



A trip to Tanzania



Sikonge Hospital Mission Statement

For many years the British Province has maintained and developed a close partnership with the Moravian Church in Western Tanzania (MCWT). This has involved the sharing of both personnel and financial assistance in support of the Church's work in their part of East Africa. Among those people who have spent time there are Sr Dorothy Morton, Br Richard Ingham and Dr Keevil, the founder of the Sikonge Hospital and Leprosarium.

MCWT is a full Unity Province with its work beginning in 1897. Today there are 120,000 members spanning 79 congregations and 261 out stations, and these are served by 110 ordained ministers, including four sisters. In addition, MCWT supervises the five Mission Areas of Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and South Central Tanzania.

The MCWT Provincial Board comprises 16 members, with three members making up an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has the responsibility of the day to day management of the Province. Br Ezekial Yona is the Chair, and he is supported by a Vice Chair, and Br Richard Lwali who holds the office of General Secretary. You may remember that Br Yona was consecrated Bishop in 2018, and so

will step down as Chair at their Synod in 2021.

The Executive Committee welcomed Sr Roberta Hoey and Br David Howarth and gave a very informative presentation on their work. They were pleased to highlight the composition of the Province, the main areas of social work (hospitals and schools) and the developments in the five Mission Areas. A number of these Mission Areas have been adopted from other denominations, and there is a desire to provide Moravian education and support the creation of Church Governance.

Our visit was a good opportunity for both Provincial Boards to share their hopes for the future, and one that the MCWT are keen to develop is the creation of sustainable income. The Executive Committee advised that this remains difficult, especially as one idea is the creation of investment projects similar to those found in the South Africa Province. They noted that a significant amount of external investment would be needed. At present, there is no clear direction on how this will progress, although there are plans to develop a Provincially owned farm in the Tabora region.

Our annual commitment to MCWT is primarily through a block grant to the Province and grants to Sikonge Hospital. Over the years various requests for project grants have been received, including a £12,000 grant for renovation of the medical dispensary in Tabora.

It is usual for a visit such as this for the host Province to take their guests on a brief tour of congregations and their work. Our visit was no exception. In addition to obtaining a feel for several of the local congregations we were shown the work being carried out at the Sikonge Hospital and Leprosarium.

The Leprosarium at Sikonge was founded in 1923 by the British missionary, Dr Keevil, and since then has extended its care beyond these specific patients. Other services provided are maternity (up to 20 deliveries per day in two labour rooms), pre and post-natal care, HIV/Aids, and Emergency and elective surgery. While there is still a need for the care of leprosy patients, due to advances in preventative measures and treatment, there are currently only six long-term inpatients in Sikonge. The Rehabilitation Centre continues to grow from strength to strength, developing prosthetics for both leprosy and non-leprosy patients.

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Editorial

There has been a noticeable move towards what is called 'Blue Christmas' services in recent years. It is a very welcome recognition that Christmas is not a cause of overwhelming celebration and joy for everyone. The increasingly over the top Christmas commercials, the expectation of the perfectly decorated Christmas table and stunning meal, and the large happy family comes nowhere near touching reality for many people. They create an expectation of perfection for children and anxiety for parents who know that they cannot afford what is expected. In real families, children and adults will argue, debts will be increased, and marriages will split under the pressure of the season. Some know they will be alone for at least part of the festive season and others will be carrying burdens of grief or illness.

Considering this I have been given much food for thought and comfort from a recent book from Bishop Alan Abernethy, the Bishop of Connor in whose diocese four Moravian congregations are situated. Bishop Alan knows what it is like to struggle and in the book 'Jewel in the Mess' he is very honest about his difficult childhood and family background, his own mental health problems and his recent diagnosis with prostate cancer.

The first part of 'Jewel in the Mess' is taken up with reflections on the first Christmas and what it means for Jesus to be born into the mess of ordinary human life. The disgrace of an unmarried pregnant girl, the desperation of having nowhere to stay, no hygienic birth with sympathetic

parents around, and the vulnerability of a new-born child is God's entry into a hurting world. Jesus is to become the jewel in the mess although his coming does not fix the mess but somehow highlights and exposes it and offers hope.

The incarnation is not just about a messy birth but about what it means for the whole of Jesus' life. God is there in the challenge of family life, in grief, and growing, in joy and celebrating, in friendship and betrayal, in pain and death as well as in resurrection. It is clear that the incarnation does not bring easy instant answers for us and a promise that if we believe everything will become perfect. What it does mean is that we have the presence of God in all that it means to be human, the ups and downs of our existence with its problems, confusion and pain.

So, leave the sanitised views of Christmas to the Christmas cards, ignore the glossy magazines with their perfect Christmas tables, try not to spend too much and enjoy the day without striving for perfection. The real miracle of Christmas is God with us now and evermore in our imperfection, and that really is a cause for great celebration at Christmas and throughout the year.

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

'The Jewel in the Mess' by Alan Abernethy
Columba Books, ISBN: 9781782183594.



© Sr Sarah Groves

We wish all our readers a blessed and peaceful Christmas and God's guidance in the coming new year.

From Lorraine, Lindsey and Sarah
Editorial Team of the Moravian Messenger

Letter to the Editorial Team

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Being mindful of Christ's teachings, regarding our nation's poor children, we have now embarked on an effort to eliminate it. On the 12th December 2019, we Moravians have an exceptional opportunity to do, at least one more thing Christ would approve of.

We Moravians are living in the fifth richest country, by economic measurement, in the world and yet, food banks, inequality, injustice, homelessness, deprivation are still evidently lodged in the United Kingdom. Why? Could it be because of our complacency?

Brexit of course is a very important national issue but yet a recent one, whilst the above seem to have been part of our nation's history for generations.

As Christians we will in December be able to do something that I firmly believe we Moravians can be proud of. We must choose an administration to govern us with compassion and fairness that we pray for each week.

Yours still the ever-struggling Moravian.

Br Alan Holdsworth

GREENBELT WILD AT HEART 28-31 AUGUST 2020

GREENBELT is a festival that has multiple ways of exploring ARTS, FAITH AND JUSTICE including through music, drama, comedy and community.

