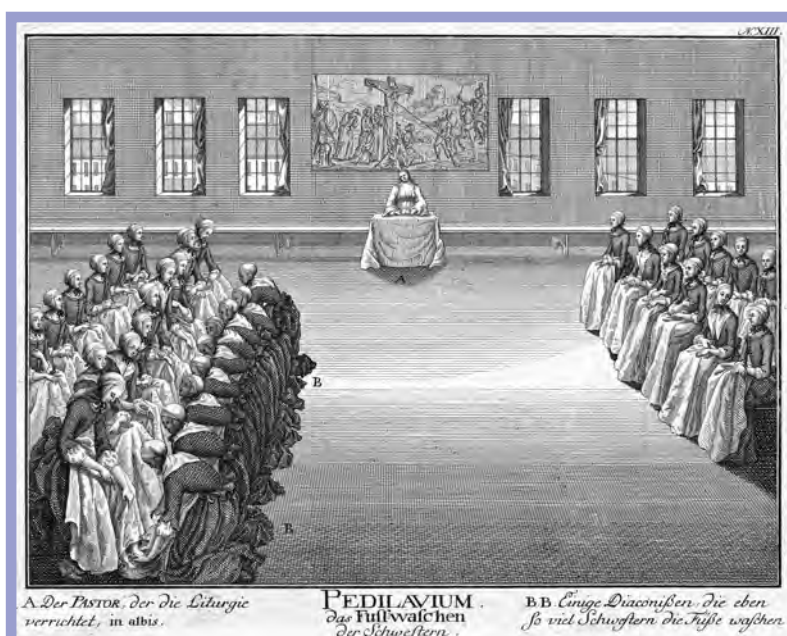


Women Priests in the Moravian Church in 1758

During an ordination service in Herrnhut on May 12th 1758, three women were ordained as "priestesses" or presbyters of the Moravian Church: Elizabeth Layritz, Marie von Zinzendorf, and Magdalena Vierorth. It was a memorable ordination service during which not only the three priestesses but also eighteen deaconesses, twenty-seven deacons, six priests (presbyters) and two (male) bishops were ordained.

The ordination of women was unheard of in the 18th century. Even today, some Christian religious groups do not allow women to be ordained, based on Paul's admonition that "women should be silent in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:34). Zinzendorf, leader of the Moravians, however, interpreted the bible text as being intended for the situation in Corinth and he did allow women a much more prominent religious role.



Moravian footwashing - copper engraving 1757. The women who were washing the feet of the other women were ordained "deaconesses".

In 1745 Count Zinzendorf decided to ordain a group of 20 women as deaconesses and in the years to follow many other women were ordained as well. Zinzendorf was influenced by other radical Pietists such as Gottfried Arnold, who in his widely read publications had demonstrated the existence of "diaconissas" and "presbyteriae" in the early Christian church.

although he was hesitant to do so in public. During the ceremony on May 12th 1758, Zinzendorf announced he had ordained other priestesses in the previous years, however without making these events public. Even among Moravians the prominent role women played was controversial; in many cases Zinzendorf had to defend this policy before the other leaders of the church. During the service on May

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12th Zinzendorf declared: "The sisters also have a right to the priesthood. They have among themselves and in their capacity the same three first degrees of the congregational offices [acolytes, deacons, and presbyters] as the brethren." As they knelt, Zinzendorf and Anna Nitschmann laid their hands on the sisters heads and consecrated the three women as priestesses while the choir sang a doxology that has since remained part of every Moravian ordination service (Glory Be to Thy Most Holy Priesthood").

What were the responsibilities of ordained women in the early Moravian Church? Ordained women were allowed to perform pastoral services within their respective choirs and to give an address in meetings with only women present; they also assisted in the distribution of Holy Communion, and some of them (the so-called

archdeaconses) even performed ordinations of other women. The office of the archdeaconses came closest to that of a male bishop. Although the women's responsibilities were confined to the female realm and therefore not equal to those of their male counterparts, their roles were quite extraordinary when compared with other groups of the time.

Zinzendorf's successors did not approve of women in prominent leadership roles. Although the ordination of deaconses continued until 1790, female presbyters were no longer consecrated. Women continued their service to the church, although they played their roles not as openly as when Zinzendorf was still alive. It would not be until 1967 when a Moravian woman was ordained again in Dresden, Germany.

Paul Peuker

This article first appeared in This Month in Moravian History, a monthly email newsletter published by the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem. Visit www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth.php for more information.

Letter to the Editor



Dear Sister Editor,

What a shame, for those ministers and members who could not attend Br. David Haworth's 'Service of Consecration as Presbyter' at Sparkhill on March 28th. The musicians, choir and address were all inspiring. A young man, vowing for the second time, to continue to work for God through the agency of the Unitas Fratrum and his commitment to be a shepherd, in every way to the flock of Jesus, was heart warming.

Br. Paul Holdsworth used his sermon to remind Br. Haworth just what that commitment to God means. It may involve being at the bedside, at home or in hospital of a Christian who is alone and unwell or being a voice at the end of a telephone at inconvenient hours of the day. It may be that a sacramental service is required during a pastoral visit. Weddings and baptisms are a bonus compared with the everyday bread and butter issues dealt with by a minister who is dedicated to working for God.

It is my opinion that we require this commitment now more than ever before.

