound technician, webdesigner and consultant at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation

René Eriksen

The book is ideal for reading loud and the many photographs would be a good outset for classroom discussion. It could also be used in teaching English as a second language to nonnative speakers of all ages.

The book can be obtained in bookstores, the Moravian Mission in Denmark. Phone 45 35294820, E-mail: bdm@bdm.dk and at the publisher house, kahrius.dk

44 pages

215 x 280 mm

Price: 125 kr.

Ellen Dalgaard Jensen born 1936 in Skjern, Denmark. Chose to live a life among the poor and underprivileged. Her mission in life is to raise awareness about the overlooked and neglected. She is a qualified nurse and midwife, and has attended courses in pastoral care, clinical pastoral training, social psychology and anthropology at Moravian College and at the Moravian Seminary in the US.

Kahrius

Them-Centret 10 · DK 8653 Them · Tlf. 81 77 47 47 · forlaget@kahrius.dk · www.kahrius.dk
Cliftonville

The month began with a family games night in the Church hall, next we were delighted to have Santa Cecilia and his elves offer to power wash the church steps in preparation for Christmas. An attractive new sign was made by John Cooper that announced the Cliftonville happenings over Christmas.

On 15th there was a service of Lessons and Carols in the morning and a Blue Christmas service was held in the evening; both were particularly appreciated by those who had lost members of their family at this time of year, or any for whom Christmas was a less joyful occasion because of ill health or loneliness. The church was lit by candles at the front and later lanterns were added by those of us who wanted to remember someone. We thank Br Jared Stephens for his meditations and for introducing this into our winter services.

The making of the Christingles was another happy occasion with plenty of skilled helpers to get the job completed in record time. This was followed by the making of cookies and for putting together and decorating Gingerbread Houses. The results were most attractive; altogether a truly fun evening.

We from Bath (Weston) wish you all a VERY HAPPY and HEALTHY 2020 (I like saying 2020).

Sr Carole Young

Twinning Toilets at Church House

The Moravian Women’s Association (MWA) have twinned four of the toilets at Moravian Church House and are supporting toilet projects in Malawi, Zambia, DRC and Uganda. This is part of the Toilet Twinning Scheme (www.toilletwinning.org) which funds the work of international relief and development agency Tearfund. The charity helps tackle the global water and sanitation crisis with help from supporters who can uniquely get involved by twinning their toilet with a country in need of better sanitation. Donations are used to provide clean water, basic sanitation, and hygiene education in these countries.

Patsy had given him: a shirt, socks and also a sign which said ‘Do not disturb GENIUS AT WORK’, which he proudly lodged on the table (see photograph). A lovely service followed. On the 5th Sunday in December we were privileged to have Br Paul and Sr Patsy at our service. Sr Patsy led the service and Br Paul played the piano. It seemed that we were the only church having a service on this particular morning, as we saw a few new faces appear in the congregation who were made very welcome.

All regular activities are now starting back after the Christmas break; a Christmas Coconut off only had one Friday off and is very well attended from 9am until 3pm. Lunch-fellowships on a Wednesday has been going for many years and is enjoyed by all who attend (usually about 60 people).

The Boys Brigade are still very involved in the Weston community, the band playing for many events. They have also had some new recruits in the Anchor division which is very encouraging for the leaders.

Despite these incidents we still manage to hold our monthly Coffee Mornings, which are well attended. We welcomed Sr Jane Dixon to Sisters’ Sunday, Br David Howarth to Harvest and Br Bob Kacprow to our Anniversary and Reunion Service. We have decided to discontinue the Reunion until our 200th Anniversary in 2024 as the numbers have fallen to only 4 this year. The Christmas services were well attended, and we even had some children at the Christingle service. We also had a good turnout to the Sustainability Review meeting as it was held after church over coffee.