Last year a group of Moravians who were 18-39 attended Greenbelt and we are looking to go again with some more 18-39 years olds to share together in this years theme: **WILD AT HEART.**

WEEKEND TICKETS	18-25	26-35	36-45	46+
ADULT	£150	£165	£180	£195
AD+	£120	£130	£140	£150
CONCESSION	£80	£90	£100	£110
18-25	£60	£70	£80	£90
YOUTH	£50	£60	£70	£80
CHILD	£30	£40	£50	£60
INFANT	£0	£0	£0	£0
1ST TIME LEADER	£80	£90	£100	£110

Tickets are cheapest before October 31st - 18-25 only £80, as an Adult (26+) £150

Then cheapest until end of April - 18-25 £90, as an Adult (26+) £165

See above for more information or to book go to: <https://www.greenbelt.org.uk/buy-tickets/>

MORAVIANS AT GREENBELT 2020 - ARE YOU COMING?



Fancy joining us or learning more?

Contact

Rev James Woolford on: james.woolford@moravian.org.uk

Claire Maxwell on: claire.maxwell@moravian.org.uk

Or Speak to Alishba Khan who came last year, who some of you may know as your Summer Camp Leader



MYForum at Whitemoor Lakes, Lichfield 25th-27th October 2019



MYForum (Moravian Youth Forum) was a weekend of open, confident discussion about our church, bringing young people from across the British Province together at Whitemoor Lakes to learn about the church's running, engage with our own potential in the church, and to empower each other.

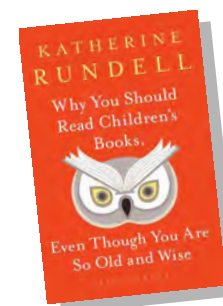
We really enjoyed having the speakers who came along. Br Michael Newman hosted a mock synod which was great to see the procedure at synod. Sr Zoe Taylor joined us on Sunday and led a great session on the sustainability project. We appreciated the opportunity to hear the progress so far, and to have our voices heard. Coming together to share ideas and experiences was truly valuable and I

think everyone who came has learnt something of what they could contribute to our community.

It was brilliant to have the time to get to know each other, make new friends and build connections throughout the Province. We have all come away with aspirations for our churches in the present and the future.

On behalf of everyone who attended, thank you for giving us this opportunity. We had a great time!

Sr Eleanor Noden
Royton



Do you read children's books? Or teen fiction?

Maybe you think you are too grown up to enjoy them, or that the language is dumbed down, or the story will not interest you. This little book, basically an essay by Katherine Rundell, sets out to explain why you can read and enjoy children's books without guilt or embarrassment. I read quite a bit of children's fiction and young adult fiction considering it important to be aware of what stories are

doing the rounds, although I never seem to get this quite right, but I mainly read them because they are good stories, exciting and immersive. I could give you a long list of books, but it is probably better if you ask a child or young person if they can recommend something for you. Or ask in the bookshop. I would suggest if you dismiss children's books as irrelevant that you read this book. It may change your mind.

Published by Bloomsbury Press this little hard back is only £6 - share it with friends and reduce the cost. ISBN 978-1-5266-1007-2

Sr Joy Raynor

Fulneck Museum Part 3: From its opening in 1969 until the present

Once the museum was open the committee and friends set about attracting visitors and raising money. The first minutes' book shows that 760 people came in 1969 and the annual totals then grew steadily to a figure of 3,465 in 1982. Numbers declined in the following years to 1997 but only in 1990 did they fall below 900.

The Committee held two or three minutes meetings each year to take stock of the progress of the museum, discuss problems to be sorted out and fund raising. As well as coffee mornings and selling Sr Balmforth's homemade marmalade, members offered other ideas. For example, in 1976 Br Wilfred Mortimore agreed to write a pamphlet about Fulneck and the museum for distribution in the district and Sr Mollie Hillam designed notelets to sell.

The friends of the museum were an important part of the running of the enterprise and on 25th November 1970 forty people gathered in what was then called the Mission Room, now the Moravian Room, to hear a talk by the Director of the Leeds Museum and Art Gallery Service on the position of small museums in relation to large ones. After coffee a short meeting was held in which it was decided to hold friends' evenings quarterly. The Friends' Evenings lasted for many years and the themes were on widely differing subjects. In 1954 Mr Norman Johnson came from Anglesey to talk about 'Clocks' and illustrated his talk with slides. The friends sometimes went on an outing instead of having a speaker. The museum was registered with the Museums and Galleries Commission but in 2003 it was

decided to cancel the registration because it was expensive and not good value for money.

Among all the ongoing activity there was one event which the committee could have done without. In June 1982 the building was broken into and several brass and copper kitchen items were

stolen along with a pair of china dogs, an Edwardian vase and eight dolls, altogether valued at £1,060. Most of these items were recovered and two men were charged with theft and remanded in custody.

After Sr Balmforth's passing it was decided to reform the museum committee to allow a new outlook to accommodate modern ideas in the use of the museum for education as well as visitor viewing. Wider publicity is essential to encourage this approach. To this end the tours of the settlement are carried on as well as talks about Fulneck being available to groups of any age or interest. Our annual Heritage Open Day is becoming well

known in the Leeds area and is a big part of the publicity drive.

In retrospect the decision to create a museum from the two old cottages was inspirational. Most people enjoy their visit and, whatever their interests, get a great deal from it. As Br John McOwat said at the 50th anniversary service in July, 'This is our history of which we can be justly proud'.

Sr Maureen Ingham
Fulneck



© Sr Maureen Ingham

Retired Ministers' Retreat at Oblate Centre, Wistaston Hall, Crewe

28th October-1st November 2019



A group of eleven retired ministers gathered at the Oblate Retreat Centre in Crewe at the end of October for a few days of retreat, reflection, and reminiscence: Srs Kathryn Woolford and Jan Mullin; Brn Peter Gubi, Fred Linyard, Len Broadbent, John Wilkinson, Trevor Auty, Kenneth Evans, Richard Ingham, Bob Hopcroft and David Newman.

