

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Greetings to all our readers as we leave the summer behind, embrace the changing scenes of autumn, and prepare ourselves for the winter season.



September began with our first Executive meeting of the new church year, and ended with the District Forum Representatives Meeting, pictured left at Swanwick. At both these meetings we took the opportunity to

review past events and set out our plans for the year ahead. It was a joy to meet up with both existing and new Forum reps, to share in worship and fellowship together, to hear news of events from across the Connexion, and to carry out the business of Forum.

This year we received nine Empowerment Gift applications, all of which met the required criteria and were agreed by Forum. The gifts will support work in areas such as education, training and health-care in Kenya, Benin, Haiti, Uganda, Pakistan, Togo, Malawi and Nigeria.

I'd like to share with you information about one relatively new initiative in Malawi and Nigeria which received an Empowerment Gift of £2,000. Pregnancy Twinning was brought to our attention by Forum member Rachel Allison, our British Unit Helen Kim Memorial Scholar. On their website www.pregnancytwinning.org we read:

In late 2014, two twenty-one year old Methodists in Stoke-on-Trent heard a story. The story was of a woman in obstructed labour in Niger; she turned up at the clinic and needed basic medical help but couldn't afford a \$21 caesarean pack consisting of basic items for a safe birth such as a sterile scalpel and clean sheets. Because of this she and her baby died, right there in the waiting room.

From this story the idea of Pregnancy Twinning was conceived and has grown, saving the lives of many adolescent girls in

Africa. If you would be interested in following this up please get in touch with Rachel Bowers at: rachel@pregnancytwinning.org

I find it really uplifting to see the many diverse ways in which MWiB fulfils its aim 'To know Christ and make Him known' through encouraging, empowering and enabling women at home and across the world to make a difference.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

Sandra



MWiB Visit to 16th Synod of the Church of North India, New Delhi, September 2017

Vice President Anne Browse and Forum member Revd Deborah Kirk were privileged to represent both MWiB and the British Methodist Church at the 16th Synod of the Church of North India (CNI) in New Delhi. They flew out from Heathrow to Indira Gandhi Airport on 27th September, and were accommodated at the YWCA International Guest House in Parliament Street.

Also attending the Synod from Britain were Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal and two staff from All We Can, Andrew Edwards and Charlie Kabanga. It was good to have opportunity for conversation about our work with all of them over the course of our stay. Inderjit *[pictured right]* generously acted as an unofficial tour guide, taking Anne and Deborah on a tour of Delhi on arrival, both on foot and in a three-wheeler taxi, which hurtled around the streets, dodging in and out of the multiple lanes of traffic, all with much hooting of horns!



The morning of Friday 29th September was spent in meetings with other world partners of CNI, where reports were presented and attendees were able to find out more about how CNI is working with various partners in its mission to the poor and the marginalised. Visitors were graciously hosted and welcomed by the General Secretary, Mr Alwan Masih and the Moderator, the Most Revd Dr P K Samantaroy. After a delicious lunch, Friday afternoon was spent in sightseeing around Delhi, including visits to the Parliament buildings, India Gate and the Gandhi Museum.



Synod opened on Saturday 30th September with a colourful celebration at St Thomas School for Girls in New Delhi. Pupils of the school *[pictured left with Deborah]*, lined the way and performed traditional Indian dance as around 400 attendees of the Synod processed to the inaugural session of worship with Communion. Throughout the weekend partners were able to see how the Church is working with the poorest and most marginalised communities in North India, including the Dalit and Tribal people, and to hear reports of the work of the last three years. Most of the business was conducted in English, moving from time to time into Hindi. The theme of the Synod, from Luke 10:2, was very clearly proclaimed as the business progressed: 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few'.

Anne and Deborah brought the greetings of the British Methodist Church and of MWiB officially to the Synod and enjoyed many conversations with members during the various breaks of each long day of business. Saturday and Sunday at Synod both began with breakfast at 7.30am in the specially erected catering marquee, and closed with cultural entertainment provided by Indian young people. On Saturday evening Deborah was invited to pray for the young people at the close of the evening's programme. After supper each night members eventually returned to their accommodation at around 9pm.

