

THIS MONTH: AUGUST 2007



RIDGWAY METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Friends

“You’re not trying to convert me, are you?”

A little while ago, I was on the telephone to a young woman who works for a large printing company in North Yorkshire. Her name is Rachel. Always looking for an opportunity to have a significant conversation with people I remarked, ‘that’s a lovely Bible name but who was Rachel in the Bible?’ My new young friend had to admit that she did not know. I said, “I expect you have heard of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* - well, Rachel was Joseph’s Mum.”

Rachel and I proceeded to have quite an interesting conversation but part way through Rachel said, “You’re not trying to convert me, are you?” My answer completely took the wind out of her sails.

I replied, “I shouldn’t worry too much even if I am trying to convert you because people are trying to convert me all the time. After all,” I said, warming to the subject, “people want to convert me to what they believe – a universe that just happened, a world where things seem completely out of control and where many people are wondering how things will go on, and individual lives that seem to have little purpose or meaning.” This obviously seemed to strike a chord. “You see,” I continued, “they want to convert me and I want to convert them. They want to convert me to believing in a universe without a creator, to a world without a Saviour and a life, even when things are going well, that is ultimately hopeless and meaningless. I want to convert them to a universe with a creator, to a world with a Saviour and a life that, even when things are difficult, has hope and meaning.”

Change of email addresses

As well as being a cheap filling for sandwiches, spam is unsolicited email. As our email addresses used to be on our website, the church email addresses have been flooded with spam, often of the most offensive nature. As we had come to the time to print new publicity postcards, the church email addresses have been changed. The main office address is now admin@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk and the minister’s office address is now min@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk We will keep the previous addresses live until 31 August but then they will become inactive, so please change your email address books now!

News from the Methodist Conference (Blackpool 2007)

As a member of Methodist Evangelicals Together, www.headway.org, I received news

from my colleague, Revd Paul Smith (Superintendent of the Plymouth Mission Circuit), about the Methodist Conference from which I have taken this information. Conference opened with a remarkable act of worship. The singing was accompanied by a worship band, Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, Principal of Cliff College, was inducted as our new President and Mrs Ruby Beech as Vice President. On Saturday, the President challenged the church to the mission and evangelism for which it was called into being. On Sunday, the Vice President testified to being converted at Cliff College. Representatives from the World Church were welcomed and new ministers were ordained, including Revd John Richey from our own circuit. Methodist ministerial training will continue at Durham, which has a strong evangelical emphasis. The connexional team (that serves our central offices and structures) is going to be reduced to enhance the church's mission. Although there are still areas that concern evangelical believers there was much about which we can be encouraged.

News from the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship

LCF have written to me to express continued concern about the situation at Exeter University, with particular regard to the Christian Union, which must now call itself the Evangelical Christian Union. Following the first and only complaint against the CU in a 50 year period, the Student Guild froze the CU's bank account and wrote banning it from holding or advertising events on Guild premises. The university appointed an Independent Adjudicator, Mr Mark Shaw QC, who has strongly criticised the CU because it required that those leading the CU should be Christians and restricted its membership to Christians, even though its meetings were open to all. He held it discriminatory that the CU should be run by Christians and held that the Guild policies in forcing the CU to be led by members open to other faiths was 'laudable'. In a most bizarre statement, Mr Shaw even suggested that on the Exeter University campus, the 'Welsh Society should be open to Scottish members; the wine society open to teetotal members, the choral society should be open to non-singing members, and the cheerleading society should be open to male members. The CU finds itself in a position where it has no other option but to instruct the Human Rights barrister Paul Diamond to instigate Judicial Review proceedings against the University and Guild.

Best wishes for the holiday season

After disappointing weather in June and July, I hope that we will have a much brighter August. Although we take a break from much of the church's regular programme, the summer is filled with special activities. For my part, I am the main speaker at *Summer Fire*. Many of our members and young people will be going away to different Christian camps and the summer break concludes with our children's holiday club. Whether you are going away or staying at home, I hope you have some enjoyable, sunny days and return to our regular routine refreshed in every way.

God bless
John Haley

Baptism, Membership and Christian Renewal

The Methodist church has a list of registered members and our way of doing things makes formal membership important. Whether you are new to the life of the church or have been part of the church community for a little while but would like to have an opportunity to express your commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, to his church and to this local church, you can show this through baptism or Christian renewal and membership. There is a possibility that I will conduct a service of total immersion on the morning of 7 October. This would be followed by a service of reception into membership later that same morning. If you would like to explore this possibility with me, please speak to me, to one of the stewards or to the leader of your group as soon as possible. Enquirers will be given a copy of Called by Name (Being a member in the Methodist Church) and A Catechism for the use of the people called Methodist and these will form the basis of preparation for being received into membership. Those who are interested are invited to four 45 minute groups on Mondays (3, 10, 17 and 24 September) at 6.15 pm. We consider - Believing and Belonging, Being a Christian, Testimony, Witness and Our Calling.

Monster Stink!

Our church holiday club starts on Tuesday 28 August from 10.00 am –12.30 pm. School age children are invited to attend. The teenage helpers will also be having activities in the evening. Please pray for this event and consider whether you could help.

Trip to Cardiff

On Saturday 1 September we will be going by coach to Cardiff Bay. Once there you can go on an organised trip of the churches of Cardiff Bay including the Greek Orthodox and the Norwegian Church where Roald Dahl was christened OR to the Dr Who Exhibition OR Shopping (including IKEA). The cost will be £15.00 per person to include church tour or exhibition. Please let Miriam or the office know if you would like to book a seat.

Margaret Bell School

Many thanks to everyone who donated to our appeal for the Margaret Bell School in Zambia earlier this year. We were pleased to be able to send a donation of £1000.00 to the school, which they plan to put towards the construction of a new school building, as well as paying the rent on their current premises and buying new resources for the children. The money will make a great deal of difference to the work of the school, and the school director, Berry Kafololo, sends his thanks and greetings to all at Ridgeway. Anyone who would like more information, or to send a message to the school can visit the website at www.margaretbellschool.org.

August Diary

Saturday 4:

8.30 am Prayer Meeting
10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Christine Gregory)

Sunday 5:

10.30 am Revd John Haley
7.00 pm Mrs Julie Birkett

Thursday 9:

2.30 pm Womens' Fellowship: Janet Dobinson followed by a Cream Tea

Saturday 11:

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)

Sunday 12:

10.30 am Revd John Haley
7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Saturday 18:

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Funds (Avril Baker)

Sunday 19:

10.30 am Mr Brian Roseveare
7.00 pm Revd John Haley

Saturday 25:

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)

Sunday 26:

10.30 am Mrs Janet Dobinson
7.00 pm Dr Phillip Walsh

Tuesday 28—Friday 31:

10.00 –12.30 Holiday Club 2007

Church office hours:
Tuesday-Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Church telephones:
348178 (office only)
331186 (pre-school and hall)

Church Office: admin@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk
Minister: The Revd John M Haley: min@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk
www.ridgewaymethodist.org.uk
Information for September's *This Month* to the office by 21 August please.