Our retreat coordinator was Br Prof Peter Gubi, who began each day with a liturgy from the 'Wee Worship Book' of the Iona Community, and then guided us through a balanced programme of activities that stimulated the mind and led to good debates. Needless to say, we were well fed and cared for at the Oblate Centre by Fr Brian and his staff.

We were blessed by the presence of Dr Margaret Barker, who tested the dexterity of our little grey cells with sessions on text archaeology, tracing the Hebrew roots and meanings of the Christian imagery of the Lamb and Flag. Margaret also gave us fascinating background information on her ground-breaking research into the codes on ancient tablets, some of which was quite mind-blowing.

We had our compulsory session on Safeguarding, which Sr Joy Raynor bravely gave us; and the two 'full-time' PEC members, Roberta Hoey and Mark Kernohan, paid a courtesy visit to bring us up to date with developments at Church House, in the Province, and further afield.

We even had an outing! A nostalgic visit to Chester, which is where ministers' conferences were held back in the 70s and 80s. On

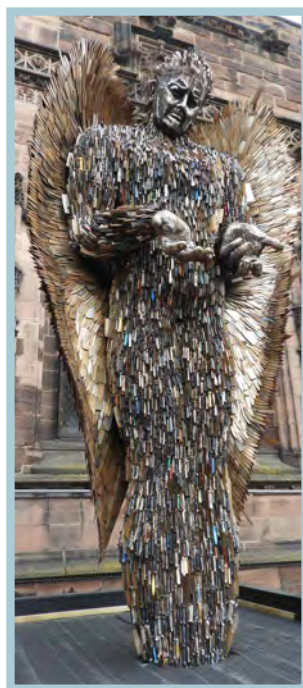
disembarking from the minibus, the first sight to greet us was a huge mobile crane outside the cathedral being used to install the 'Knife Angel' sculpture. Readers may have heard of this impressive creation, or even seen it as it 'tours' the country. The spectacular, 27 feet high sculpture is made from around 100,000 bladed weapons collected in knife amnesties during police surrenders across the country.

The Angel was created at the British Ironwork Centre by sculptor Alfie Bradley. Relatives of those killed by knife crime were invited to engrave the blades with names and messages for their loved ones as part of the sculpture. Find out more by using your computer search engine to look for KNIFE ANGEL.

Thanks again to Br Peter for his organisation and leadership. It was a good, refreshing week, where we enjoyed each other's company, and all left the Oblate Centre in good spirits.

We hope to meet up again in retreat in 2021...

Br David Newman



© Br Kenneth Evans

A trip to Tanzania *continued*



The old Leprosarium

A new building is currently being erected on the main Sikonge campus, and the leprosarium which is currently a mile away will be relocated.

As we know, HIV/Aids continue to be pandemic in rural Tanzania and there is a great stigma attached to this condition and tackling this has become a priority. This part of our trip was a true mixture of emotions: it was wonderful to see what they are doing, but there is so much more that could be done.

There is a real need for more doctors and nurses for both short term and long term deployments, and the hospital is keen to

learn from practices from outside Tanzania. Perhaps you are someone with the right skills and who would wish to discuss the possibility of spending some time there. If so, please contact a member of the Provincial Board. Any expressions of interest or desire to want to know more will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

The Lusangi Bible College was established in 1957 by the Danish Moravian Church and Danish Lutheran Mission. It currently has twenty students who are preparing for ministry and evangelism by studying subjects such as New and Old Testament, Faith, Civics, Marriage, English, Swahili, Leadership & Reliance. There are six pastors who make up the teaching staff and five support staff.

There were many highlights of our short visit, but two immediately spring to mind. Firstly, 'Richard's Tree' continues to bear fruit (mangos). The Richard referred to is Br Richard Ingham, and not only is he remembered for planting this sapling, but more importantly for his ministry at the Moria congregation. And secondly, our visit to the congregation at Iseya, for it was here in 2005 that Br Howarth had the great privilege of preaching one Sunday morning during his time at the Unity Seminar held

in Tabora in 2005, thankfully not in Swahili but in English with a Tanzanian brother translating.

Each time we visit this part of the Moravian Unity we are struck by several things, some of which have already been mentioned, but there are many others. These include the medical dispensary in Tabora who provide HIV testing kits and medicines to the local community; the sense of Call and Service to God and His people; the desire to share the Gospel message and the various church based activities and projects run in difficult circumstances, each one responding to a real need. Many of these projects are run in partnership with the international organisation 'Compassion' and are open to young and old alike, equipping them with life-skills such as sewing and dressmaking, carpentry and welding.

In closing, we believe the partnership between our two Provinces is something that we should celebrate and prayerfully encourage. We in the British Province are richly blessed by this, as we hope our sisters and brothers in Tanzanian are.

Br David Howarth
British Mission Board

© Br David Howarth

A Unity Creed

I recently had the privilege of attending the Moravian Mission Council with my husband Paul, who was representing the PEC. It took place between the 2nd and 4th September this year and was based at the Mission House, 21 Missionstrasse in Basel, Switzerland. During the first evening, when the business of the day had ended, we went down to the Chapel or the Room of Silence, which had a wonderfully calm atmosphere, as its name suggests. We sat in a circle and shared prayers that were led by the new Unity Women's Desk Coordinator, Sr Julie Tomberlin and Sr Erdmute Frank, who is the Unity Women's Desk Advisory Board member for the European Region.

As part of the evening prayers we used the new 'Unity Creed', which is a beautiful statement of belief created by Sr Alay and Br Obed, two Moravian Pastors from Cuba in 2018. Alay and Obed were developing workshops aimed at reducing violence against women and teaching congregations how to end domestic violence. The Creed is written in nine languages, namely Afrikaans, Albanian, Czech, Dutch, English, German, Miskito, Spanish and Swahili and during the worship we took turns to read the sections in whichever language we chose. I

attempted to tackle Miskito, having spent some time with Moravians in Costa Rica. This helped us to remember that wherever we were from, we were united as Moravians in the love of Christ.