Sr Anne Broadbent

Twinning Toilets at Church House

We were not much less than other years. If we thought the garden party was wet, our barbecue held at Crawfordsmoor Country Park for the Irish District was even wetter. Sr Mondy and Br Mark Kernohan bravely cooked burgers as we stood around in wellington boots under umbrellas. Sr Roberta Hoey and Sr Edna Cooper did all our cooking and waiting despite the weather. We held a country and gospel concert in Hillsborough Village Centre in October. This was a success and brought in some much-needed income. The year ended with a lovely Christingle Service. The church was full with family and friends all giving encouragement to the children.

The first phase of the reclamation of Zula’s Hollow is now finished. The ground has been cleared of undergrowth and trees cut back, revealing the pond and site of the old summer house. The second phase, for which we hope to receive funding would see the fountain in the pond in working order. Signs have been erected showing points of interest. The management of Hillsborough Castle have shown an interest and may include us in their literature and have kindly offered us any advice we might need in advertising our grounds.

Sr Carole Young

Bath (Weston)

At this present time our church is under construction, having the church tower waterproofed, new toilets, new storage area and another kitchen. This is so that the church can be hired at the same time as the hall, to bring in more revenue. The hall is being used for all our services at this time.

In November our minister Br Paul Holdsworth organised another Charity Open Mic evening with the help of Catherine, a mother of a Boys Brigade boy. This was well attended and just over £700 was raised for Great Ormond Street Hospital, another one is in the pipeline sometime in the Spring.

Instead of Carol’s by lantern light - it worked very well and enjoyed by all. This was followed by refreshments of mulled wine and homemade mince pies (homemade are the best!!!)

Christingle service was very well attended even though we changed the time this year from 6.00pm to 4.30pm. We seem to have more adults these days than children. Christmas Day service was led by our minister Br Paul Holdsworth. The congregation were asked if they had opened any presents, none had except Br Paul, so he was delighted to tell us what the past, some with children and others with grandchildren. We gathered as usual on Christmas morning at 10am and followed the Christmas liturgy.

On the 29th the congregation organised another Lessons and Carols service since Br Stephens’ father is unwell, and he and Elaine are making a trip to Michigan to visit him. Our good friend, the Rev Ken Doherty has agreed to take the service for him on the 5th, when we begin our changed time of worship from 10am and 11.30am and will have our time of tea and fellowship before, rather than after the service.

Sr Edna Cooper

Kilwarlin

Our annual Garden Party in June was held on what we thought must have been the wettest day of the year, a bit of a disaster for outdoor games and ice cream sales. But with the support of friends and neighbours who faithfully support us every year the proceeds were well attended, and we even had some children at the Christingle service. We also had a good turnout to the Sustainability Review meeting, it was held after church over coffee.

We now look forward to the next decade and, as we have an aging congregation, hope we shall still be here at the end!!

Sr Carole Young

Fetter Lane

Celebrating the season

Knowing that preparation is the key to success, a number of us gathered at Fetter Lane on Saturday, 21st December to make sure that we had enough Christingles to go around, that they stood up well and were in sizes to suit every grip. The work was worth it, and we were pleased to welcome members of the congregation as well as friends and extended families - the number of children present made it a special afternoon. Sr Claire Maxwell led us through the story, helping the children (and adults) by providing masks of the main characters. The lighting of the Christingles was a beautiful moment as ever.

The New Year always brings a time of reflection on the past but at Fetter Lane we’re also looking forward to shaping the role of our small congregation within the wider community. Much to be done but with a positive sense of anticipation - Happy New Year from all at Fetter Lane.

Sr Cynthia Dize

Kilwarlin

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© Roberta Hoey

© Martin O’Brian

© Sr Claire Maxwell

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From the Sanctuary

I am often dismissive of the book of Leviticus, because the details of it seem to have little relevance for us today as Christians. It is a book in the Bible which features little in the lectionary readings, so we don’t have many sermons that are based on that book in our Sunday services. It contains mainly a series of regulations for worship and religious ceremonies from ancient Israel, and it regulates ways of living and worshipping God so that people could maintain their relationship with God. Perhaps the most famous words to come from Leviticus are ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself’ - words that are often attributed to Jesus, and yet by uttering them, Jesus was merely quoting the early scriptures that evolved out of the formation of the establishment of Israel as a coherent community, based on a belief of what was God’s will - and therefore God’s law.