Links were furthered with the Diocese of Cuttack *[pictured right]*, where the Plymouth and Exeter District has an ongoing partnership, and there were also reports on the work of CNI with Dalit women and children as supported by MWiB over the past three years, since the visit of MWiB President Linda Crossley in October 2014. The hostels in the Diocese of Marathwada are no longer running, but there is an extensive and valuable programme overseen by the Synodical Board of Social Services to which our funds contribute.



The final photograph, left, shows Anne and Deborah with Mrs Poornima Lall (left) and Mrs Prabhjot Primrose Masih (right). Mrs Masih's daughter, Priya, visited MWiB with Revd Meena Bhati in 2016. Neither Priya nor Meena was present at Synod this time, but Anne and Deborah met many others with whom they shared fellowship over the course of their stay. They were able to see how the work of CNI is progressing and to be reassured of the ways in which the money raised by MWiB is being used. They assured the Church of North India of the ongoing prayers of Methodist Women in Britain and thanked them for the opportunity to share with them in God's mission in this partnership.

Exciting volunteer opportunities!

We are currently inviting applications for the roles of

MWiB President 2019–2021

a four year commitment beginning in June 2018 (one year as Vice-President, two years as President, and a further year as Vice-President).

[Closing date for applications: 5th January 2018]

and

Finance Officer 2018–2023

a five year commitment beginning in September 2018.

[Closing date for applications: 30th November 2017]

Full role descriptions and application forms are now available on the website: www.mwib.org.uk or by email: admin@mwib.org.uk or by telephone: 0300 030 9873

Meet a Mission Partner

Our Woman in Colombia



Hermanos y hermanas The welcoming words of the Bishop fill the small chapel: a creatively converted garage, attached to the church's Office for Projects where we have been working for the last ten weeks. People are arriving late as they have to fight through the traffic generated by a nearby football match. After a lot of hugging, as is customary everywhere in Colombia and even extends to parent-teacher meetings at school, the service continues. When I look around, I see all my colleagues, many of whom work a six-day week, it being the norm in Colombia. All of them continue to work despite not having been paid for several months due to the church's financial struggles. The work here continues despite empty bank accounts; the health clinic built by the church for those without access to any other care is keeping its doors open, the programme for malnourished children carries on... sometimes, I wonder for how long.

One of our tasks here is to help find some alternative forms of funding for the various projects, but a country that has recently signed a peace treaty, that is considered one of the Latin American economic tigers, and is renowned for its social innovation, is not on the top of any donor's list. Despite that, we have submitted our first proposal to USAID and have launched an urgent campaign to cover the shortfall for the clinic's operating costs at www.icmetodista.org/brisasclinic—where you can also see a YouTube video of the community by clicking on the link under *Updates* (and where we'd also very much appreciate any donation to help keep the clinic's doors open). At times, there is a hint of despair, but then I remember that the church here is made up of people that have survived armed conflict, of indigenous and Afro-Colombian people that have successfully defended their land rights, of people that live their lives without water and sanitation infrastructure, of young pastors with an outreach in city slums. And together they make up a church that has survived much more than a financial deficit.

So, my preoccupied mind is now a bit more at rest and I can focus on the Bishop's sermon again.



In a very Catholic country, a child's first communion is a hugely important event. Here, Bishop Cardona gives first communion in a Methodist ceremony, after having spent many hours with the children explaining its meaning.



The clinic, IPS Clinton Rabb, in Brisas del Mar. The clinic provides essential health services to the 3000 people - comprising an exam room, a labour and delivery room (also used for minor surgery), a dental office, a pharmacy, and a room for overnight stays.



The congregation in Brisas meets under thatched roof. The same space serves as a safe space for school children that are part of the feeding programme for malnourished children. The area can be easily set up (as you can see) for various purposes.

Chris and Vera Lacey, with their children Sofie and Abigail, are serving as mission partners with Iglesia Colombiana Metodista (the Colombian Methodist Church), providing IT solutions and identifying programme development and funding opportunities for their new Centre for Projects.