This evening worship meant that we ended our day together feeling much closer and enriched by the new Moravian Creed. We were asked by Sr Julie and Sr Erdmute to take copies of the Creed back to our various provinces and to encourage and facilitate its translation into other languages. I am hoping to have the Creed translated into Welsh, for our brothers and sisters on either side of the River Wye near Brockweir. In the meantime, I highly recommend the new Moravian Creed to you and you can see a copy for yourself on the Unity Women's Desk at:

<http://unitywomensdesk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Womans-Creed.pdf>.

Sr Patsy Holdsworth
Minister of Brockweir, Kingswood and Tytherton Moravian Churches

Woman's Creed

Written by Rev Alay González y Obed Martínez Translated to English by Sister Sandra Gray

I believe in God, who created men and women in his image, who created the world and entrusted to men and women reproduction, care of the earth and everything else created by his hands.

I believe in Jesus, son of God, of one substance with the Father, born of a woman, Mary, who with utmost attention listened to women and held them in high esteem, and sat in Martha and Mary's house and spoke with them about the Kingdom. Moreover, he had women disciples who followed him and helped him in all of his ministry.

I believe in Jesus, a Jew who spoke of popular theology with a Samaritan woman by Jacob's well and confided for the first time that he was the Messiah. He inspired in her the desire to go into the city and tell the marvelous good news of the water of life.

I believe in Jesus, on whom a woman poured perfume in Simon Peter's house, and who reprimanded the male guests who criticized her. I believe in Jesus, who said he would remember that woman for what she had done, bowing her head

and serving the Lord who inspired her in her life.

I believe in Jesus, who cured a woman on the Sabbath day and restored her health because she was a human being, and she could see that, for the Lord, it was more important to preserve a life than to follow a law.

I believe in Jesus, who compared God to a woman who searched for a lost coin and intensely searched for that coin and finally found it, and this was the answer: that the coin represented the value of each person in the Kingdom of God.

I believe in Jesus, who considered pregnancy and birth to be something marvellous, not a punishment, but rather a heartrending event, a metaphor of transformation, a new birth from agony to joy.

I believe in Jesus, who compared himself to a hen who shelters her chicks under her wings.

I believe in Jesus, who appeared first to Mary Magdalene and sent her to spread the amazing message, "Go and tell the

Good News of Resurrection and Salvation to the people."

I believe in the universality of the Saviour, in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female because we are all one people in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who moves over the waters of creation and over the earth.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the maternal spirit of God who created us and gave us birth and like a mother enfolds us with her maternal arms to care for her children.

I believe in that second moment in which the King of Kings will return to look for men and women who are sanctified by the blood of the Divine Lamb.

I believe in a church composed of men and women who, in spite of our weaknesses, are incorporated by the love of the Lord, by divine grace, and who lovingly work to build up the Kingdom of God until he returns.

Amen.

9

The Centre of Creation

You shall have no other gods before me, Exodus 20.3

This is the first of the ten commandments, and what it says is clear: nothing must be set in front of the Lord. Nothing must be more important in our lives and in the way we see the world and make decisions about how to live in it.

*O may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.*

Nevertheless, we cannot 'see' God. We live by faith. 'By faith we understand that the world was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was made from what is not seen' (Hebrews 11.3, my translation). There is far more to the physical creation than meets the eye, and so much in the world is shaped by unseen forces.

These forces can be the 'laws of nature', like gravity, but they can also be human minds and the choices they make or the illusions they accept about human powers. Human beings cannot shape the world to fit what they want. Their actions are limited by the laws established by the Creator.

*Praise the Lord for he hath spoken;
Worlds his mighty voice obeyed;
Laws that never shall be broken
For their guidance he hath made.*

Biblical theology describes these 'laws' as the bonds of the eternal covenant, and surely the first great bond-breaking in recent times was the first atom bomb in New Mexico. The official description sent to President Truman said: 'Then came the strong, sustained, awesome roar which warned of doomsday and made us feel that we puny things were blasphemous to dare to tamper with the forces hitherto reserved to the Almighty'. Many other fundamental bonds have been broken since then, and we see the creation collapsing.

The second commandment follows logically from the first: 'You shall not make for yourself any graven image'. No idolatry - but this meant more than 'no statues'. It meant not setting up anything made by human beings in the place where the Lord should be. Isaiah described the sinful state of Judah and Jerusalem in his time: 'Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their own hands ...' (Isaiah 2.8). Idolatry means having a false centre to our world view, what the Bible calls 'an abomination that makes desolate' (e.g. Daniel 12.11).

Isaiah warned that judgement would follow for the proud who had rebelled against the Creator and made their own gods: 'The pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day' (Isaiah 2.17). Pride in our own powers and what they can achieve is an ever-present temptation in our time. These works of human hands include economic and

political systems, rebranding old sins as new possibilities, and calling them 'freedom'.

One of the new gods is The Market. In a world where we are more and more aware of other faiths and systems of belief, this new religion has largely escaped notice. The Market god has gained great power because so many people in the western world have no idea of any other God. The Market and consumption give purpose to their lives. People are not made in the image of God; they are human resources and consumers. Values have changed. The Bible says: 'The earth is the Lord's' (Psalm 24.1), but the Market god says 'It is for sale. Anyone with money can buy it and exploit it to make money'. And so, the rainforests are disappearing, and soils are exhausted through industrialised farming. It is not bad management that causes these disasters; it is false gods.

*From every idol I have known
Now set my spirit free;
O make me worship you alone
And reign supreme in me.*

The story in Genesis 3 stands as a warning. The serpent was clever. He used words carefully and well. When St John described the fall of Satan, he said he was 'that ancient serpent ... the deceiver of the whole world' (Revelation 12.9). God had warned them that the fruit of the forbidden tree would bring death, but the serpent, despite the commandment, made it seem attractive. The serpent offered choice, and the human pair were deceived. Too late their eyes were opened.