Yours in Christ's work
Alan Holdsworth

A word from the Editor

Well, not me personally, but as the latest attack reverberates about NHS pay for hospital chaplains it does feel as if it's 'open season' on Christians and all that we hold dear. The National Secular Society (NSS) has called for an end to NHS funding for hospital chaplains. It is argued that the £40m annual cost could be better spent on nursing and cleaning staff. Terry Sanderson, president of the NSS stated that: "Hospital chaplains are not on most people's list of essential services in a health care setting." The NSS has asked the Health Minister Alan Johnson to review chaplaincy services with a view to ending taxpayer funding for them.

There's not going to be a meeting of minds between professing Christians and members of the NSS about hospital chaplains, but is the NSS right to suggest that the majority of people hold their view? Statements issued by both the union, UNITE, which embraces the College of Healthcare Chaplains, and the Department of Health suggest otherwise.

"Infamy, infamy, they've got it in for me."

Healthcare is not simply about tending to the physical needs of a person, often more is needed when people are in pain or frightened for themselves or their loved ones. Counselling may be provided but it is at times of crisis that spiritual guidance may be sought by patients and staff.

The NSS state on their website that they are "the leading pressure group defending the rights of non-believers from the demands of religious power-seekers." Was the real motive to open a national debate about hospital chaplains or was it simply to publicise the National Secular Society? Are Christians really seeking power? Hopefully we wish to serve God and our neighbour who needs us. Chaplains are there to help people towards wholeness and healing, physically and spiritually. A society that denies our need for spirituality would be a very arid place; a hospital without chaplains, medicine without a soul.

YOUTH ZONE

Latest news from the Provincial Youth and Children's Office

Good Friday Workshop

A few years ago Rev. David Dickinson started a tradition of the Good Friday Workshop in the Yorkshire District.

We have continued with the idea this year at Baildon church. Young people from all over the district were invited to join us, unfortunately only 4 children took part but we still had a great morning!

We started by crushing grapes with our feet to make wine for the last supper. After sharing a glass of grape juice (from Tesco!) and some bread and talking about the Last Supper we made some arrow prayers. We then carried the cross down to the burial ground.

On returning to church we covered the group with a black cloth, because the world went dark, and asked them if that was the end of the story? Happily they all could tell us that that was not the end and Jesus rose from the dead.

To celebrate the resurrection we then made flowers from tissue paper and pinned them on to the cross. It looked lovely and was shown in church on Easter morning.

It would've been nice to have more children attend the morning but will try again next year.

Lorraine Shorten



Relaxing after the run - BBQ at University Rd

The Belfast Marathon

A cold blustery and wet May Bank Holiday Monday saw the Irish District Youth taking part in the Belfast Marathon for the third year in a row, with 12 runners in two marathon teams and one fun run team. One of our marathon teams actually managed to break the five hour barrier, which pleased us greatly, for we had not managed this before. Monies raised will go into ID Youth funds, which we hope to use to help young people go to Summer Camp this year. After the event twenty five people gathered at University Road to share in a celebratory BBQ, cooked for us by the Kernohan family. All in all it was a good day and we hope that the sponsorship money eventually reflects all the efforts put in by the folks taking part. Donations after the event will be gratefully received via Br. Paul Holdsworth.

Well done everyone.

Paul Holdsworth

Summer Camp 2009

Saturday 25th July – Saturday 1st Aug
Frontier Centre, Irthlingborough, Northants

There are still a few places available for Summer Camp. If you are interested, email: youth@moravian.org.uk or phone 01753 553549 (Joy Raynor)

Summer Camp needs your help!!!

Summer Camp started in 1948 and has met every year, except 1952. So this year's camp will be the 60th camp, something worth celebrating. This is where you can help, we need donations. If every congregation sent just £60 we would have nearly £2,000 towards the target.

Donations can be sent to me, Joy Raynor, 25 Lynwood Avenue, Slough SL3 7BJ Cheques payable to Moravian Union Inc.

Church Leaders Sign Declaration at Fulneck



From left to right:

The Regional Minister for Ministry, the Yorkshire Baptist Association
The Anglican Bishop of Bradford
The Chair of the Yorkshire District of the Moravian Church
The Chair of the West Yorkshire African Caribbean Council of Churches
The Catholic Bishop of Leeds
A representative of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
The Chair of the Leeds Methodist District
The Anglican Bishop of Ripon & Leeds
The Anglican Bishop of Wakefield

The Church Leaders of the main stream Churches in West Yorkshire used their meeting at Fulneck on Wednesday 22nd April to talk about the forthcoming European elections in June and the British National Party. Pastor Gloria Hanley, Chair of West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council said that, "racism is a sin, as all people are created in God's image; the British National Party does not speak for Christians".

The full text of the statement, which was signed in Fulneck Church says:

"As leaders of different churches in West Yorkshire, meeting at Fulneck, we affirm the values of unity, tolerance, hospitality and mutual respect, which have always helped people from different backgrounds to live together."

- We are deeply concerned at the views and activities of British National Party which is using people's fears to stir up racial and religious hate. □
- We assert that all human beings are created equally in the image of God, that racism is a sin, and that such extremist groups do not speak for Christians. □
- In particular, we are called to love our neighbours as ourselves; and so we abhor any rejection of our neighbours of other faiths as an affront to all our beliefs and a danger to the unity of the whole community.