World Federation Day 2017



Gender Equality in the 21st Century

On Saturday 28th October, around 50 people gathered at the Side Door Methodist Church, Grimsby to celebrate World Federation Day. The theme was 'Mind the Gap—Gender Equality in the 21st Century', based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality.

We were welcomed by the warm hospitality of a fantastic team who helped us with our technical equipment, moving furniture, music for our worship, and provided us with a wonderful lunch and refreshments.

The opening worship was led by Rita Rowe, the MWiB Forum Rep for the Lincolnshire District and Nina Rawlins, the Rep for Northampton. This was followed by a Bible study led by Carolyn Lawrence, the Vice President for the Britain and Ireland Area of WFM&UCW, based on a reading from Galatians 3:26-29 on the theme of 'One in Christ.' Carolyn spoke about how we find true equality when we discover our true identity in Jesus as beloved and valued children of God.

There followed a keynote speech from Alison Judd, the World President of WFM&UCW. She spoke about issues of gender inequality in our own country and across the world and shared experiences of her recent visit to Zimbabwe to celebrate 40 years of autonomous mission in the Methodist Church of Zimbabwe.

After a delicious hot meal there was opportunity to participate in four different workshops.

Rach Collins [*pictured top right*], the former Helen Kim Memorial Scholar (HKMS), presented a workshop on the theme of Female Genital Mutilation. She encouraged those present to write to their MPs to ask for education and awareness of FGM to be part of the school curriculum.

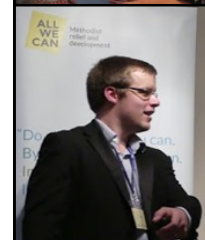
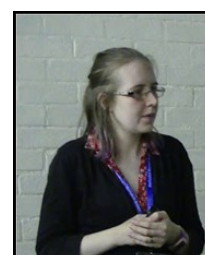
Emily Shurmer [*second from top*] from Middle East Media spoke about the work the charity is doing in the Middle East and North Africa using creative media. In culturally appropriate ways they are seeking to raise awareness about child marriages and to encourage the worth and self-esteem of women, helping them to gain confidence and make positive decisions in their lives.

A third workshop was delivered by Tim Baker from All We Can [*second from bottom*], who shared the work that is being done amongst some of the most vulnerable and poverty stricken people in the world, many of whom are women. He told the stories of projects in Cameroon and Zimbabwe which are helping women to lift their families out of poverty and giving them dignity and self-worth.

The final workshop was led by two local ladies from the North East Lincolnshire Women's Aid [*pictured bottom right*], who talked about issues surrounding domestic violence in the UK and how they are working to help women who suffer in this way. They also dispelled some myths and raised awareness about an issue which many are reluctant to talk about.

The day concluded with closing worship led by the President of MWiB, Sandra Goodwin, which included prayers of intercession about some of the topics from the day.

Many of those who attended expressed gratitude for an interesting and inspiring day and lots of ideas about practical ways they can take action and show God's love for all people in this country and across the world.



Carolyn Lawrence



Alison Judd



Closing worship

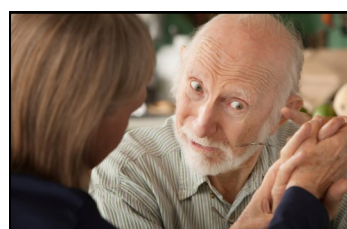
[Report and photographs:
Carolyn Lawrence]

MWiB Gifts and Grants

Every year MWiB gives gifts and grants to a wide range of projects both here in the UK and overseas, to encourage, enable and equip women in education and skills that will enrich their lives and the lives of their families and communities.

Social and Community Action Grants

These grants, totalling £6,000—£7,000, are for UK projects which meet a local social or community need. Priority is given to projects working with those considered marginalised in society, and to those seeking funding for imaginative new areas of work. While grants cannot be given for building projects, staffing costs, or ongoing expenses, in previous years gifts have been given to a wide variety of projects including parent and toddler groups and after-school clubs, community cafes and church lunch clubs, a community women's group, a befriending service, a community crèche, groups working with people with dementia, a gardening project for young people with challenging behaviours, and a group teaching basic cookery skills for cheap and nourishing meals.