The second commandment warns where idolatry leads: 'I ... visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but show steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments' ... (Exodus 20.5-6). This is not a vindictive God showing spite. It is warning of the results of 'iniquity'. This Hebrew word means, literally, 'distortion'. If one generation distorts the world with false gods, then future generations will suffer. If we have chosen an unsustainable lifestyle, then our children and grandchildren will have to cope with the consequences of our choices.

St John's great vision described the voices in heaven as the Kingdom was established on earth: they thanked God that the time had come for destroying the destroyers of the earth (Revelation 11.18).

Dr Margaret Barker
Methodist Preacher and Theologian



© Br Nigel Pocock



About thirty years ago I founded Vision Training & Research, the name based on the Proverb: 'Without a vision, the people perish'. This non-profit 'social venture' started by providing theological training mainly to the African and African-Caribbean community, but owes an enormous debt to the Rev Freddie Roberson, an African American pastor and trainer, with whom I worked for nearly ten years. Freddie was an inspiration and was instrumental in laying the essential foundations of all that followed, including those issues surrounding slavery. Since that time, Vision Training has evolved into a research and project development organisation, although it still provides some teaching materials, exhibitions and lectures in a wide range of related fields.

In 2007 the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade (not slavery) was celebrated (if that is the right word). Working together with Dr Clifford and Mrs Monica Hill, a project was set up to sail a replica of the notorious slaver, Zong (from which 133 Africans were thrown overboard as useless, but living, chattel, in order to claim insurance) up the Thames, under Tower Bridge, and to be

Commemorating Slavery: From East Tytherton to Northern Ireland #LINKSLEGACY400

Br Livingstone Thompson, Br Nigel Pocock and the African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland have been active in a series of events in Northern Ireland commemorating the transatlantic slave trade.

moored by the old Sugar Wharf, for three weeks. In terms of visitors and impact, this was a huge success. Visitors from far beyond London came just for the day, or part of the day, to visit the ship and its exhibition. Many were very distressed, as well they might be; but it was not the intention to re-traumatise people, but to engage in a way that played a part in social change and healing. Politicians were also impacted, as was the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone and Lord Hugh Thomas (the historian of slavery) who gave an address on board the ship.

This project was the first seeds of what then grew into the Christian charity, the Movement for Justice and Reconciliation (MJR), concerned to address both the legacy of slavery, and its concomitant other side, industrial exploitation.

In the meantime, also in 2007, I was working in East Tytherton, where the Moravian burial ground was little more than a field. At least half of the gravestones where either entirely or partially below ground, and weeds abounded. There was a powerful suspicion that there could be a strong connection with slavery - and so it proved! Indeed, the finds were of national importance. Four sisters, Ann, Sarah, Eliza and Alicia Briggs, Leonora Casey Carr (all from Antigua), and Harriet Maynard (from Surinam) were directly connected to slavery, Leonora indeed still legally being a slave when she first arrived in England. As a result of these researches the East Tytherton Heritage Project was set up (as a sub-project of Vision Training, which funds it). This is now working

towards establishing an annual lecture and art exhibition to commemorate Leonora and Harriet, and we were very grateful to Professor Alan Rice for giving the inaugural presentation (with Jean-Jacques Vrij from Amsterdam and the Surinam Genealogical Society booked for 2020).

Then, in September 2017, along came Marsha Deans, a Jamaican living in Northern Ireland, to visit the East Tytherton Heritage Open Day. Working together with Br Livingstone Thompson and others, the Links Legacy 400 commemoration project was being set up in Belfast, specifically to address the general denial that Ireland had anything to do with slavery. Sadly, the opposite is all too true.

Parallel to this, I was advising the MJR as its senior researcher and as a trustee, on a freshly designed exhibition, expertly put together by brother and sister team, Lucy and Barney Heywood, of Bristol (descendants of the slave traders the Heywood brothers, and a still-active subsequent baronetcy). MJR have worked together with Links Legacy, Marsha and Livingstone, to put this exhibition on in the best and most prestigious exhibition venue in Belfast, the new Titanic Centre. From small seeds, amazing things have been achieved - yet this is only the smallest of small seeds of the story to be told!

Br Nigel Pocock
East Tytherton



THE IRISH DISTRICT OF THE
MORAVIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
WILL BE HOLDING THE

M.W.A. RETREAT

AT 'DRUMALIS', LARNE, CO. ANTRIM FROM 1st-3rd MAY 2020

THEME: **WONDER WOMEN - THEN AND NOW**

SPEAKER: **REV. DR. MARGARET BARKER**
(Methodist Preacher and Theologian)

COST OF WEEKEND £135 PER PERSON

If interested, please send me your name and address with £15 per person booking fee (non-returnable). Please make cheque payable to Sr K Kitson, 6 Gracefield, Gracehill, Ballymena, Co Antrim, BT42 2RP. Closing Date will be 31st January 2020.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Your Sister in Christ,
Kathleen Kitson Irish District M.W.A. Secretary

Report from the Autumn 2019 Lancashire District Conference

The meeting was held at Salem on 12th October and Br Smith opened with a brief act of worship.

Greater Manchester Churches Together

This organisation, of which we are a member, were on the verge of collapse in recent years, but Sr Warr was happy to report that matters had much improved since the appointment of Dr Graham Baker as facilitator. The finances are now in a stable condition and at the Annual Assembly on 30th September, there was a record-breaking attendance of over 100 people. The President's Meeting is due to take place in November.

Dukinfield

Br Gubi was happy to report that membership stood at 32, an increase of one on last year and that two more people are taking confirmation instruction and will be confirmed in November. The congregation is still actively involved in the Food Hamper Project and Dementia Warriors Group and the uniformed organisations are thriving. Messy Church meets every couple of months and the Mums and Tots Group is popular. The Friday Group has had to close but it is hoped to introduce another venture attracting a similar age range (5-10) in the future. The congregation received a grant of £2,250 from Allchurches Trust and this has now been put towards the cost of building a disability ramp and an automatic door. Still to be installed is a handrail, but this will be completed soon. Because of all the alterations to the building that have taken place over the past 18 months, it was felt that a rededication was required, and we were glad that Br Joachim Kreusel came along to be the guest speaker at a special service. The usual services for the MWA, Tearfund and Harvest have taken place. Junior Church attracts an average of five young people each Sunday and a willing team of Junior Church Leaders, with Sr Anita Webb taking overall responsibility is in place. Br Gubi concluded his report by thanking all the workers of the Dukinfield congregation for their continued support.