On 4 June, the people of Yorkshire and the Humber will choose our representatives in the European Parliament. The regional voting system means that every vote counts. A high turnout will enhance democracy and prevent candidates on extremist platforms from winning seats.

We urge all Christian people to use their cross on 4 June, and, by exercising their right to vote, to defeat the advocates of extremism and hatred."

The statement was signed by:

The Anglican Bishop of Bradford
The Anglican Bishop of Ripon & Leeds
The Anglican Bishop of Wakefield
The Catholic Bishop of Leeds
The Chair of the Leeds Methodist District
The Regional Minister for Ministry, the Yorkshire Baptist Association
The Chair of the Yorkshire District of the Moravian Church, (Rev Ken Evans)
A representative of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
The Chair of the West Yorkshire African Caribbean Council of Churches

This statement follows a tradition of West Yorkshire church leaders uniting to speak out against the BNP, going back to the last European elections in 2004. The statement gained good press coverage, with press photographers and a camera man from the BBC One Sunday Politics Show.

The rest of the day long meeting was held in the West Hall of Fulneck School, by kind permission of the School. The lunchtime meal was a tour de force by the congregation members in the Boys Brigade Hall. Following lunch there was a short walk around the settlement to gain an insight into its history.

It was a long and busy day, the Settlement, Church and School looked wonderful, everyone worked together and the meeting went well. I am so proud that Fulneck could be the venue for such an important statement about our faith and our civic and Christian life together

Sarah Groves

Leh friendship flourishes thanks to school visit

Five pupils and a teacher from Fulneck School in Pudsey have been sharing their experiences of their summer 2008 trip to the mountainous semi-autonomous state of Ladakh in India. This visit was especially relevant to the church, as an integral part was a visit to another Moravian school. Adam Lightbody, Chris Oakes, Jordan Miers, Tim Scholes and Jake Land, who are all current Year 12 pupils at Fulneck, took part in the four-week expedition, which was led by the schools expedition company 'World Challenge', aided by myself, the school's outdoor activities co-ordinator. In January, the group gave a post-expedition presentation to their families, teachers and members of the school governing body – including the Fulneck minister, Sarah Groves. At that point, I was asked to write about the expedition for the Messenger.

The team began fundraising and planning for the trip in October 2006. Mr Alcock had decided on the expedition destination, and the company had suggested suitable treks and tourist highlights for the group, but a key aspect – the 'community project' element – was secured thanks to a chance comment by the Principal of Fulneck, Mr Trevor Kernohan about the presence of a Moravian School there. This 'lead' was followed up by Mr Alcock, thanks to extra help from Reverend Hopcroft, and by January 2007, contact had been made with Reverend Elijah Gergan, the Principal of Leh Moravian Mission School. Several e-mails were then exchanged, and a meeting date was established for the second week of the expedition. Meanwhile, the school paired up with a school in Southampton, Hardley School, who also had a small team who wanted to go on an expedition to India.

So it was that on a crisp sunny morning last August, Mr Alcock walked from the hostel in which the group was staying, to Reverend Gergan's house near the middle of Leh. Following a very interesting discussion of the nature of schooling and society in Ladakh and the UK, a follow-up meeting was set up, and, in keeping with the 'student-led' experiential learning ethos of 'World Challenge' expeditions, two pupils accompanied Mr Alcock to the Manse a few days later, to arrange the project work. It was intended that the pupils would not only engage in practical work, but that they should also become immersed in everyday life in the school.

The agreed project involved a day observing (and partaking in!) lessons, two days in a primary satellite school, one day at a local primary school hostel, and a football match to finish off. The lessons were conducted in small classrooms, but they were adequately equipped and the lessons were expertly staffed. Our pupils were stunned to find out how broad the range of subjects studied was (including a wide variety of languages, from English and Hindi to Ladakhi and Urdu), and Reverend Gergan impressed

our pupils with his list of institutions that alumni had attended, including Cambridge University. The two days spent at the village school at nearby Matho were enjoyed by all – the welcome, complete with silk scarves, flowers and singing children, was especially stunning! We split into two working parties – one of which taught some lessons to the primary children, whilst the other group did some interior wall painting. In the evening, we were treated to meal of 'skyu' – pasta noodles in a spicy soup. Following a night spent sleeping on the staff room floor, we were woken up to find that the local mothers had brought in some locally milled bread and Ladakhi tea. This started us off on another day's work. On the second day, we also presented the school with a sizeable consignment of writing and art materials, as discussed with the head teacher of the primary school. Our day with the hostel children was eventful, as we shared the catering with the hostel staff, and the pupils organised games for the children. On the last day, we co-opted three Ladakhi children from the secondary school into our football team, and we beat the Leh team by a close margin of two goals!

As well as the school project, the group undertook a seven-day trek in the Markha Valley, reaching 4,900m above sea level, we went white-water rafting for the day, and we spent the last four days of the trip exploring the sights of Jaipur, Agra and Delhi. Certainly deserving of a mention too was the gruelling three-day trip over the Himalayan foothills, via the world's second highest motorable pass, which we undertook to reach Leh from Delhi (via Manali) on the first days of the expedition!