Applications for 2018 SCA Grants are now open; the closing date is **28 February 2018**. Application forms are available to download from the website: www.mwib.org.uk/aboutus/finance, by email: finance@mwib.org.uk or by telephone: 0300 030 9873. Applications must have the recommendation of the District's MWiB Officers, and the applicants themselves must be committed financially or practically to the project.

Empowerment Gifts

Every year MWiB is able to give £10,000 to projects overseas, and in September this year the MWiB Forum agreed to accept all nine applications received via Forum reps. These gifts, though relatively small, make a huge difference to people's lives. These are some of the comments received when we notified projects of their success in receiving a gift:



Mother-to-Mother: working with disabled children in Kenya

"It will help us to go a long way in the development of the work we have planned with the L'Programme de Sante [health programme]." (Benin)

"this... will make a lot difference to the Mother-to-Mother playgroups [for children with disabilities]." (Kenya)

"This will make a huge difference to many Kenyan women and their families."

"Thank you so much for this gift towards our work of transforming the lives of young families [through Pregnancy Twinning] in Malawi and Nigeria."

"Gifts such as this from MWiB make a huge impact and go a long way in Kenya."

"Oh wow. What fantastic news. ...such a great help in... getting the [tailoring workshop] up and running." (Uganda)

"Thank you very much for the gift... to give the teachers' training. ...Please thank all the ladies who have contributed money for this award." (Pakistan)

"It will enable us to reach a good number of women with this [Women: Faith, Family and Community] training programme." (Haiti)

"Just a quick thank you for the Empowerment Gift...The money will make an enormous difference to this relatively small project in Togo."

"This amount of money will do such an enormous amount of good for the women in our [cervical screening] programme. Your generosity is such a blessing to us." (Kenya)



Tharaka Women's & Children's Welfare project, Kenya

Application forms for 2018 Empowerment Gifts will be available in February 2018, and gifts awarded at the MWiB Forum meeting in September 2018.

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS: 22nd November 2017 and 10th January 2018

FORUM MEETINGS: 17th–18th February 2018 and 29th–30th September 2018

If you have any issues to raise or questions to ask, please speak to your Forum Rep.

Forthcoming Events



World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women

Joint Area Seminar



**CHOSEN PEOPLE,
CALLED TO PROCLAIM
THROUGH WORSHIP,
RELATIONSHIPS
AND SOCIAL ACTION**

Thursday 7th–Sunday 10th June 2018
at the Clayton Hotel, Belfast.

Information and booking forms are now
available to download from the website, or
request by email or telephone as below,
marking it 'JAS BELFAST'.

BONANZA FOR BELFAST!

Once again we are raising money to enable
women from poorer European countries to
attend the seminar, who would otherwise be
unable join us. Coffee mornings, offerings,
bring-and-buy sales, concerts and events—
there are so many creative and imaginative
ways to raise money, and we look forward to
seeing what you come up with!

Oceans of Justice, Rivers of Fairness



MWiB Residential Weekend

Friday 20th—Sunday 22nd April 2018

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire

Keynote speaker: Rachel Lampard

Rachel is Team Leader of the Joint Public Issues Team
and was Vice President of Conference 2016-17. She has
worked for the Methodist Church as Secretary for
Parliamentary and Political Affairs since 2000 with
responsibility for the Church's engagement with political
issues in a range of areas.

Information and booking forms are available to download
from the website, or by email: admin@mwib.org.uk or
telephone: 0300 030 9873 to receive them by post.



Thanks to two very generous legacies, MWiB
has money available for projects, training or
equipment to enable those with visual or hear-
ing impairment have better access to worship and other
church activities. The amount available for Visual impair-
ment is £24,665 and for Hearing Impairment is £60,242.

If you know of any group, church or individual who would
benefit from a grant from this money, please contact the
Finance Officer with details.

Contact us:

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