Fairfield

Br Cooper began his report by stating that membership has dropped from 90 to 83. One member has died, one has moved away and five have lapsed their membership. In October Sr Christine Emanuel began a two-year placement here as part of her training for the ordained ministry of the Moravian Church. The congregation were pleased to welcome Sr Christine and they are enjoying and appreciating her ministry. The timing of the Sunday service has changed to reflect the reduction in children attending the separate Sunday Club. Worship now begins at 10.30am and the children leave for their own classes half-way through the service. This situation will continue until July 2020 when the situation will be reviewed. Evening worship no longer takes place on the second Sunday of each month, neither does the mid-week service on the fourth Tuesday of each month. The special evening services at Christmas will continue to be held. Coffee is served after some of the morning services and the proceeds are given to different charities each month, chosen by one of the church members. The Youth Club has 16 young people and eight leaders who are following a full and active programme. They recently held a successful Coffee Morning with proceeds being donated to Dementia UK. A Guide Company started in November to accompany the present Rainbows and Brownie Groups and a total 39 children attend. Explorers, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers have 68 young people and 11 leaders. The congregation welcomes the opportunity for outreach and mission with the weddings, baptisms, funerals, historic visits and the Heritage Weekend that takes place during the year. A new

venture, the Fairfield Memory Singers was started during the year, and was initially aimed at people living with dementia but it welcomes everyone who enjoys a good sing. This is held on the second and fourth Friday afternoon year. The Church has been left a large legacy and the Church Committee have been asking for suggestions as to how to spend the money. One possible idea is for the employment, on a fixed term contract, of someone to work in an outreach capacity. The other churches in the District were asked if they would like to be involved in this outreach work.

Royton

Membership stands at 27 with six adherents, a loss of two during the year. Average attendance at morning services is 25 adults and three children which is slightly increased from previously. Coffee is served after most morning services. This is run by the older young people and the proceeds are split between general church funds, Summer Camp and outside charities. A Traidcraft stall sells goods after the morning service, once a quarter. Services of particular note include Celebration of Sunday School and Prize Giving, Mothering Sunday and Cradle Roll Service, Sisters' Breakfast and Church Anniversary Service. The Remembrance Sunday Service which marked the centenary of the armistice was held and a display was prepared to commemorate the local young men who fought and fell. Two teachers and six young people attended Sunday School, and this continues to meet at the back of the church. The Wednesday Coffee Mornings continue as does the MWA Circle. A bible study group meets monthly. A community brass band are now regularly using our premises for rehearsals. The church is a member of Churches Together in Royton and has been involved in many local events. Br Smith concluded the report by advising that the building remains in good condition and has been well maintained.

Salem

Membership stands at 24 with one adherent and average attendance was 17 adults and no children which is a slight drop on last year's figures. Sisters' Sunday was celebrated in June being led by Sr Jane Dixon. Br Joachim Kreusel led the Church Anniversary and Renewal service in November. People from the local area support the monthly Coffee Mornings. A service to mark the tercentenary of the birth of John Cennick was held in December and special invitations were sent to residents of Cennick Close. The Oldham Foodbank continues to be supported by direct donations. The pre-school group provides much needed finances and gives opportunities to connect with the neighbourhood, but as the people attending are multi-faith, there is not a lot of scope to increase membership.

Another District Gathering will be held at Fairfield on Sunday 28th June 2020 and ideas for a speaker were requested.

A Retreat Day will be held at Dukinfield on 23rd May from 10am to 3pm and this will be led by Sr Lorraine Shorten.

The next District Conference will be held at Dukinfield on 14th March 2020.

Sr Sue Selby
Dukinfield



CONGREGATION NEWS

Halloween at Fetter Lane

As part of Sr Claire Maxwell's outreach ministry, we welcomed neighbours to Fetter Lane for an alternative Halloween party on 31st October. Twenty-eight of us gathered in the chapel for a Bible story underlining our links to those who came before us - 'the great cloud of witnesses'. Then, in the now dark burial ground we focused (with torches) on some of the interesting personal histories commemorated there. By then the fire was burning bright in the brazier and young and old enjoyed some lively storytelling provided by professional Dave Allen. To top it off, Br Steve prepared s'mores (a sandwich of chocolate digestives and toasted marshmallows) - delicious at the end of a chilly evening. Many of the children dressed up and we spotted a cat, a princess, a judo champion, several assorted teddy bears and a plump pumpkin.

For the first time we used our new card machine to collect some of the donations which will be split between Christian Aid and the congregation - new technology tied to an ancient tradition.

Sr Cynthia Dize



© Steve Maxwell

Horton

One of our dearly loved members passed away peacefully in July after a long illness. Sr Betty Taylor was always smiling right up to the time of her death and I'm sure she is still smiling now on us all. We remembered Betty in a service of thanksgiving for her life where we were blessed to hear wonderful snippets from Bettys life from both Br David and her granddaughter Aimee. Our hearts and prayers go out to her family at this time. The proceeds of the donations were split half between the work of the church here in Horton and half to the Alzheimer's Society.

On Sunday 8th September we welcomed Br George Watson who very kindly offered to play our organ for us as our organist was away on holiday. George's family have long connections with Horton. Thank you, George!

A lunch was held in the Sunday School Building in September, Yorkshire Puddings filled with various casseroles. Well what

else would it be in Yorkshire?

The following day Br Jamie Spencer and Sr Linda Haggas led the service where we were asked to think about what we have to be grateful and thankful for. The congregation wrote on cards what they were thankful for and the cards were displayed in church and prayed for.