So what did we learn? I learned that there appeared to be more similarities than differences between the educational experience at the Leh School and Fulneck. I also learned that the way of working at the school was very productive, and yet the staff and students found the time to be very welcoming. I am especially grateful to Reverend Gergan for his patient and accommodating manner. I believe that the students learned that it is very easy to befriend people of other cultures, even if the language did not flow quite as smoothly as perhaps it might have done. I also hope that as well as taking away such insights, we have also provided students and staff at the Leh School with an interesting and worthwhile experience, rather than being a burden on them.

As for the future, I sincerely hope that both schools will be able to develop this nascent partnership, and I hope that pupils, teachers and the wider community alike in both regions can benefit from this relationship. I hope to revisit the town and school in summer 2010, and that there may well be another Fulneck World Challenge expedition to the area in the coming years.

David Alcock (Head of Geography)

Midlands District Conference

The Midlands District Conference met on Saturday, March 21st at Hall Green Methodist Church, the present home of the Sparkhill congregation. The opening devotions were conducted by Br. David Howarth. Welcome was given to Sr. Jackie Morten PEC and Joy Raynor, the Provincial Youth and Children's Officer. Sr. Jackie Morten gave the PEC report which listed the various meetings in the Province. Questions were asked by Conference about the financial situation of the Church. At the present time, the accounts for the financial year are with the auditors. The financial report was given by Sr. Joan Marson. We have received £33 from the Eastern District as our share of contributions previously received before the new Midlands District was formed.

Sr. Joy Raynor showed a very interesting DVD called 'The Next Generation', a provoking insight with thoughts from the young people and an opportunity to use their gifts in

the Church even if they are very young. As adults, we need to listen and learn from our children and we as adults should talk to them about our faith.

Once again we were unable to give a name for the Renewal Committee and this matter is to be referred back to the congregations. Sr. Zoe Ferdinand from Sparkhill Congregation was elected as the representative for the PYCC. We shared together the news from the congregations:

Leicester

Recently, a Youth Service was held and conducted by the Shine Band from the Ockbrook congregation under the leadership of Br. James Woolford.

Ockbrook

The minister conducts regular assemblies at Ockbrook school and the Congregation has welcomed the boarders from the school at worship every term this year. This year four weddings will be held.

Sparkhill

The congregations are growing

together with the Methodist Church and now jointly worship with them each Sunday. The Sparkhill United Church building has now been sold.

Woodford Halse

Numbers are very small in the congregation. Members continue to meet for united services at the Methodist and Anglican Churches every month.

The District Away Day will be held on Saturday July 18th and the Leominster Congregation will be host. It is hoped to have a conducted tour of the historic places of the town and devotions and fellowship with the Congregation in the afternoon.

The Social Responsibility report was given by Br. Cliff Winfield. He mentioned the Fairtrade Fortnight and a Lent Christian Aid leaflet entitled 'Count your Blessings'.

The next Midlands District Conference will be held on Saturday October 17th at Woodford Halse.

Victor Launder

The Closure of Malmesbury Moravian Church and the Joining Together of the Malmesbury and Tytherton Congregations.

The final service at Malmesbury Moravian Church was held with much regret on Sunday 5th October 2008 and was a celebration of 260 years continuous worship. We were honoured to have with us Bishop Beth Torkington as well as the Rev. Gerald Farrar, the Rev. Basil MacLeavy, and the Reverends Peter and Paul Gubi. The little church was packed with Moravians and many friends. The service was devised by the congregation, during which Mrs Joyce Mellowes, widow of a former Malmesbury Moravian minister and Richard Langley a member of the congregation recalled some of their memories. A poem written by A.J. Lewis, a former minister at Malmesbury, was also read during the service. Rev. Thom Stapleton presided and together with Gerald Farrar, another former minister served Communion. It was a sad occasion for us but it was a wonderful service on which to end.

After the service we all went to the Town Hall and enjoyed a good tea in true Moravian fashion.

The church at Malmesbury had been originally started by John Cennick, an itinerant preacher like John Wesley, who also started the church at Tytherton. He then asked the Moravians to take over their care. The Moravians had only come to England (which they considered to be a Christian country) in order to get a ship to take them to a country where Christ was unknown. Fetter Lane became a Moravian society in the 1730's and a congregation in 1742 but Tytherton was the first congregation to be settled outside London in 1743. They took over Malmesbury in 1748.

In recent years the Malmesbury congregation has been small in number but our members and a few others who liked our liturgy attended regularly. We met each Sunday with our minister Thom Stapleton taking the services on the first Sunday for Holy Communion and on the third Sunday. Our other weekly services were maintained with the help of the Reverends Peter and Paul Gubi, for which we were very grateful.

For many years the Quakers met in our church, and they came every Sunday to hold their meeting after our service. (They provided refreshments for us once a month.) The church being warm and comfortable and in a central position in the town, was used by Churches Together in Malmesbury for their meetings as well as the Abbey Guild. Br. Thom Stapleton held Bible Studies there, to which members of other churches came.

Then disaster struck - in the form of very large electricity bills! The few Moravian members could not afford to go on paying them. Our minister called a meeting on May 28th 2008, to which the leaders of the groups using the church were invited, and the position was explained. It was decided that the church in Malmesbury would close and that members would join the congregation in Tytherton. They have subsequently made us feel very welcome.

Mollie Batstone



... and normal daily routine at 49 Creighton Avenue is suspended for a fortnight. It's the only two weeks of the year when Marilyn watches more sport on TV than I do. That's not to say that I don't enjoy tennis and following the matches at Wimbledon. Whilst working in my study I find listening to the radio coverage on FiveLive very entertaining and informative as John Inverdale, Claire Balding and the rest of the team share their enthusiasm for the tournament with the listener. I can recommend it.