For those Christians who believe that the Bible should be taken literally, there are many challenges in living out the detail in Leviticus, because if taken literally, ordinances should be rather bloody affairs with the killing of many animals involved. According to Leviticus, sin offerings are to be made every time we sin, and there is much about animal sacrifice and how animals are to be eaten which most Christians don’t live by today. There are even instructions about what to do with milder in your house, and how to purify oneself from skin diseases - and even what to do with unclean bodily discharges! Much of it is of historical interest in its detail, but of little use the details of it seem to have little relevance for us today as Christians. It is a book in the Bible which features little in the lectionary readings, so we don’t have many sermons that are based on that book in our Sunday services.

However, looking more deeply at Leviticus, one can get a real sense of the deeper spiritual wisdom that lies at the heart of the book - which I believe is relevant for today, and that wisdom is in the beneficial nature of living with an awareness of God, and of ‘holiness’, which needs to be at the centre of our living. How often do we think about God in the detail of what we do before we do anything, or make any decision? Yet, Leviticus shows that God is concerned with the detail of our lives, and that our lives would be lived better if we were concerned about God more in the detail of everything that we do.

Whilst ‘God’ has been taken out of much in society, many of the political messages we are surrounded by regarding climate change and single use plastic (so name but only two) have, at their core, the necessity for good stewardship of our planet - a biblical principle found in Leviticus; therefore, God is at the heart of the many charides and individuals, but without acknowledgement of God; yet their work is of God. It is all ancient wisdom from ancient Israel, which, if strayed too far from, results in struggle, conflict and destruction - for us and for society. Guidance for our wellbeing and wholeness rests within living close to what God wills - yet the ancient wisdom is often so easily cast aside. So - how can you live in such a way that has God, and holiness, more at the centre of your life? For in that, lies our wellbeing, wholeness and salvation - as individuals and as society.

Br Peter Gubi, Dukinfield

The New Unity Youth’s Website

In January 2019, the Unity Youth Committee met together in Tabora, Western Tanzania. Three of us plus the Unity Board Administrator and our (then) newly appointed Unity Desk Coordinator discussed various aspects of what we would like to achieve. We also considered what we could do to bring together and link Moravian Church youth members, with its many supporters and leaders. It was decided that, in line with Moravian tradition, one of the best things we could offer was fellowship and education, but the challenge was how to do this on a global scale.

The idea came that we should first put together a Facebook page. This platform would give a majority of people around the world, a forum where they could interact with us and also with each other. They could post updates about what they were doing to share and learn more about God - not only on a provincial level but also on a local and individual level.

Next came the proposal for a Unity Youth Website. This would be more of a resource centre and information platform where we could direct people for things like the About Us page, our own Blog or for details about the upcoming Heritage Tour in 2021. You can also find links to other great places of resources online like Bible Studies, songs, camp ideas, podcasts and more.

If you are a youth member, a youth leader, or simply interested in what is going on in youth work globally within the Moravian Church I encourage you to get online and take a look and see what we have to offer. Maybe you’re not that confident online or unsure where to go? Why not speak to one of your youth members and discover this together or even as a church!

Br Phil Battelle

Hornsey Church Fire Update

Many of you will already be aware that on the afternoon of Thursday 25th December fire broke out at Hornsey Moravian Church causing significant damage to the church sanctuary. We thank the Lord that the building was unoccupied at the time and no one was hurt. We would like to express our praise and gratitude the London Fire Service for their quick response and their skilful handling of the incident, which helped contain the fire to the sanctuary leaving the hall and other areas untouched. The congregation were able to meet in the Memorial Chapel at Church House on the Sunday after the fire and are now able to meet in the church hall at Hornsey for services. The PEC continues to work with the congregation and church committee at Hornsey in respect of the fire. The insurers and insurance loss adjusters have completed their inspections and it is hoped that repair work will commence soon. The PEC and Hornsey Congregation would like to thank everyone across the Unity for their support and prayers.

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