On Sunday 22nd September we were led in our Harvest Festival by Sr Kathryn Woolford. Once again the church was filled with gifts. Kathryn pointed out how many ingredients on a tin of food we should give thanks for - not just farmers but all who provide those ingredients for us to enjoy, the chefs for making the food, the people who made and printed the labels on the tin, something we don't always think about when opening a tin of peas or soup.

Br Jamie Spencer

Brockweir

A twitch, a twitter, an elastic shudder in flight

And serrated wings against the sky ...

On the 30th June the congregation was delighted to see a full church for the christening of Amelia Grace Groves-Bond. It was a lovely sunny day and a joyful occasion, and the christening cake was rather special! Amelia behaved well until the unexpected shock of water surprised her, but she enjoyed being introduced to the congregation.

Fundraising continues apace and on Saturday 7th September, Brockweir Amateur Dramatics Society and others held an afternoon of entertainment for us. It was nice to see villagers who don't normally attend church services enjoying themselves. The performance was dedicated to the memory of Jeff Boden, a valued member of the community, who'd helped those performing update their lighting and sound equipment, as well as helping the church raise money in the past. He will be sadly missed.

The annual Soap Box Derby had its usual thrills and spills but thankfully there weren't too many accidents - just hurt pride and a few bumps and bruises. A few of us from the church sold drinks and cakes and managed to raise £200 for our repair fund.

At a recent service a bat flew out of one of the organ pipes. I'm not sure who was more surprised, the bat or Sr Buffrey our organist, but once both had settled down the service continued. Life continues to be rich and varied at Brockweir, whether we are dealing with stray sheep in the burial ground, autumn storms or bats in the belfry.

Sr Judith Ashton



© Br Philip Ashton

Cliftonville

The fortnightly Bible Study was altered from mornings to alternate Wednesdays at 7.30pm to enable more to participate; Br Stephens is leading us in a series on the book of Revelation.

We had a visitor from Washington USA as the preacher at the Harvest service on 20th October. Heidi is an intern from Princeton Theological Seminary at Groomspoint Presbyterian Church for a year, where Br Stephens served in the same capacity ten years ago. A short Council meeting was held after the service, then we enjoyed a light lunch in the church hall. Tinned goods, requested instead of fresh fruit and vegetables, were delivered to the Trussell Trust on the Monday.

We have continued to sit in a circle at the back of the church to enjoy a short time of fellowship over a cup of tea each Sunday before Br and Sr Stephens go to Ballinderry morning service. Ballinderry members now indicate they would prefer to have a 10am service, so we have agreed to change to 12 noon from January 2020, meeting at 11.30am for a cup of tea and fellowship before the service. To enable Br Stephens to preside at both Christingle services, we are also willing to change Cliftonville time to 6pm.

Over a number of weeks, members have been generously entertained in groups to dinner at the home of Br and Sr

A group at Harvest lunch showing Christmas shoe boxes in background



© Sr Edna Cooper

Stephens in Bangor. Happy occasions where we enjoyed a lovely meal and all got to know each other better, plus a fun time with games for the younger Moravians afterwards.

Christmas shoe boxes for needy children have been prepared as usual and are ready to be dispatched. The final total is likely to be at least 125, plus some items that will be donated to local charities.

Christmas greetings from Cliftonville to all Messenger readers.

Sr Edna Cooper

Lower Wyke

As I look back over 2019, life at Lower Wyke has continued to be a wonderful Christian witness in our small part of Yorkshire. There have been individual highs and lows but the 'church family' always pulls together and is a constant source of support to those who need it. Our 80 and 90 year olds are a great inspiration to us all and are amazing role models to the younger congregation members and friends.

Our weekly services, led by Sr Jane, always help us to learn, understand and explore more of God's word and often include some 'fun aspect'. Yes, fun, why not!! Ecumenical links remain strong with the other Churches in Wyke and a joint service was held at Lower Wyke in the summer. The monthly Café Church is always well attended and, although we lost one of our accomplished pianists in the summer, she has been replaced by another experienced musician. How lucky we are! Br and Sr Hardcastle relocated to Cumbria to be near their daughter and we wish them well in their new life. Staying on a musical note, the Moravian Singers gave a heart-warming concert/service on Palm Sunday. Br Simon Dunn has been an enthusiastic and talented musical director for the last eight years and the final item, a rendition of 'Morte Christe' (When I survey the wondrous cross), was a fitting end to the service and beginning to Holy Week 2019. Br Dunn left the area for a career move and will be greatly missed in the District. Br Glyn Jones led the choir, again at Lower Wyke, in the Advent Service - two wonderful evenings of music.

Two new initiatives were taken by the church this year, the first being the installation of a defibrillator on the outside of the Sunday School building. The local community gave generously towards the purchase. It could prove vital in an emergency, but



© Sr Jane Dixon



we hope we never have to use it! The second was connecting the Sunday School to the internet. The installation of WiFi keeps us up with modern technology and is already being used to enhance Café Church services.

The small groups meeting regularly including Prayer Group, Bible Study and MWA and they almost go un-noticed but they are essential to church life. So too is the continual dedication of those who work in the Junior Church and The Adventurers (our youth group). All our many and varied social events reach out into the community and still attract a large number of friends and acquaintances, some old and some new. Every year people enjoy the familiar Strawberry Fair, The Art Festival, and The Proms in the Paddock, The Scarecrow Festival and The Craft Fair. The Community Lunch and Greenfingers plant swap are also excellent events that continue to thrive and increase in numbers attending.

At Ladies Weekend and Harvest time especially, the church was looking at its best enhanced by new carpeting throughout. Personal invitations were

given out for the Harvest and Brethren's Lovefeast Services and larger than normal congregations enjoyed both services. Special thanks were given to Sr McOwat for her harvest message and all those who helped with the Brethren's Service. As we look forward to the Christmas celebrations let us not forget those for whom this time of year does not bring the happiness it brings to others - those facing the lack of warmth and food, the empty chair, the constant raging pain. Let us try to bring a smile and comfort where we can. I'm sure that we can pass on to others the hope that Christ's birth brings to us, whether we are 8 or 80.