Whilst we've been in London, Marilyn and I have managed one visit to Wimbledon for the championships. We had tickets for the new No.1 Court for the second Monday of the tournament - which potentially meant being able to see last 16 or quarter final matches in both singles events.

Potentially - that year was not the best for weather, and we arrived at the All England Club as the drizzle began to fall. We saw 70 minutes of rain-interrupted tennis, as former champion Richard Krajicek took on Aussie Mark Philippoussis. That was never going to be a match of long rallies, as both had big booming serves and explosive returns. It was frustrating. If it had been 59 minutes of play, we'd have got a refund; but to go just over the hour meant that it was deemed that we had seen our money's worth!

Most of the day was spent wandering the grounds, eating our sandwiches on "Henman Hill", sheltering from the showers in the shop and museum, and spotting players and celebrities. At one point, Sir Cliff Richard appeared on one of the hospitality suite balconies, and you could sense a general feeling from the milling crowds, "please, Cliff, don't start singing in the rain again!"

Tennis players are a broad mixture of characters and personalities, but those at the top do seem to have a good sense of how fortunate they are. For example, the top two men in the game, Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer, both have charitable foundations set up in their name through which they are able to give something back to society by helping those in less fortunate circumstances. Of course, they are not alone in this highly commendable practice.

Do you remember Andrea Jaeger? One of the US teenage "brat-pack"; she was playing as a professional at the age of 14, and at 16 was ranked number 2 in the world. In 1980, aged 15, she became the youngest ever Wimbledon quarter-finalist - but her huge potential was never realized. During her brief career she reached two grand-slam finals, losing

both to Martina Navratilova, including 1983 at Wimbledon. In 1985 a shoulder injury forced her out of the game. In retirement, Jaeger used the millions of dollars she made in prize money and endorsements to create the Little Star Foundation, helping children suffering from disease, especially cancer, neglect and poverty. Two years ago she helped found Athletes for Hope, a charity dedicated to encouraging ex-athletes to contribute to charitable causes.

All of this grew from her faith and from a chance hospital visit that she made at the age of 16 when she met children and young people suffering from cancer. She felt called to help them. In an interview in the Observer in 2008, she said, "My friendship with God has always been the strongest thing in my life, so when I was given the choice between tennis and the kids, I knew I didn't want to be on the circuit. But it was hard: I had responsibilities, I had contracts - I didn't want to disappoint people. I wanted God to make the decision for me. So when my shoulder popped the next year, and I knew it was career-ending. I thought: 'Great, I can go help kids full-time.' I was given a direction and I've been helping kids ever since."

Last year, she became Sister Andrea, an Anglican Dominican nun. Again, she told the Observer, "I've been studying spiritual things for more than 20 years. I just thought: 'I've given my life in service to God, so why not take this extra step?' I've always had a relationship with God and I think that really benefitted me. The only way I survived the circuit was my faith. It was lonely. I didn't really want to be world number one, but who do you have that conversation with when you're young and number two in the world? It's not something people want to hear."

Now in her 44th year, Andrea Jaeger has dedicated her life to God through the care of children in need, visiting hospitals and running camps for children and young people with cancer, living a life that is an inspiration to many, and proving that there is more to the lives of sporting stars than we perhaps at first realize.

It makes me want to end this month's Grandstand View with the same quote as last month - "When the One Great Scorer comes to write against your name, He marks - not that you won or lost - but how you played the game." (Grantland Rice)

Enjoy the tennis...

David Newman

Open Book

JEREMIAH

In the Old Testament, the number of years are counted in descending order because they record the number of years remaining before the advent of Christ.

After the death of Soloman king of Israel in 931 BC, his son Rehoboam came to the throne. He took advice from his young contemporaries rather than the experienced older statesman who had served his father. The result was a revolt which divided the kingdom into the northern kingdom of ten tribes called Israel under Jeroboam, and the southern kingdom of two tribes remaining under king Rehoboam. In 721 BC the northern kingdom was defeated by the Assyrians led by Sargon II.

The southern kingdom of Judah continued for another 135 years under a succession of seven kings, but deteriorated politically and in morality. The downward trend had started towards the end of Solomon's reign. "When Solomon was old his (foreign) wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God." To pacify his wives, Solomon built shrines for the worship of pagan gods, 1 Kings 11v 6. The downward spiral continued under Solomon's successors until the last king of Judah, Zedekiah, when the exile to Babylon began and Jerusalem, its walls and temple were demolished in 586 BC.

There had been some improvement during the reign of Josiah 640-609, "He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his ancestor David (2 Kings 22). At the age of 26, Josiah set in motion repairs to the temple, when a book of the law was discovered which led to reforms in worship and celebration of the Passover such as had not been seen for generations. It was during Josiah's reign that Jeremiah, also a young man in his twenties, was aware of God's call to be a prophet.

Jeremiah's first reaction was to protest, saying he would not know what to say and he was only a youth. (The Hebrew word "na'ar" also has the secondary meaning of "a person who was not able to take the initiative but was told what to do" (an assistant or servant). Jeremiah appears to be of a retiring, sensitive nature, avoiding any glare of publicity, a reluctant prophet: not an obvious choice for an interviewing ministerial committee. God's call, however, contained many promises: "I will send you, tell you what to say. Do not be afraid, I am with you and will keep you safe." Jer.1 v 7,8. God keeps His promises. In all the 52 chapters of Jeremiah, except two which are entirely narrative, the phrase appears "The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah." It was the Word which kept Jeremiah going. (Jeremiah 20 v 9)

Faithful testimony against evil and sin, calling for repentance and reform, warning of judgement will stir the fires of opposition, even violence. Such is recorded in Jeremiah chapter 20. Pashur, a priest and chief governor of the temple, physically attacked Jeremiah, put him in the stocks on public display. This did not silence Jeremiah. On his release, he told this high official, telling him in no uncertain terms what was in store for him and the nation, including exile to Babylon. This confrontation was not

without its cost to Jeremiah, physically, mentally and spiritually, as is shown in verses 7-12 and 14-18. Verse 13 appears to be out of context. It may belong to the moment of his release from the stocks or when he had emerged from his depression. There is, of course, the possibility that Baruch, his scribe had his piece of manuscript out of order. It can happen in a pulpit occasionally.

The open book of Jeremiah contains the message in many forms, narrative, poetry, through word pictures. We select two examples for our present purpose.

Jeremiah 2 v13 The Lord says "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water," Only two sins? Many sins are recorded in this book: injustice, crime, violence, corruption, neglect of the poor. These are the outcome, however of two root causes: forsaking God, the fountain of life and substituting cisterns of human manufacture, which cannot hold water, therefore cannot save nor satisfy.

Jeremiah 18 vv 1-10 The Lord tells Jeremiah to visit the potter's house. There he will give him a message. "The pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands, so the potter re-formed it, shaping it as seemed best to him." (Bible AV 'so he made it again.') The Lord says, "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" Looking at the context of this story, it may be suggested there was a stone or hard substance in the clay which resisted the hands of the potter. He did not reject it, but re-formed it. The end result was a pot fit for purpose.

Jeremiah was given a difficult and unpopular task; to deliver to his people a warning of the dire consequences of their sin, a call to repentance and a return to the Lord and His covenant

relationship. Jeremiah was not a pessimist, as so often portrayed, but a realist. His appeal was for people to return to "the old paths where the good way is and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6 v 16). He may have been a reluctant prophet, but he was a courageous prophet. The hero is not the one "who knows no fear", but the one who overcomes his fear and becomes more of a conqueror by the grace of God.

The people's exile to Babylon did occur and lasted some seventy years. In time, lessons were learnt and there was a return home. Jeremiah became a hopeful prophet. He was not all doom and gloom. The message of the potter becomes true in Jeremiah chapter 31 vv 31-34. "The time is coming" says the Lord "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more".

The Word of the Lord carries its own authority. It embraces the past, present and future. Without it, we have nothing to say.

Dennis Monger

Notice Board

A short update on the accounts for the year ended 31st August 2008 from PEC and the Finance Committee

The consolidated accounts, including the Moravian Church, the Moravian Union, all the congregations, the schools at Fulneck & Ockbrook and the Fulneck Choir House, showed a surplus on the Net Movement of Funds of £291,645 (£92,273 for 2007).

For the areas under the direct control of P.E.C. (The Moravian Church and the Moravian Union) there was a net surplus of £390,018 (£336,764 for 2007). However, there were two significant factors. The market value of investments reduced by £139,348, but this was more than offset by gains of £727,111 from the disposal of property.

The funding of pensions is a long term problem and there was a residual deficit of £50,000 on all the other functions controlled from Church House (Ministerial costs, archives, youth work, staff costs and other administrative expenses).

Income from the assessments levied on congregations, the Bates Trust and dividends on investments was in line with previous years, and this trend should continue in the current year.

The reduction of £139,348 in the value of investments reflected the turmoil in the financial markets. However, an early sale of banking shares helped to minimize the effects of this crisis and the performance of our investment advisors has been good.

It is intended that the income from the sale of property will be invested but interest rates are low and an investment in equities is seen as too great a risk at this point in time.

One firm commitment is to ensure that there are sufficient funds to cover training and other costs for our new ministerial candidates.

A full report from the Provincial Board will be published during June.

Sr. Gillian Taylor, PEC and Br. Graham Mallinson, Finance Committee Chairman

Ockbrook

Congratulations to James and Annette who have just announced their engagement. We wish them well in their future together.

Marie Rose

Applications are invited for the tenancy of: 6A Fairfield Square, Droylsden, Manchester

A terraced brick built and slated house

The accommodation comprises:

Ground Floor: Large kitchen and three large living rooms

First Floor: Four double bedrooms; bathroom with separate shower

General: Gas central heating throughout; rear walled yard with outbuildings

Rent: £1,800 per quarter (£600 per month)

Viewing may be arranged with:

Mr George Malvern, 19b Fairfield Square

Manchester M43 6AD

Tel: 0161 301 3984

Application Forms can be obtained from the Unitas Agent:

John Forrester, Chartered Surveyors & Land Agents

First Floor, 19/21 Chapel Brow, Leyland

Preston PR25 3NH

Tel: 01772 421 566

Completed forms should be returned to the Agent by 15 June 2009.