Sr Diane Thornton



Interested in being involved in some form of Church Service?

The next Church Service Exploration Day is planned to be held on **Saturday 25th January 2020** (venue to be arranged depending on the geography of explorers). This will be led and facilitated by Br Peter Gubi and one of our Bishops. Expressions of interest to Br Peter Gubi by 9am, Monday 20th January 2020.

Contact Br Peter Gubi at: peter.gubi@moravian.org.uk

Moravian Church in Great Britain & Ireland

Fulneck Moravian Church

Christmas Tree Festival

Displays

Gift Stall

Children's Treasure Hunt

Refreshments



Saturday 7th December, 10am to 3pm
Sunday 8th December, 1pm to 4pm

Free Entry

Fulneck, Pudsey, LS28 8NT

www.fulneck.org.uk

Registered Charity No 251211

From Church House

The Provincial Board have issued a temporary call to Br David Howarth to serve full time with the Provincial Board, at Church House, for a period of six weeks. The call took effect from Monday 4th November 2019 and Br David will resume his call to Horton and Baildon from Sunday 15th December 2019. Br Mark Kernohan will be based in Church House from the beginning of January.

The Provincial Board are very grateful for the support given by Horton and Baildon congregations during this time, and all those retired ministers and lay preachers providing cover during this time.

Christmas

Church House will be closed from 1pm on 23rd December and reopening on 2nd January. The Provincial Board and the staff at Church House would like to take this opportunity to wish you a blessed and peaceful Christmas season, may it be one filled with joy and hope.

Provincial Diary for December

10-11 PEC Meeting, Church House

Congregational Register

Baptisms

3rd November 2019 Aria Elisabeth Dickinson Fulneck

Marriages

1st November 2019 Daniel Matthew Lively & Bethany Jade Blewitt Fairfield

Reception

3rd November 2019 Alishbha Khan Ockbrook

Deaths

13th July 2019	Betty Taylor	Horton
11th October 2019	Diane Margaret Long	Fairfield
16th October 2019	Gladys Eileen Matthews (previously Moss Side)	Fairfield
19th October 2019	Doreen Clark	Dukinfield
25th October 2019	Ella Green	Royton

1	World Aids Day (www.worldaidsday.org)
	First Sunday of Advent
2	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
10	Human Rights Day (www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/)
18	International Migrants Day (www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday/)
21	Winter Solstice
22-30	Hanukkah - Jewish
25	Christmas Day
31	New Year's Eve / Watchnight

Dates to remember!

From the Sanctuary

My cat often gets teased by the birds, and it's cruelly lovely to watch. Sometimes they are sitting on the lawn when she is under a bush in the garden. They hop about seemingly innocently, whilst she positions herself carefully to pounce - and then, at the last moment, they fly away leaving her dejected and disappointed (and me feeling relieved). Sometimes, inside of the conservatory, she sits poised and watching the small birds dancing on the ledge on the other side of the frosted glass - literally two inches away from her. They seem unable to see her, but she can clearly see them through the glass, and is 'cacking' expectantly (i.e. making those strange noises that cats do when they see birds in close proximity), in the hope that they will come hopping into her mouth. Yet, the glass is between them. So near, yet so far!

What isn't funny in life, though, are those times when something is seemingly within reach, yet is so far away. Those times: like when we try to help those we love, and all they do is get angry with us; like when we see the potential in others, and they turn down what we offer by way of help, hope and encouragement; like when we see the inner beauty in others, and all they can see is the ugliness of their shame and self-loathing. They are so near (physically), and yet in many ways so far away from us (psychologically and spiritually). How helpless we feel ...

I sometimes wonder if that is how God frequently feels? That God sees our potential, both as individuals and as a human race, and feels helpless and powerless to help us when we can't



see it for ourselves; and disappointed when we instead choose paths to self-destruction or stuckness. Maybe that is what Christmas is about - God offering us another way, exemplified through His son, Jesus Christ, other than our innate ways of self-destruction and self-abasement. That having gone so astray from our potential to be like God, He had to remind us again of who He was, by becoming human (incarnation) and living among us to demonstrate how transformed life could be if only we could live again by faith and love. Yet, his love was rejected on the cross, and still we reject Him. So near, and yet so far.

We know the way to truth and life. It has been revealed to us. I have that sense that God is waiting for us to truly embrace Him. Maybe this Christmas will be a challenge of how much importance we really give to spiritual matters, or whether we will again be distracted by the busyness and materialism of Christmas? Will we fail Him, and reject Him, yet again, by merely paying Him lip service through the tinsel and wrapping paper?

I already sense His sadness ...

Br Peter Gubi,
Dukinfield

British Mission Board (BMB) News

At the end of October, Sr Roberta Hoey and Br Jørgen Bøytler visited Ladakh in India. The four-day visit was an opportunity to connect with the ministries in Shey, Leh and Khalaste. This also included a visit to Chiktan School. Chiktan is in a very remote area of Ladakh and the Moravian Institute is providing education to the local community which is made up of mainly Sunni Muslims. As well as a Principal, Br Vijay Kumar, and three permanent teachers, the school is staffed with volunteer teachers from Moravian Institute in Rajpur. We will share more news of our trip early in the new year.

The Moravian Christian Women's Wing in Ladakh informally started in 2017 and have just registered as an official society in Ladakh. In Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Christians are a minority group and in Ladakh, the Moravians

© Sr Roberta Hoey



Leh Women's Wing

are the only significant presence. The women have been encouraged by women's groups from Buddhist, Shia and Sunni Muslim faiths to start their own women's group. As a result, the Moravian women's wing meet with the other faith women's groups on a regular basis. This year for the first time they will host Christmas events for the other faith groups. Currently their main focus is raising scholarship money to send young girls to school. They have also run hygiene campaigns, events to

raise their voice against plastic and also raising awareness of the social/economic problems around weddings and funerals (i.e. there is a big tradition of people trying to outdo each other in how much money is spent on these events leading to considerable debt). They are hoping to buy office and shop space soon and they are also trying to find two female candidates to appoint on the Hill Council (the local government).

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