Prayer walk, County Clare

Sr. Rosemary Power is organising an ecumenical prayer walk from Friday 3rd July - Sunday 5th July, starting at Discart O'Dea, County Clare and ending in Kilfenora. It is a drop-in, drop-out walk at a gentle pace, talking to people along the route, which is mainly on the Burren Way. The route will take in the ruins of Crossard Moravian Church, which will be the stopping place for lunch on Saturday 4th July. Sr. Power would be pleased to welcome Moravians for all or part of the route.

A second prayer walk along this route will take place from Friday 4th - Sunday 6th September. For further details contact: Rosemary Power, Co. Clare ministry, 061 363717, rosemary_power@eircom.net

Congregation News

Cliftonville

As the first of our Centenary events, on Wednesday 18th February a number of friends and neighbours joined us for an evening of music with George Hamilton IV from USA. He commented on his first visit to the congregation in 1981 when he attended the Watchnight Service. Hot Dogs were provided for supper.

The young people in the district met in Cliftonville in the afternoon of Sunday 1st March and prepared a service which was held at 5 p.m. and attended by members from the other congregations.

During Holy Week we met for the readings on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, as has been our practice for a few years, we joined with members of the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian, Methodist, and Roman Catholic Churches in Holy Trinity Parish Church. We were welcomed by the new Rector, Rachel; the Order for the Seder led us through the Passover Story, and with a token meal of green vegetables, matzoh, bitter herbs and roast lamb we experienced a very meaningful evening of fellowship and preparation for Easter with Christians in the district.

The Easter Service was led by Br. Paul Holdsworth, and the floral cross, prepared by Olga Cooper, June McGrath and Marianne Maginnes was a focal point in the chancel.



After the service it was placed outside the church and we understand has been appreciated by passers-by and bus passengers.

An evening of Line Dancing, organized by Mandy and Margaret Alexander and friends took place on Friday 24th April. We enjoyed the demonstrations and then joined in some of the simpler dances. Supper followed. A 'Mama Mia' Singalong and a Quiz Night have been arranged for 8th and 29th May.

We thank the local preachers, retired ministers, Leonard Broadbent and Desmond Quaite, and the members of the choir who have enabled us to maintain the services during the past few months.

Edna Cooper

Wheler St, Hr Openshaw

Our Service of Thanksgiving took place on Sunday 8th February. What a moving and memorable occasion it was. Over 230 members and friends packed the church, with chairs squeezed into every nook and cranny. Many thanks must go to all concerned in its planning and organisation, and especially to our guest speaker, Sr Beth Torkington, who though not feeling well, did not wish to miss the occasion and spoke with love and affection of her time at Wheler St. Refreshments were available before and after the service, and displays of photographs, videos, visitor's books and a 'help yourself to anything you want' table kept some for a further two hours afterwards, despite the snow flurries quickening the exits of others.

Two weeks later, we held our Final Service, - Family Communion led by Br. Cooper, including a brief presentation to him in gratitude of his time at Wheler Street, followed by group photos and an extended after church coffee provided by the Guides (who celebrate 50 years as a Guide Unit this year and have now moved into the local junior

school for their meetings). Again, it was very emotional. It is hoped that all our members have taken items of importance to them from the church to keep as lasting mementoes of their involvement in Wheler St.

The following week, we turned out in force at Fairfield and we were warmly welcomed, and appreciated the choir performing in our honour and a special after church coffee provided so that we could start to get to know our new church. We hope to settle quickly and be able to contribute to the life of the congregation.

But what of the Wheler St property? Progress for putting it up for sale has been slow, and consequently has given us more time to oversee the re-allocation of resources such as hymn books, tables, chairs, etc to welcoming new 'homes'. We hope that the sale does not drag on too long, so that we can move on and contribute fully to the community of our new congregation.

Messenger Correspondent (for the last time!)
Anne Larkin

Blackbird Leys, Oxford

In June 2008 we said goodbye to Rev. Fleur & Rev. Walter Houston as they departed to Macclesfield following Sr. Houston's retirement. We celebrated her last Sunday with a lovely service and lunch to which guests from her other 'walks of life' were invited along with her family. With the generosity of so many members and friends we were able to send them off to their new home with several reminders of the church.

In October we welcomed Rev. Pamela Baker as our new part-time curate.

We have had two students on placement with us from Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Paul Chamberlain and Richard Frith It has been a pleasure to welcome them and their families at our worship. We wish them well as they continue their vocation. We have also welcomed preachers from the Methodist Circuit - Rev. Bob Horton and Jan Grimwood - and Rev. Andrew Bevan from Littlemore Baptist Church.

The membership continues to fluctuate but is slowly increasing. There were 16 Baptisms during the year.

I am grateful for the help of the church members in maintaining the weekly rota of services and for stepping in when vacancies occur at short notice.

Margaret Burne

Fairfield

New Build:

On the 18th January the newly built Droylsden Methodist Church played host to our Droylsden & District Churches Together, United Service for Christian Unity. It was a lovely service and an opportunity to visit this recently opened building. It was altogether very impressive as were the homemade cakes we were treated to after the service.

Old Build:

On Sunday the 8th February I set off feeling quite downhearted, to attend Wheler Street's special service to mark its closing on 22nd February. The service was uplifting and Sr Beth Torkington's address filled me with hope for the future.

New Friends:

On 1st March we were thrilled to be able to welcome a group of Wheler Street Members to worship at Fairfield and already they are regulars and have become a welcome and happy addition to the congregation. I hope they are as happy to come as we are to have them and that they soon feel at home as they are all friends of old.

Lenten Meetings began on Tuesday 3rd March and in the approach to Easter we have already had A Sunday School Daffodil Tea & chocolate Bring and Buy to raise funds for the Sunday school and a good as new sale and a Jumble sale for Church funds.

Margery Sutcliffe

Horton, Bradford

Our recently formed 'Social Responsibility Committee' has been busy of late organising a 'Christmas starts here' event which included coffee , card making , Christmas lunch, singing, a beetle drive and a silent auction. On February 15th we had an Italian evening with a three course meal and entertainment! These events raised money for church funds and also brought in some people who are on the fringes of the church.

During lent we ran a 'Love Life, Live Lent' course which attracted 10 young people and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience of fun and fellowship, under the guidance of Srs. Linda Haggas and Yvonne Elvridge and Br Michael Newman.

Churches Together, renamed 'Branches of the Vine' also ran a lent study at St. Oswald's Church which was attended by 30 people from the surrounding area. Br. Michael Newman began the study series with a talk looking at Genesis and the environment. The rest of the studies were taken by ministers from the various participating churches.

On February 8th 'Education Sunday' Philip Hollindrake was baptised and welcomed into the church.

On Sunday, March 1st we hosted the Memorial Day, Lovefeast and Holy Communion for the district. Our guest preacher was Gloria Hanley and it turned out that she had many connections with Moravians in the Caribbean. At our Congregation Council meeting on March 29th Sr. Maureen Colbert stood down from the Church Committee and we thank her for her efforts over the years.

The funeral was held on April 15th of Sr. Dorothy Hodgson a lifelong member of the church. We will miss her faithful witness to the church and God.

On March 28th we held our 'Grand Sale' in Shipley. It was hard work but raised much needed funds for property maintenance.

Jim Spencer

CONGREGATION REGISTERS

DEATH		
18th Apr 2009	Albert Moses	Sparkhill
23rd Apr 2009	Mary Williams	Sparkhill
3rd May 2009	Olive Skeete	Sparkhill

FROM CHURCH HOUSE

The Provincial Board wish to inform you that Sr Beth Torkington has been relieved of her duties at Brockweir Moravian Church as of the beginning of June. This is to enable her to give proper time to carry out her Episcopal duties, both here in this Province and throughout the Unity, as well as continuing to serve the Bath Weston Congregation.

The Provincial Board are pleased to announce that Br. Thom Stapleton has received and accepted a call to serve the Brockweir Congregation in addition to his responsibilities for the Kingswood Congregation. This will take effect from the beginning of June at which time Br. Stapleton will relinquish his responsibilities for the Tytherton Congregation.

The Provincial Board are pleased to announce that Br. David Newman has received and accepted a call to serve the Swindon and Tytherton Congregations effective from the beginning of September 2009.

Provincial Diary for June

20	Renewal Committee, Lower Wyke	Sr Morten
30	Bates Trust Meeting	Sr Mullin
		Sr Taylor
40	Yorkshire District Mission Evening	Br Hopcroft
7/12	Mission Board meeting in India	Br Hopcroft
22	Ockbrook School Governors' Meeting, 10.30am. and 1.00pm	Br Hopcroft
24/25	PEC, BMB, Unitas Estates Meetings	The PEC
27	Provincial Men's Fellowship Day, 1.00pm. Hornsey Moravian Church	
29/2nd July	In service Training at Sarum College, Salisbury	

The Provincial Board would ask members of the Church, throughout the Province, to remember all serving ministers, supervised ministers and lay workers as they gather together for In Service Training at Sarum College, Salisbury from Monday June 29th. until Thursday July 2nd. 2009.

PRAYER NOTES

A Prayer for Politicians and Journalists

God, whose desire is to lead us into all truth, we pray for those who deal with matters which affect us all and have to put complicated issues into words and pictures which enable the rest of us to understand at least a part of what is going on.

We pray that they may see proper accountability as a source of strength, and a vital contribution to the common good.

We pray for those who take decisions that most of us would shrink from taking, that their debates may offer light rather than heat and that their words may be signposts to truth rather than a deepening of distortion and confusion.

May they receive wisdom and insight when confronted by moral ambiguities and difficult judgments. May they find satisfaction in service and delight in integrity as they share in the creation of a better world that is part of your creation
In Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Golden Nuggets WYBooks No 16

A Prayer for Friends who are ill

Lord,

We lift to you our dear friends.

You know our love for them, our need of them and our fears for them.

You see the smiles in public, the tears in private, the confident words and the despairing thoughts.

We pray for healing for our friends, recovery from physical illness, grace in their weakness and calmness in the midst of confusion and worry.

May our friends know your presence and love may their care givers and family know your strength and peace, and may we all be upheld by your everlasting arms beneath us.

For those leaving School, University or home

Lord,

With dreams before our eyes, we prayed for our children, Prayed that their voyaging might be that of ships that sail with favouring winds over a summer sea.

We asked that life for them might be an easeful and radiant thing.

Now with a clearer vision in us,

We ask that your spirit may dwell in theirs, making their desires pure, and kindness the law of their thought.

Once we asked that no grievous thing might touch them.

Now we ask that whatever discipline the years may bring them, Shall perfect their trust in you.

Amen

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